Educator Identity Development for International Graduate Teaching Assistants through Community of Practice: A Design Case

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by

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Abstract

This design case provides a transparent tale of building an international graduate teaching assistant (IGTA) orientation as a virtual Community of Practice (VCoP) during the COVID-19 era. The design case is situated in an English as a Second Language Composition (ESLC) Program at a large midwestern university for new GTAs, both international and domestic. Studies show that IGTAs who do not fit the prototype of GTAs in predominately white institutions (PWI), face marginalization, damaging their sense of belonging and identity as legitimate educators. Their salient social identities as both multicultural and multilingual become oppressed as they attempt to develop their professional educator identity. Intersectionality illuminates the oppression of social identities and provides a way forward that empowers rather than marginalizes. Embracing social identities as assets and not deficits can engender IGTAs’ sense of belonging. As a complement, the constructs of Community of Practice (CoP) theory provide practical guidance for welcoming newcomers. CoP sets forth three modes of belonging (i.e., imagination, alignment, engagement) and three enabling structures (i.e., support, sponsorship, and recognition) that form an architecture for building a community. These two theories comprise an identity theoretical framework to undergird the design. Further, the design is contextually grounded with instructional goals identified from an extensive front-end analysis. A two-month front-end analysis, including semi-structured interviews, a member-checking focus group, and weekly peer-debriefing with the design team is followed by six months of design and development. This design case addresses a gap in the literature related to IGTA educator identity development in U.S. universities. While many empirical studies demonstrate that CoPs support identity development, the
literature lacks VCoP design precedents that elucidate how theoretical constructs shape community members’ interaction and engagement. The design case provides detailed descriptions of how the learning environment and discrete design elements were influenced by the theoretical framework and experienced by participants. In this way, it attempts to fill the gap with a rich, descriptive narrative of the design challenges and decisions. Design feedback from Learning Experience Design (LXD) interviews and pilot surveys provided insight into the design’s successes and failures. The design case concludes by highlighting several precedents created by the process to support future VCoP designs aimed at educator identity development.
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List of Abbreviations

Community of Practice (CoP)

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

English as a Second Language Composition Program (ESLC Program)

First Language (L1)

Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate (GTA)

Instructor of Record (IoR)

International Graduate Teaching Assistant (IGTA)

Learning Management System (LMS)

Learning Experience Design (LXD)

Non-native Speaker of English (NNSE)

Predominantly White Institution (PWI)

Second Language (L2)

Subject Matter Expert (SME)

Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“As a new student, coming to the new, different role, who needs to focus on my own learning as a doctoral student, but also work in [the] writing program as an instructor, I was responsible not only for my learning, but also for my students’ learning. So, I was so much overwhelmed by the workload I had to accomplish.”

- Former ESRC Program International Graduate Teaching Assistant

Doctoral graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), sometimes referred to as ‘associates’, often find themselves developing and integrating identities as graduate students, researchers, and educators upon entering their graduate studies (Barr & Wright, 2019; Beers et al., 2020; Muzaka, 2009; Winstone & Moore, 2017). This is an overwhelming task, as illustrated by the opening quote. They may struggle to develop these multiple identities, “being recognized as a certain ‘kind of person’ in a given context” (Gee, 2000, p. 99), often needing to slide seamlessly from one to the next (Beers et al., 2020; Chen Musgrove et al., 2021; Jazvac-Martek, 2009; LaCroix, 2018). Thus, much of the GTA’s academic journey is about identity development as they grow to be both educators and scholars within their chosen discipline (Jazvac-Martek, 2009; Wright et al., 2009).

International GTAs (IGTA) can experience more pronounced liminality than domestic GTAs in the context of universities in the United States (Ashavskaya, 2015; Ates & Eslami, 2012; Hakkola et al., 2020; Kasztalska, 2019). IGTAs stand apart as outsiders, especially within Predominately White Institutions (PWI) (Ates & Eslami, 2012; Kasztalska, 2019; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021). Their social identities, or memberships in various ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups, distinguish them easily as ‘other’ (Duran & Jones, 2019; S. R. Jones & Abes, 2013). Failing to fit the prototypical mold of an American GTA, the intersection of salient social
identities affect IGTAs’ sense of belonging and makes them vulnerable to bias, prejudice, and discriminatory behavior (Crenshaw, 1989; Kim et al., 2018; LaCroix, 2018). IGTAs may not experience these negative effects equally, as those with less perceptible linguistic differences (e.g., those who attended school where English is the medium of instruction) are less susceptible to bias and discriminatory behavior (Adebayo & Allen, 2020; Rubin, 1992; Zheng, 2017). Their linguistic and cultural differences are perceived by students, colleagues, and faculty as incompetence, leading to self-doubt and difficulties in establishing credibility as a legitimate educator (Ashavskaya, 2015; Kasztalska, 2019; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021). IGTAs’ multiple oppressed identities effectively stunt their educator identity development (Ates & Eslami, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989; Kasztalska, 2019; LaCroix, 2018; Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2019).

IGTAs assigned to teach in English language courses (e.g., composition or second language writing) cannot rely on the universal language of numbers like their colleagues in the sciences (Ghanem, 2018; Peker et al., 2020; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021). As non-native speakers of English (NNSE), IGTAs may struggle with self-efficacy related to their own command of the language, let alone their ability to teach it to others (Christiansen et al., 2018; Kasztalska, 2019; Zheng, 2017). Despite recent trends toward Translingualism and world Englishes that celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity (Ghimire & Wright, 2021; Kasztalska, 2019; Li, 2021; Zheng, 2017), the stigma attached to NNSEs continues to hinder professional identity development of IGTAs (Ates & Eslami, 2012; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021).

Given the evidence-based ties between IGTAs’ social identities and their marginalized experiences within U.S. universities, it is unsurprising to see a push toward professional development opportunities focused on fostering identity development through belonging (Bhalla, 2019; Hakkola et al., 2020). Empirical studies link effective IGTA educator identity
development to Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice (CoP) theory (Bhalla, 2019; Christiansen et al., 2018; Hakkola et al., 2020). Wenger introduced CoP as a group of people with a shared passion and purpose building knowledge and learning through participation in practice. Identity development occurs in tandem with learning as a result of discourse and engagement in practices particular to a community, in person or online (Gee, 2000; Golde, 1998; S. U. Smith et al., 2017). Further, CoP offers an architecture for educator identity development through three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination, and alignment (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Wenger, 1998) along with several enabling structures. Intersectionality, as a complementary theory, illuminates how the community space can enhance IGTAs’ sense of belonging by recognizing their salient identities as assets rather than deficiencies (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989; LaCroix, 2018). Wenger, as reported in Farnsworth et al., 2016, believed that without this recognition, CoPs can, in fact, further marginalize IGTAs.

Increasingly, CoPs are hosted virtually (VCoPs) to support the transition to remote GTA teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic (Grunspan et al., 2021; McLaughlan, 2021). However, the literature on VCoPs for IGTA educator identity development lacks specific detail about how instructional designers can capitalize on its tenets to build an effective community space (Lantz-Andersson et al., 2018; S. U. Smith et al., 2017).

**Problem of Practice Statement**

GTAs are plunged into teaching positions as the instructor of record (IoR) for undergraduate or graduate level courses and must develop a new educator identity, intersecting it with their other salient identities. IGTAs enter this complex time of identity development with cultural and linguistic social identities that do not match the prototype of a GTA in American universities (Ates & Eslami, 2012; Kasztalska, 2019; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021). These salient
identities are more pronounced in IGTAs assigned to teach language-based courses like academic writing (Christiansen et al., 2018; Ghimire & Wright, 2021; Kasztalska, 2019; Zheng, 2017). As a result, IGTAs in these positions are subject to biases and discrimination from their students, fellow GTAs, and faculty, frustrating their ability to develop new educator identities (Duran & Jones, 2019; Yaw & Kang, 2021; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021). Without dedicated educator identity development opportunities to combat the oppression felt at the intersection of their cultural and linguistic diversity, IGTAs can experience anxiety and even decide to never pursue the professoriate, the very reason they initially planned to attend graduate school (Gardner, 2008; Gin et al., 2021; Golde, 1998; Jazvac-Martek, 2009; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009). Professional development is necessary to support immediate classroom teaching and is a worthwhile investment for IGTAs’ future careers in academia.

Community of Practice (CoP) theory offers a solution that centers a sense of belonging as the first step in identity development (Farnsworth et al., 2016; S. U. Smith et al., 2017; Wenger, 1998). CoP acknowledges the intersectionality of IGTAs’ experiences in PWIs and privileges the voice and experiences of all newcomers to a community to avoid marginalization and foster movement from the periphery to full participation in the field (Farnsworth et al., 2016). Scholarship shows that CoPs have successfully developed educator identity in IGTAs (Hakkola et al., 2020; Schwallier, 2020; Silva et al., 2020). For CoPs to work with fidelity, there must be opportunities for discourse and dialogue specific to the practices of the professional community (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Gee, 2000; Wenger, 1998). Empirical studies, however, only offer brief descriptions of the social practices that go on within a CoP (e.g., frequent meetings, storytelling, etc.) (Hill et al., 2019). Fewer reports offer insights into the construction of VCoPs for IGTAs (Grunspan et al., 2021; Lantz-Andersson et al., 2018; McLaughlan, 2021). An effective VCoP
can only be sustained when, as Lantz-Andersson and colleagues (2018) noted, there are “specific technical and social configurations of the applications and platforms” (p. 309) in place for delivery. This lack of detail about VCoP architecture in the literature creates a problem for instructional designers attempting to create successful VCoP spaces for IGTAs. 

Design cases are needed to share knowledge and extend the literature surrounding IGTA VCoPs (Boling, 2010; Howard, 2011; Svihla & Boling, 2020). A design case offers a thick description and transparent tale of an instructional design process focused on an intentional purpose (K. M. Smith, 2010; Svihla & Boling, 2020). When designers begin to share their experiences through design cases, precedents are set and effective design is both innovated and moved forward within specific, focused purposes such as supporting the development of IGTAs’ educator identity (Boling, 2010; Lawson, 2004; Svihla & Boling, 2020).

As is typical with design cases, the design arises from a specific, identified need (Howard, 2011, 2014). The impetus for this design was a problem faced by the English as a Second Language Composition (ESLC) Program at a large research university in the American Midwest. IGTAs in the ESLC Program provide direct instruction to nearly 450 international undergraduate and graduate students each year. The ESLC Program hires between 10-12 GTAs, majority international, each year to teach second language (L2) writing. The ESLC Program courses are a critical step between international students and their core classes, creating a high stakes instructional need. Yet, at the time of this study, no professional development existed for the IGTAs; they relied instead on weekly course meetings during their first semester of teaching to address any immediate concerns. While these meetings created an informal CoP, the activities within consisted mostly of reacting to problems rather than proactively building educator identities to support overall IGTA success. A formal professional development intentionally
designed as a VCoP would support the GTAs’ educator identity development and prepare them for day one.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the present design case is to rigorously document the process and decisions made during the design and development of a VCoP professional development for IGTAs teaching in the ESLC Program. This purpose differs from traditional qualitative or quantitative research. For example, specific research questions are conspicuously absent as there can only be one research question for all design cases: “How did the design come to be as is?” (Howard, 2011, p. 53). Further, the utility of the design case is to be determined by the reader, not the writer (K. M. Smith, 2010); therefore, the purpose is not to proffer design guidelines or principles. Rather, it is only to share the process and highlight design elements that stood out as salient to IGTA educator identity development. As is typical of design cases, it will begin with a rich and thick narrative describing the project impetus, including a description of the context through a thorough front-end analysis (Chapter 3) (Howard, 2011, 2014; Svihla & Boling, 2020). A discussion of the design considerations, revealing design tensions (Chapter 4), will ensue before reflections on the final product with insights from informal testing with current program GTAs, both domestic and international (Chapter 5). Moreover, how Crenshaw's (1989) Intersectionality framework and Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice theory undergirded the entire design case will be brought to light throughout the study, with the three modes of belonging (i.e., engagement, imagination, and alignment) and enabling structures offering ongoing guidance for design decisions. This theory was central as it illuminates how IGTAs’ knowledge and identity development can be formed.
Design Case Significance

The final product in this design case was a five-week orientation for new IGTAs and their domestic counterparts the summer before their first semester of teaching. The orientation design was meant to achieve three overarching goals: 1) introduce ESLC Programs, 2) form a virtual community of practice, and 3) support readiness on day one. The design was grounded in a front-end analysis as well as a theoretical framework comprising Crenshaw's (1989) Intersectionality and Wenger’s (1998) CoP theory. Specific attention was paid to designing elements in the virtual learning space that aligned with the three modes of belonging (i.e., engagement, imagination, and alignment) as well as several enabling structures (i.e., support, sponsorship, and recognition).

The design intended to purposefully engage IGTAs in social practices and dialogue that would support their sense of belonging and educator identity. While significance can be extracted from the pre-planned, explicit alignment of certain design elements with the modes of belonging (e.g., reflection questions to foster imagination, asynchronous and synchronous discussions to facilitate engagement, and content on pedagogy for alignment with best practices), significance can also be pulled from design elements that emerged during the design process. For example, prolonged exposure to the IGTAs’ experiences through front-end analysis activities (K. M. Smith, 2010) led to the addition of stories about their experiences as an element of authentic problem-solving and engagement. Additionally, peer debriefing with the GTA Coordinator resulted in a re-structuring of weekly assignments from reflections to instructional artifacts that IGTAs could implement directly in their classrooms (i.e., online schedulers, introduction videos, etc.). Designers reading this case may find these emerging elements of the design even more useful in informing their future designs related to developing VCoPs to aid the professional identity development for IGTAs.
Definitions

**Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA).** The definition of Graduate Teaching Assistant is context dependent (Alhija & Fresko, 2020). The name, role, and responsibilities of a GTA may differ based on the university, college, and department that hires them. GTAs in this study are doctoral students who act as the instructor of record (IoR) for undergraduate and graduate level courses. In the context of this design case, GTA is a generic label referring to both domestic and international GTAs. The narrative will refer to IGTAs when the author wishes to draw attention to the international GTA population only.

**International Graduate Teaching Assistant (IGTA).** UNESCO defines international students as “students who have crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin.” IGTAs may or may not be NNSE. In the context of this study, IGTAs come primarily from East Asian and middle eastern countries and are NNSE.

**Identity.** This study adopts the view of identity presented by S. R. Jones and McEwen (2000) as having multiple dimensions. In this view, identity is inclusive of both a core sense of self (values, personal attributes, characteristics) and an externally defined dimensions, or social identities (membership in race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). Identity is continuously shifting and evolving. Different aspects of an individual’s social identity can take on varying levels of salience depending on the context in which they find themselves.

**Intersectionality.** Intersectionality refers to the phenomenon of an individual experiencing greater marginalization due to their identification with multiple oppressed identities rather than if they possessed only one oppressed identity (Crenshaw, 1989). The multiple disadvantaged identities have a compounding effect to subordinate rather than privilege. Crenshaw (1998)
argued that Intersectionality as a framework and analytical tool is needed to appropriately move multiply disadvantaged populations toward social justice (Cho et al., 2013).

**Community of Practice (CoP).** Wenger (1998) dedicated an entire chapter to defining the concept of community of practice. He explained the concept through three dimensions of practice that occur within a CoP: 1) mutual engagement, 2) joint enterprise, and 3) shared repertoire. These dimensions have since been simplified to critical characteristics of a CoP: 1) community, 2) domain, and 3) practice (Wenger et al., 2002). More recently, Wenger (now Wenger-Trayner), along with his partner, proffers this evolved definition that encompasses these constructs: “Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion or something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayer, 2015, p. 1). In an interview in 2016, Wenger-Trayner expounded that CoP “refers to a social process of negotiating competence in a domain over time” (Farnsworth et al., 2016, p. 5). In this way, CoP is simultaneously a tangible learning space and a social learning theory. The present design case treats it as both.

**Modes of belonging.** Wenger (1998) presented three modes of belonging as a way “to make sense of these processes of identity formation and learning” (p. 118). The modes of belonging, sometimes called modes of identification (Farnsworth et al., 2016), are more central to communities of practice as a social learning theory. Through these modes, people negotiate their identity within the CoP (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Wenger, 2000).


Alignment. Alignment is adopting the discourse and best practices of a community within one’s personal practice (Wenger, 1998, 2000).

Enabling Structures. Wenger (2004) believed that CoPs required top-down, administrative support to be sustained and successful. Enabling structures (i.e., sponsorships, recognition, and support) are different ways those in power, such as faculty and GTA coordinators, foster the activities of the CoP.

Design Case. A design case is defined by Boling (2010) as “a vehicle for dissemination of precedent, direct or vicarious experience of existing designs stored as episodic memory” (p. 2). It is a rich, in-depth description of design decisions, moves, and artifacts that encompass a design. While design cases may call upon research and theory to inform design decisions, the design itself is foregrounded (Boling, 2010; Howard, 2011).

Design Precedent. Boling and Gray (2018) define precedent as “a critical form of design knowledge, comprising the designer’s awareness and experience, direct or vicarious, of existing designs” (p. 259). Precedent is what designers take away from a case as episodic memory for use at a later point of departure for their designs (Lawson, 2004). In this way, precedents, as set forth by design cases, expand the knowledge base for instructional designers (K. M. Smith, 2010)
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Designing a virtual community of practice for new international graduate teaching assistants (IGTAs) and their domestic counterparts in English as a Second Language Composition (ESLC) Programs must be driven by the realities of the context and learners as well as be influenced by established theories and design precedents (Ertmer & Newby, 2017). A theoretical framework steers design decision-making toward design elements that facilitate the learning and identity development process (Dick et al., 2015), while design precedents showcase the practical application of those design elements and their outcomes (Boling, 2010). Designs created for a similar learning population (i.e., GTAs, IGTAs) with a similar problem (i.e., developing educator identity) offer solutions that can be translated to the present design case (Boling, 2010; Boling & Gray, 2018; Svihla & Boling, 2020). While Chapter 3 provides a deeper look at the needs of the study population through a front-end analysis, the review of the literature presented here is intended to argue the case for two theories as a framework for the design of the ESLC Programs orientation: Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998). The chapter discusses both theories and their suitability for driving design decisions for this population with the ultimate aim of building professional educator identities. Following this discussion, an exploration of design cases that translates these theories into practical design moves establishes what has and has not worked and what can be appropriated to build an effective virtual learning environment for the present problem.

Theoretical Framework for Identity Development

Interest and research into the professional development of GTAs increased since the turn of the 21st century after “a loud and vocal call” (Palmer, 2011, p. 1) for stronger GTA
preparation (von Hoene, 2020). Since then, studies have approached GTA professional development in many ways, including mentoring (Haque & Meadows, 2020; Parker et al., 2015), discipline-specific pedagogy training (Barr & Wright, 2019; Lee, 2019), observations (Mathers et al., 2021), and even virtual reality training (Ke et al., 2020). However, these professional development approaches and the research surrounding them overlook the GTAs as individuals, neglecting the intersectional identities they bring to the teaching context in which they find themselves.

A study by BrckaLorenz and colleagues (2020) highlighted the importance of recognizing GTA identities during professional development. They found that GTAs with different identities valued different aspects of training, concluding that “identity characteristics underscore the importance of considering the needs of a diverse graduate student population in order to prepare a successful diverse faculty population” (p. 32). Indeed, Green (2005) observed that supporting students, “is as much about the production of identity, then, as it is the production of knowledge [emphasis in original]” (p. 162). Identity theory illuminates how a person’s salient identities intersect with and influence their development of new professional identities. The onus falls on the GTA trainer in a higher education context to “know and be aware of the campus culture and how the culture relates to students’ representation and development of their multiple identities” (Abes et al., 2007, p. 20).

Identity is shifting, multiple, and dependent on context (Varghese et al., 2005). S. R. Jones and McEwen (2000), in their Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, added depth to the growing body of knowledge on multiple identities by describing how “multiple identities develop and change” (p. 411) based on continuously shifting intersections with the core self and various social identity dimensions. While core identities are central to one’s perception of
themselves (e.g., personality, values, attitudes, beliefs), externally-defined dimensions of identity are based on one’s group memberships (e.g., sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, class, age, etc.) (Abes et al., 2007; S. R. Jones & Abes, 2013; S. R. Jones & McEwen, 2000; Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2019). These dimensions are often referred to as social identities. Social identities are crucial to IGTA development because others’ (e.g., students, faculty, coordinators, and fellow GTAs) perception of them can determine their ultimate sense of belonging as legitimate educators in a university setting (Varghese et al., 2005). The less an IGTA embodies the ‘prototype’ of an educator within a particular context, the less they will feel they belong (Kasztalska, 2019). A prototype is what is perceived to be the normal representation of a person in the role of GTA within a given space (Kim et al., 2018). In the U.S. context with predominantly white institutions (PWIs) as the norm, most IGTAAs fail to fit the ‘heterosexual white male’ prototype. As a result, the conspicuous incongruity of their linguistic and cultural social identities to the prototypical GTA impacts how GTAs themselves and others are able to accept them as legitimate educators. This barrier to acceptance, then, hinders their development as an educator in a PWI context (S. R. Jones & Abes, 2013; S. R. Jones & McEwen, 2000).

Social identities are not power neutral. Salient social identities that are conspicuously different from the dominant cultural norm within a PWI are subject to biases and discrimination (Duran & Jones, 2019). By growing up in a different country and culture, often as non-native English speakers (NNES), IGTAAs are subject to both cultural and language biases. Culturally, for example, IGTAAs’ teaching pedagogies are viewed as incompatible in U.S. higher education classrooms, especially regarding lecture-based learning, strictness in grading, or the use of technology (Agrawal, 2018; Avsar Erumit et al., 2020; Elkhoury & May, 2021; Kasztalska, 2019; LaCroix, 2018; Lee, 2019; Peker et al., 2020; Steadman et al., 2018; Zheng, 2017). IGTAAs
in Kasztalska’s (2019) study reported being so unfamiliar with the culture of their U.S.-based composition classrooms that, despite their teaching experience, they had to start from scratch, adopting new approaches to teaching writing that better aligned with the school’s accepted pedagogies. Linguistically, IGTA as NNESs face bias from their students as well as faculty (Adebayo & Allen, 2020; Avsar Erumit et al., 2020; V. A. Jones et al., 2020; Rahimian, 2018; Ramjattan, 2020; Yaw & Kang, 2021; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021). Particularly, U.S.-born students in PWIs perceive accented English as less credible, leading them to question IGTA’s competence as educators (Ates & Eslami, 2012; Kasztalska, 2019; Yaw & Kang, 2021). IGTA professional development opportunities often reflect these cultural and linguistic biases by approaching instruction from a deficit view where instruction is focused on ‘fixing’ accents and pedagogical beliefs (Collins, 2021; V. A. Jones et al., 2020; LoCastro & Tapper, 2015; Subtirelu, 2017; Yaw & Kang, 2021; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021). Thus, IGTA’s educator identity development can be negatively impacted by either or both their linguistic and cultural differences (Yaw & Kang, 2021). A theoretical framework that recognizes this fact can inform an appropriate response to IGTA’s salient social identities and construct a safe environment “with minimizing marginality in mind” (Duran & Jones, 2019, p. 468).

**Intersectionality**

The experiences of domestic and IGTA can be markedly different based on the extent to which their social identities intersect to privilege or oppress (Crenshaw, 1989; V. A. Jones et al., 2020). Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), as an identity theory, is a lens through which to analyze and understand these power dynamics. At its core, intersectionality “emphasizes how overlapping axes of oppression uniquely impact individuals with multiple marginalized identities” (Duran & Jones, 2019, p. 455). Holding membership in more than one oppressed
identity (e.g., language and culture), compounds marginalization. Alternatively, membership in more than one social identity that is privileged within a context (i.e., white and male), increases power. Crenshaw’s (1989) foundational writings on intersectionality focus on the overlapping, oppressed social identities of Black women. She illustrated the concept with an analogy of a four-way traffic intersection. The traffic, moving in different directions, represents different flows of discrimination (e.g., sex, race, appearance, gender, etc.). When accidents occur in the intersection, the resulting injuries are from two or more types of discrimination colliding together.

Collisions of varying oppressive social identities work to make the possessor of those identities all the more vulnerable to biases and discrimination from others (Crenshaw, 1989; LaCroix, 2018; Nichols & Stahl, 2019). Linguistically and culturally diverse IGTAs are made more vulnerable at the intersection of those social identities. One IGTA in a recent study summed up the experience this way: “When they [students] stand in front of you, they are all L1 [first language] learners; you are not from their education system, and your first language is not English” (Zheng, 2017, p. 35). This apprehension stems from very real, negative encounters between IGTAs and their students as captured in the literature (W. Chen, 2021; Christiansen et al., 2018; Zheng, 2017). IGTAs recall receiving bad or hostile evaluations and being challenged by students on their credibility and capability. Students respond with “distrust, questioning, distance” (LaCroix, 2018, p. 26). For example, Chen (2021) recalled:

Early on in my TA career, when I was teaching at a small public university in Arkansas, I was told by a student, who was failing the class, to my face that, “I never understood a word you said” on the last day of class. I have been challenged by some students on the
grades I gave them; one student confronted me by saying, “I never made a B in English, and you gave me a C?”

Intersectionality illuminates discriminatory behavior from faculty as well in the form of lowered expectations and unequal work assignments (Varghese et al., 2005; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021). V. A. Jones and colleagues (2020) found that IGTAs with more teaching experience faced discrimination by faculty who saw their language abilities as hindrances to their teaching abilities. One participant spoke of being assigned to non-teaching tasks during field experiences: “The master teacher mentioned at least once like, ‘All right since Ailee is not native, maybe you can do other things’” (p. 491). Faculty and coordinators can favor domestic GTAs and make IGTAs feel like “second-class citizens” (Zhu & Bresnahan, 2021, p. 155). Microaggressions like these comments linguistically ‘other’ the IGTAs, inject self-doubt, the sum total of which stalls IGTAs’ professional identity development (Ates & Eslami, 2012; LaCroix, 2018).

Intersectionality “more fully describes how individuals, as members of social groups constructed and affected by larger systems, experience their lives, interactions, and various contexts” (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2019, p. 11). This more complex view of identity is necessary to guide the present design given the bias and discrimination confronting IGTAs in U.S. universities. In fact, Crenshaw (1989) noted that the intersectionality view of identity is needed to ‘sufficiently address’ the way in which IGTAs are subordinated due to their linguistic and cultural identities. For example, through this view, the design can build awareness of biases and discrimination faced by IGTAs, the relative positions of privilege enjoyed by the domestic GTAs, and the resulting impact on educator identity development for both groups (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2019). For, as V. A. Jones and colleagues (2020) purported, “discrimination based on a lack of cultural conformity and resulting marginalization can influence the agency GTAs have to
build their own professional identities” (p. 484). Intersectionality undergirds the design by centering the inequalities faced by IGTAs in U.S.-based universities (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989). Any design for educator identity development is obligated to consider the social influences on the empowerment or disenfranchisement of IGTAs. Wenger’s (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Wenger, 1998) Community of Practice theory provides a practical framework for professional identity development that answers this call.

**Community of Practice**

CoP theory foregrounds identity development (Farnsworth et al., 2016; S. U. Smith et al., 2017; Wenger, 1998) by relying on positive social interactions within a community of people with a unified professional goal or interest. Community and a sense of belonging act as an antidote to marginalized identities (Yaw & Kang, 2021). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayer (2015) defined CoP as, “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (What are communities of practice? section). They are characterized by a certain domain (field or area of knowledge), community (group of people who interact and learn from one another), and practice (the shared resources, knowledge, and tools community members use to solve problems in their domain) (S. U. Smith et al., 2017; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayer, 2015). Size and geographic location are irrelevant so long as these three elements are present (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayer, 2015). In this sense, a CoP for GTAs forms around their teaching practice as they band together for support, sharing stories and swapping ideas about teaching ESL composition. Through practice and negotiating membership in a community, members engender a sense of who they are (Farnsworth et al., 2016; S. U. Smith et al., 2017). A person’s identity continually evolves as
members become more active within the community (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

**Three Modes of Belonging.** Wenger recognized that professional communities have the power to marginalize newcomers by rejecting their claims to competence (e.g., their knowledge of teaching and learning and the language with which they express that knowledge) (Farnsworth et al., 2016). As IGTAs are frequently marginalized in this manner in PWIs, a community that welcomes a diversity of voices and experiences can combat these negative forces. To move IGTAs from powerless to powerful, CoP practices and discourse should be designed to increase their sense of belonging and, in doing so, foster identity development (Farnsworth et al., 2016; V. A. Jones et al., 2020; S. U. Smith et al., 2017). Wenger (1998) devised ‘three modes of belonging’ as a blueprint for building a CoP with this goal in mind. The three modes of belonging – imagination, alignment, and engagement (see Figure 1) – help all members express belonging and move from the periphery of the community to full participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; S. U. Smith et al., 2017). Full participation, Wenger (1998) hypothesized, goes hand in hand with strong identification within the domain.
Wenger’s Three Modes of Belonging and Infrastructure of Learning

Note. From Communities of Practice, Learning, Meaning, and Identity, by E. Wenger, p. 117. Copyright 1998 by Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with permission.

Wenger (1998) proffered, “it is by combining these three modes [of belonging] that we can form learning communities” (p. 156). Imagination should orient IGTAs in the space, history, meaning, and power structures of their work environment; knowledge of the bigger picture helps them to envision their place as a professional in the domain. They also need opportunities for reflection on their practices both individually and through conversation with others. Exploration, as part of imagination, allows them to try out new practices, play with new ideas, and push the boundaries of the profession. Alignment is adopting the discourse and best practice of a community within one’s personal practice. Through alignment, IGTAs converge with a common vision for their domain, coordinate standards for their practice, and enforce those standards through arbitration. Engagement supports continuity of the practice through elements such as documentation and storytelling to jointly solve problems, negotiate meaning, and create artifacts.
The three modes of belonging become anchor points from which to hang design elements within the CoP.

The literature shows evidence of successful GTA educator identity development in CoPs that make explicit use of the three modes of belonging. A study by Gretton et al. (2017) used a CoP intervention to support the transition of GTAs from physicists to physics educators. As physics educators, the researchers hoped to increase the GTAs’ buy-in for new teaching approaches presented during professional development opportunities. The study participants encountered program design elements specific to each mode of belonging. For imagination, they envisioned themselves as members of the physics education community. Alignment meant that they adopted evidence-based teaching methods agreed upon by the physics education community (e.g., student-centered, active learning). Finally, to engage in the community, the GTAs needed to “participate together in meaningful and consistent activities to develop a commitment to learning about teaching and to each other” (p. 383). The researchers found that GTAs engaged with one another often, sharing challenges they faced in their classrooms and contributing possible solutions. The study found that GTAs who reported stronger physics educator identities in the end also reported adopting active engagement techniques in their classrooms.

Other studies described only the structure for mutual engagement within a CoP but still reported identity growth. Bhalla (2019) explored how South Indian IGTAs in a university biology department derived identity from participation in an informal CoP. They found mutual engagement in the form of regular professional development meetings and conversations among IGTAs “helped facilitate the process of a professional educator identity” (p. 122). The CoP space allowed them to vent frustrations and share advice, leading to mutual problem-solving. Christiansen et al., (2018) studied an informal professional learning community created by three
IGTAs teaching second language (L2) academic writing. Engagement in the form of frequent meetings, as in Bhalla’s (2019) study, allowed the participants to assist one another in growing their expertise in the domain. Researchers found that participation in a professional learning community led to teacher agency and, in turn, to educator identity development.

**Enabling Structures.** Wenger (2004) later identified enabling structures in addition to the three modes of belonging as essential to CoP success. He wrote, “The most successful communities have always combined bottom-up enthusiasm and initiative from members with top-down encouragement from the organization” (p. 6). He named three enabling structures: sponsorship structure, support structure, and recognition structure. Sponsorship is the legitimization of the CoP and their work by encouraging their solutions for the classroom. Whoever is in charge of the GTAs assumes this sponsorship role and ensures that the work of the CoP is spread throughout the department. Supporting structures, again, require someone with authority, like the coordinator, to provide resources, time, and space for the community to continue its work. Finally, recognition structures involve authority figures celebrating contributions from both individual members and the entire CoP.

Gretton et al. (2017) found that enabling structures (i.e., investment in sponsorship, support, and recognition) played a significant role in supporting identity development alongside their CoP. The physics course instructors sponsored GTA activity within the CoP by asking their opinion about course structure and by applying the solutions they found to classroom problems. The GTA training facilitator further supported the CoP by providing context-rich problems and tools to facilitate group problem-solving. Recognition came in the form of “meaningful performance appraisals for TAs that recognize each TA’s success beyond his/her own classroom” (p. 383). Findings revealed that GTAs in the CoP interpreted the sponsorship
structures as respect for their ideas. They appreciated that their ideas and opinions were heard and valued. The GTAs liked support from caring course instructors but also noted the need for more context-specific training support beyond what was offered by the university’s Center for Teaching and Learning. While GTAs in the physics educators CoP were recognized for their efforts informally during their meetings through feedback, they desired more tangible gratification through monetary awards or nominations for other teaching awards.

Ghanem (2018) examined the identity development of eight German language GTAs. Similar to the role of enabling structures in Gretton et al.’s (2017) study, Ghanem found that “becoming a full member is not exclusively participation in the community, but also involves motivation, access to resources, and support” (p. 23). The study findings outlined some areas of support the administration provided, such as creating departmental expectations, ongoing workshops in foreign language education, ongoing discussions about identity, and teaching reflections. Crede and colleagues (2010), in their study of a CoP for engineering GTAs, found that the CoP must decrease enabling structures over time while steadily increasing GTA responsibility.

Since COVID-19, enabling structures from administration takes on new importance. It falls to the department administration to provide technology and online space for GTAs to form a Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP). McLaughlan (2021) described a cross-departmental virtual CoP (VCoP) using Facebook meant as a support to new IGTAs as they navigated teaching online. The VCoP allowed participants to feel more socially connected despite the physical distance created by the transition to online teaching. The study illustrates that the online space afforded discussion of shared problems, resources, and ideas.
**VCoP Design**

The studies above demonstrate a link between CoP and identity development through the three modes of belonging and enabling structures. Additionally, the studies with IGTAs (e.g., Bhalla, 2019; Christiansen et al., 2018) illustrate a strong connection between CoP and Intersectionality. Community of Practice theory and Intersectionality are equally needed to answer the call for IGTA identity development. However, design precedents, especially for VCoPs, are scarce in the literature, leaving a corresponding gap around how to design with these constructs in mind. Lantz-Andersson and colleagues (2018), through a systematic review of 52 studies on online teacher communities, report a significant lack of details on community design. They reported, “The empirical literature provides only a partial sense of the technological basis of formally-organized and informally developed online teacher communities – especially how different configurations of the platforms and applications being used might shape participants’ interactions and engagement (p. 312). S. U. Smith et al. (2017) examined 60 online or hybrid communities in higher education and professional development and found similar results. They reported that a description of epistemic and discursive practices occurring within the communities was largely missing from the literature they reviewed. The researchers asserted:

Future research focusing on online/blended learning communities through the lens of CoP theory should consider the identification and articulation of these structures and syntax (i.e., the epistemic and discursive practice) that are valued in specific disciplines and professions. Doing so will provide the beginnings of an understanding of how to better focus learners’ social interaction in online/blended learning environments to facilitate their professional socialization (p. 221).
S. U. Smith et al. (2017) further urged future research on VCoPs to engage in the complexity of the CoP theoretical constructs, such as the modes of belonging, rather than providing only cursory mentions of the theory as a framework for research.

**Design Cases as Precedent**

Compared to the empirical literature reviewed above, design cases are meant to create precedents to inform future designs (Boling, 2010; Svihla & Boling, 2020). Design cases provide rich description of not only design elements but also the decisions and actions required to choose those components to reach a specific goal (Howard, 2011). Indeed, it seems that design cases, rather than traditional research, are uniquely suited to answer S. U. Smith et al.'s (2017) call for ‘articulation of structures and syntax.’ In a review of the design case literature, however, few cases approach the design challenges of developing IGTA’s educator identity through an intentional community of practice. A few publications provide a curriculum development overview of professional development training for GTAs in physics (Alicea-Muñoz et al., 2021), life sciences (Beers et al., 2020; Thompson et al., 2020), and even composition (Schwaller & Miller-Cochran, 2020). These studies provided some insight into the challenges of designing for GTAs, such as coordinating schedules and encouraging participation despite their already overburdened workload (Thompson et al., 2020), but they did not lay a precedent for a VCoP as the training framework.

One design case stood out as designing a VCoP for graduate students completing their dissertation (Snyder et al., 2012). While the design case did not focus on IGTA educator identity, it did showcase the importance of a needs assessment to ground the design, member checking for initial design decisions, and peer debriefing on the design performance. Variations of these elements will be incorporated into the front-end analysis and design process of this design case.
as described in Chapter 3 and 4. Additionally, the case highlighted salient elements of the design that supported their goal of creating a greater sense of connection between the faculty and students and among the students. For example, the designers noted how photos of the students accompanying discussion posts facilitated greater communication and connection. They also found that when they used the VCoP to spotlight individual student achievements, the other students celebrated their success with congratulatory posts. This design element perhaps provides one method of providing recognition to GTAs, as Gretton et al. (2017) reported was needed as an additional enabling structure outside of the main CoP design.

Summary

IGTAs in U.S.-based universities remain vulnerable to linguistic and cultural discrimination. Within a PWI, their multiply-oppressed social identities intersect and interfere with their educator identity development. Intersectionality identifies the root of these challenges and explains how valuing and inclusion of IGTAs’ salient social identities can lead to empowerment. Intersectionality theory alone; however, does not fully address the needs of developing a professional development space to support new educator identity. CoPs are specially equipped to support the identity development of IGTAs through positive social interactions structured around the three modes of belonging and bolstered by enabling structures. The review of literature demonstrated that CoPs provide professional development spaces that can positively influence educator identity of GTAs (Bhalla, 2019; Christiansen et al., 2018; Crede et al., 2010; Ghanem, 2018; Gretton et al., 2017). Empirical studies showed how application of Wenger’s (1998) three modes of belonging (i.e., engagement, imagination, alignment) created an architecture around which to build a CoP for identity development. Increased levels of engagement can influence the level of educator identity felt by GTAs and
IGTAs (Bhalla, 2019; Gretton et al., 2017) and increased imagination can lead to greater alignment with domain best practices (Gretton et al., 2017). Further, CoP studies showcased how the presence of enabling structures (i.e., sponsorship, support, recognition) provided top-down support to further fortify CoP success. Enabling structures from department administration should feature more heavily at the beginning of the CoP and decrease over time as GTA and IGTA responsibilities increase (Crede et al., 2010).

As VCoPs for IGTAs become increasingly popular in the aftermath of the emergency transition to remote teaching, enabling structures take on extra importance to recreate online spaces for community practice (Grunspan et al., 2021; McLaughlan, 2021). However, the lack of description about VCoP design and accompanying design decisions creates a gap in the literature (Lantz-Andersson et al., 2018; S. U. Smith et al., 2017). Design cases can fill this gap with their aim to provide thick, rich detail of design moves to set precedent for future designs (Boling, 2010). Design cases similarly focused on GTAs have already illuminated some specific challenges related to the population (Thompson et al., 2020) as well as some design features that support effective VCoPs (Snyder et al., 2012). The design case discussed here will extend this work by highlighting the design tensions and decisions experienced while designing a VCoP for developing educator identity in IGTAs teaching L2 composition.
CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXT

In this chapter, I will situate this design case within a context to further illuminate the motivations for the design (Howard, 2014; K. M. Smith, 2010). The theoretical frameworks of Intersectionality and Community of Practice discussed in Chapter 2 act as one guidepost for the design, providing parameters for the types of activities and dialogue that should be systematically woven throughout the project. The design, however, must also heavily reflect the specific learners and the learner context. A true reflection of needs and limitations unique to a context is discovered through a thorough front-end analysis (Dick et al., 2015). Svihla and Boling (2020) described front-end analytical work as a way for designers to close the distance between themselves and the design. It serves to build empathy for the target learners' needs by more deeply understanding the problem from their perspective. Trivializing the distance between the designer and the target learner can lead to multiple reframings of the problem during the design process (Svihla & Boling, 2020).

As the lead designer, I acknowledged that the distance between myself and the international graduate teaching assistants (IGTAs) in the English as a Second Language Composition (ESLC) Program was substantial. While I taught second language (L2) writing in higher education settings (2009-2010) and even taught briefly in the specific setting of this design case (e.g., ESL Programs 2013-2014), I lived those experiences as an adjunct faculty without the stresses of being a GTA who is juggling multiple identities. Furthermore, as a native speaker of English born and raised in the United States, my linguistic and cultural identity was privileged. Therefore, to close the distance, I chose to conduct an extensive front-end analysis involving those closest to the problem of practice, the ESL Program Director, the GTA Coordinator, several GTA training subject matter experts (SMEs) housed within different
colleges and departments around the university, and current and former GTAs, domestic and international, from the ESLC Program. This chapter will discuss the results of these conversations and will conclude with design implications for the ESLC Program orientation.

While the front-end analysis builds trustworthiness through data triangulation as well as prolonged engagement with those impacted by the design (S. U. Smith et al., 2017), there were a few risks inherent in the data collection and analysis. One risk to trustworthiness was my inability to gather data directly from the primary target population: new IGTAs to the ESLC Program (Dick & Carey, 1977). At the time of the front-end analysis (i.e., Fall 2020-Spring 2021), ESLC Programs did not hire any new GTAs, domestic or international, as a result of a hiring freeze implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. The GTAs identified for this study were prompted to answer questions from the point of view of a new GTA to lessen the impact of this threat. Having access to veteran GTAs, however, afforded me the opportunity to ask questions about their entire professional development journey as a GTA. As educator professional development is never finished, this data helped me to consider the big picture in the design. Another potential threat to the trustworthiness of the front-end analysis results was the lack of investigator triangulation (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). As the lead investigator and designer, I worked alone to code and analyze the data, though I shared the de-identified results via peer debriefing with the GTA Coordinator to achieve rigor through multiple perspectives (K. M. Smith, 2010). To further mitigate this risk, I conducted a final member-checking focus group in April 2021 to both confirm accurate representation of GTAs’ interview responses and receive feedback on the initial orientation topics and objectives.
Front-End Analysis

A front-end analysis following the Dick and Carey model of systematic instructional design was used to illuminate the context of this design case (Dick et al., 2015; Dick & Carey, 1977). After determining that the problem can be resolved with instruction, the front-end analysis encompasses a needs assessment, learner analysis, and context analysis to determine instructional goals to be met by the design (see Figure 2). A needs assessment identifies the gap between the current and desired status of the target learners (Dick et al., 2015). In this design case, the needs assessment illuminated what skills, knowledge, and attitudes are essential for new GTAs to be successful in their roles as instructors in the ESLC Program. Identification of needs is crucial to the design, but it is not the complete story. Simultaneous analysis of the learner and the context provides a wholistic understanding of any factors which limit the design (Dick et al., 2015). The learner analysis seeks out the target learners’ preferences for and attitudes toward training. The context analysis considers the environment in which the learners will learn and perform their new skills, including resources and limitations. It is important to note that for this design case, the data for all three areas (i.e., needs assessment, learner analysis, context analysis) were derived from the same data collection methods as discussed in the next section. The next sections describe the data collection methods, participants and procedures, and data analysis involved in the front-end analysis. This is followed by a detailed examination of themes that emerged from the needs assessment, learner analysis, and context analysis to inform the design. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the resulting instructional goals and implications for the design.
Data collection covered a roughly four-month period from December 2020 to early April 2021 (see Figure 3). Data collection followed IRB approval in November 2020 (see Appendix A). The research site university provided permission for the study contingent upon IRB approval from the degree-granting university (see Appendix B). Data were collected from multiple sources and through prolonged engagement with those most impacted by the design to achieve triangulation and improve the design case rigor and trustworthiness (K. M. Smith, 2010). Thorough data collection avoids wasting resources on building activities that do not solve problems and, worse, could discourage learners (Dick & Carey, 1977). Methods used to collect data for a front-end analysis can vary widely from surveys, observation, and interviews, but Dick
and colleagues (2015) noted that qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups provide greater insight. Therefore, data for the needs assessment, learner analysis, and context analysis were collected using semi-structured interviews and a member-checking focus group to provide a rich, detailed understanding of participant experiences.

**Figure 3**

*Timeline for Front-End Analysis Data Collection*

**Participants and Procedures**

I identified participants who could supply pertinent information to the front-end analysis, including key stakeholders and subject matter experts (SMEs). The ESLC Program, as one branch of ESL Programs, is nested within the Department of Teaching and Learning (T&L) in the college of education at the research site university. Therefore, the T&L department chair assigned two stakeholders to the project: the ESL Programs Director and the GTA Coordinator. Recruitment of front-end analysis participants was assisted by the GTA Coordinator who had
existing relationships with both SMEs and GTAs and could serve as gatekeeper (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Recruitment emails and consent forms for each group can be reviewed in Appendix C and D, respectively. The following section describes the participants along with procedures for how and what data were collected from each individual or group.

**ESL Program Director.** The ESL Programs Director was a past ESLC Program Coordinator and was an IGTA in the program before that. Because of his experience as an IGTA, I invited the director to support the project by participating in a pilot interview in October 2020. The pilot allowed me to test my interview protocol for other GTAs and refine any questions according to his feedback (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). I met with the ESL Director again in February to discuss preliminary front-end analysis results.

**GTA Coordinator.** The GTA Coordinator was identified by the department chair and the ESL Director as the person in charge of GTA professional development and as the future instructor of GTA training. She, therefore, served as the design project supervisor and main point of contact. The GTA Coordinator has held numerous roles in ESL Programs since 2004 as a professor, course coordinator, and interim director. Before graduating with her doctorate in 2004, she was also a GTA in the ESLC Program for nearly ten years. The coordinator and I made up the central design team, her experiences adding a critical perspective to the design (Howard, 2011, 2014). We met weekly for approximately eleven months (i.e., September 2020 to July 2021) to discuss the front-end analysis and resulting design decisions. Additionally, I interviewed her at the end of November 2020 as part of the front-end analysis. As GTA Coordinator, she met with the GTAs weekly and was intimately familiar with their duties and
responsibilities. Her interview lasted 60 minutes and was conducted and recorded using Zoom. See Appendix E for the entire semi-structured interview protocol.

Subject Matter Experts. Next, I invited several SMEs to consult on the development of a GTA orientation. The SMEs each possessed valuable insight into providing professional development for GTAs in their respective contexts (See Table 1). Interviews with SMEs were intended to reinforce the identified needs for GTAs and to identify university-specific resources. Additionally, each SME provided a detailed description of their departments’ model of GTA professional development along with its advantages and disadvantages. Each SME’s semi-structured interview lasted 45-60 minutes, though two interviews required follow-up sessions to cover all questions. All interviews were conducted and recorded over Zoom. The SME interview protocols can be seen in Appendix F. SMEs will be referred to by the participant letter as indicated in Table 1 to protect their confidentiality.

Table 1

List of Subject Matter Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Letter</th>
<th>University Department or Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning (formerly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>First Year Writing Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Writing Across the Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Center for Life Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Introduction to Psychology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Former and Current GTAs.** Since ESLC Program GTAs, both international and domestic, are the ultimate recipients of the orientation, I needed to identify and incorporate their voices. The college of education hires 10-12 GTAs each year for the ESLC Program, the majority of which are international graduate students. Therefore, while this design is specifically focused on supporting the educator identity development of IGTAs, domestic GTAs are included as they will also participate in and benefit from the orientation as a VCoP. For this reason, the data reported in the needs assessment will be attributed to “GTAs,” meaning generically domestic and international. Quotes will only be specifically attributed to IGTAs if the distinction is important to understanding the data or emergent theme.

I gathered initial front-end analysis data from GTAs through semi-structured interviews. I interviewed three former ESLC Program IGTAs, four current domestic GTAs, and four current IGTAs (see Table 2). GTAs will be referred to by the participant number as indicated in Table 2 to protect their confidentiality. The interview questions were developed to delve deeply into aspects of their experiences and perceived needs. The interview protocols were slightly different for former and current GTAs, reflecting changes based on the experiences expressed by the former GTAs, who were interviewed first. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was conducted and recorded using Zoom. The interview protocols for former and current GTAs can be seen in Appendix G and H respectively.
Finally, a focus group was chosen for member-checking as it is a recognized way to “verify data gathered from other methods” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 376). Four participants (i.e., participant numbers 7, 8, 9, and 11 from Table 2) of the semi-structured interviews participated in the April 3, 2021 focus group. The focus group was meant to confirm that the data gathered from the GTA interviews were accurately captured to best influence the design case. Therefore, the focus group consisted of questions about the major themes that emerged from the front-end analysis as well as their consequent design implications. The focus
group was conducted and recorded on Zoom and took approximately 90 minutes. The focus group protocol can be seen in Appendix I.

**Data Analysis**

Data from all front-end analysis participants were analyzed to determine themes central to the needs assessment, learner analysis, and context analysis. The interview data from the GTA Coordinator, SMEs, and GTA interviews were analyzed using the qualitative method of constant comparison (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In the constant comparison method, data are continuously compared back to emerging themes until a saturation point is reached in which no more themes emerge (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). First, all interview data were transcribed using the transcription software Temi.com or Otter.ai. Then, each interview transcript was compared to the original audio recording to check for accuracy. Next, all data were divided into meaningful units, or paragraphs focused on one topic only, within Excel spreadsheets for ease of comparison (Saldana, 2021).

**Needs Assessment**

The needs assessment data are analyzed to identify instructional goals related to the “new information and skills you want learners to have mastered when they have completed your instruction” (Dick et al., 2015, p. 6). Interviews with the GTA Coordinator, several GTA training SMEs, and the GTAs themselves helped to paint a picture of the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that new GTAs need to possess when they start teaching in the ESLC program. Seven themes, as well as several subthemes, emerged for the present design: L2 Writing Best Practices, Department Big Picture, Course Design, Student Profiles, Teaching Modalities, Teaching Community, and Non-Native Speaker of English Self-Efficacy and Bias (see Table 3).
Table 3

*Seven Needs Assessment Themes and Subthemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L2 Writing Best Practices</td>
<td>• Student-centered pedagogy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workshop (multi-draft) approach</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunity to show expertise from course work and external training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Big Picture</td>
<td>• The ‘Business’ of ESLC Programs (e.g., policies, practicalities, procedures, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Curriculum and student trajectory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Student course placement process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Design</td>
<td>• Course components (e.g., assignments, sequence, assessments)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Course delivery (e.g., instructional activities)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Options to customize course tools/artifacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Profiles</td>
<td>• General student population knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Education and Linguistic background of students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cultural challenges students face (e.g., academic dishonesty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Modality</td>
<td>• Logistics of remote teaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge of LMS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Preparation for interaction with students in online modalities (e.g., communication, building rapport, gathering feedback)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Community</td>
<td>• Productive value (e.g., sharing tips, materials, cultural knowledge)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Emotional value (e.g., ‘teacher room talk’, avoiding isolation)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Hurdles (e.g., impostor syndrome competitiveness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Native Speaker of English Self-Efficacy and Bias</td>
<td>• Academic language self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible bias and discrimination from students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Space for embracing cultural and linguistic identity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Linguistic identity as instructional strength</td>
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**L2 Writing Best Practices.** When asked to rank what knowledge, skill, or attitude was most important for new GTAs to possess at the start of the semester, the GTA Coordinator stated, “Pedagogy first.” ESLC Program adheres to the latest L2 writing theory and pedagogies, so all the instructors must align with evidence-based best practices in their classroom. As research evolves, approaches to teaching have shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered.
Understanding the shift toward student-directed learning is central to understanding the ESLC Program curriculum and for GTAs aligning their classroom practices. The coordinator expounded:

These things aren't haphazard. [...] You have to know what research says about successful student writing. I mean, like the research finding that students write better when they're in full control is significant. And it's important for GTAs to get a foundation in that so that they understand why we've done the course this way. And if they want to make improvements, they kind of know what to suggest that's in line, you know, with how we're thinking.

The shift in focus has meant a move away from teaching practices that GTAs may have experienced as a teacher in another context. One GTA, for example, called his transition from his previous U.S. university context as “a big jump.” He continued, “I was teaching, it was all very genre-oriented writing, but then I came to [university name], and it was not [...]. It was a difficult transition for me” (11). IGTA's may feel the change more acutely. The GTA Coordinator described student-centered learning as “a very Western kind of approach to pedagogy,” meaning that “teachers from different countries who may have come from very, very teacher-centered pedagogies, this requires learning for them.” ESLC Programs advocates for the writing process, or workshop approach in their courses. One IGTA with teaching experience in France and the Middle East found the writing process novel, characterizing it as having “more focus on the outlining, the multi drafts, the feedback, and how to take up the feedback, and how we negotiate the feedback” (5). With multiple drafts, feedback prioritizes meaning-making and continuous improvement over perfect grammar. Several GTAs, both international and domestic, found this to be an adjustment. One IGTA recalled moving from harshly grading students’ first drafts.
during her first semester to “everyone gets a perfect score for their first draft, as long as they write, so that they don't have to worry about making mistakes” (1). A domestic GTA who taught in an international school in China that prepared students for admission into U.S. Ivy League schools was expected to mark every mistake on students’ papers. She reflected on how her transition to the ESLC Programs would have been easier if the expectations about grading and feedback were more explicit from the beginning to help her adjust her style.

If you're a 'grade everything for grammar,' then like people should know that. Like, I have no idea about [the university's] policies on this. Like, do you want it to be standardized across ESL Composition or do you leave that up to me? I think those kind of expectations [are needed]. So first finding out the background of people, how they would do it. And second, like informing people of maybe expectations (6).

Ideally, GTAs would come into their first semester of teaching in the ESLC Program with knowledge of the writing process approach and the student-centered theories of learning that undergird it. The actual situation, however, is that many GTAs come from teaching backgrounds that are not aligned with this approach and find that they must adjust slowly over their semesters of teaching in the program. GTAs may even resist change, feeling that their prior teaching experiences are undervalued. The SME from the psychology department handled this resistance by honoring her GTAs’ teaching experiences while simultaneously setting clear expectations and providing opportunities for their contributions. The SME explained:

I tried to honor people's teaching experiences, but it is part of just setting expectations for like, this is what we're going to do in our team. And these are our values. [...] And just saying, 'hey, this may be new.' Just acknowledging what things may be new or
challenging. And then letting them leverage their own... finding opportunities for them to leverage their expertise with one another (F).

As GTAs in the ESLC Program progress, there are many opportunities for them to gain teaching expertise that they can share. Very often the GTAs are themselves students in L2 writing methods courses where they explore and even directly participate in L2 writing research. The GTA Coordinator acknowledged that GTAs in the ESLC Program are “highly valued” because the knowledge they gain from these courses can keep the department abreast of the latest best practices in L2 writing instruction. For example, after one GTA took a class on source-based writing called Transfer in Second Language Context, she remarked how she created materials and activities that incorporated more reading to support academic, source-based writing. Others similarly appreciated directly transferring cutting-edge teaching methods like dialogic teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy into their classrooms. Another GTA remarked that the course she took on culturally relevant pedagogy “really informed how I kind of revised the curriculum” (4). These external resources, whether courses or workshops, help GTAs to gradually transform their teaching methods to align with best practices. A summer orientation could perhaps accelerate this process through explicit awareness building of these practices and pointing GTAs toward these resources. GTA training should be careful, however, to avoid overlap with the existing courses, as one focus group participant pointed out:

Most of the GTAs are in Foreign Second and Multilingual Language Education program. And in this program, we have an L2 writing class offered. […] Most of them, you know, focus on theory and practice. So, I just wonder, like, if there's a lot of overlap between that course and this, you know, training. I'm not sure like how helpful it will be. I mean, it
will be helpful, but, you know, GTAs it might feel like it wastes their time since there's already an L2 writing course (7).

There is a clear need for new GTAs to find alignment with best practices in L2 writing teaching. This transition, however, is a gradual one as GTAs reconcile new practices with their past experiences and new inputs from courses and workshops. The orientation should foster the transition by explicitly naming and demonstrating expectations for practices within the department and by pointing GTAs toward external resources that can provide the “why” behind the “what.”

**Department Big Picture.** While it is clearly important for GTAs to be situated within the domain of L2 writing, it is equally important that they understand their duties and responsibilities as an educator within the context of ESL Programs at the university. GTAs must navigate the liminality of being both a doctoral student and an employee of the department. The SME from the First Year Writing program mitigates this issue by having one “business-oriented” section for GTA orientation. He explained that “even if people had already been here as grad students, their role was shifting to this really, kind of, sometimes confusing space of being both a student and an employee of the university” (C). The ESL Director exemplified this statement when reflecting on his first semester as a GTA:

So as an [new] instructor, I was mostly listening and then just kind of trying to understand the business, like, quote-unquote, the business of teaching ESL composition. You know, because in addition to the pedagogy and the teaching itself, there's the administrative stuff. You got to grade this by this time, submit this, you know. For example, at the time we were allowing students to move up to the next level based on the diagnostic exam. So how do you do all that?
The GTA Coordinator also recognized this need for providing new GTAs with explicit information about “absentee policies, plagiarism policies, and all that.” GTAs need to understand these policies to remain compliant but also because they will field questions from their students. GTAs are on the front lines in their classrooms, so students will approach them first with questions not necessarily related to the course. For example, one GTA requested that an orientation provide some ‘practicalities’ to help her field student questions about how their grade is factored into their grade point average or how often they can repeat the course if they fail. She stated, “I don’t really know those practical things […] I usually direct those questions to [the GTA coordinator]. So maybe if we could just have a little more big picture” (4).

A big picture of the department would also include a description of the curriculum, including the scope and sequencing of the courses and students’ trajectory through them. All of the courses are designed to develop academic writing skills and prepare students for writing they will encounter in their core academic courses. GTAs knew that connecting the writing skills practiced in ESL Program courses to the writing students would need to do in the core academic courses was key to sparking student motivation. Consequently, GTAs found that students need to be told the relevance of the courses because they may not see it in their first semester or first year.

The ESLC Program has four main courses where GTAs can serve as instructor of record (IoR), two for undergraduate international students (i.e., 1901 and 1902), and two for graduate international students (i.e., 5901 and 5902). New GTAs are most likely to teach 1902 because it has the largest enrollment; however, they still need to understand what is taught before and after their course to best serve their students in their writing journey. One GTA described the challenge of “making sure that your course does not overlap with someone else's course. […] We
still have students who graduate from one level to the next, and we have to somehow accommodate that reality” (11). Even when students finish 1902 as undergraduates, they will have to take English 1110 as part of their general education requirements, so GTAs need to be mindful of the English 1110 course in the First Year Writing department as well. One GTA remarked, “Because students were like, ‘Oh, ESL, I don't really see any points of learning it and so on. But I thought if I can make better connections between ESL and First Year Writing course, then I can convince my students more” (1). The ESL Director urged GTAs to talk with administrators to better understand the courses and course sequencing.

Talk with the coordinator, the curriculum coordinator, and also talk to the director of the program. […] I talked to the director, and it helped me understand kind of like the whole structure of the program. You know, because when you're teaching one course and you work with your coordinator, that's good, but you also need to know what is next in the sequence.

GTAs, as the only instructor of the course, must also understand how students are placed within their courses. International students admitted to the university most likely have to take an English Composition placement exam to determine if they require additional academic writing support (i.e., in one of the ESLC Program courses) or if they can proceed directly to their other courses. The composition placement exam supersedes scores that students received from an international standardized language assessment like the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam. This can be upsetting for students who achieve a high score on the TOEFL but are placed in ESLC Program courses. They may view ESLC Program courses as remedial and feel as if they are being punished. One GTA warned that “the punitive perspective is so much dominant in ESL courses” (3), so instructors should guard against it. Another GTA agreed
noting, “They [students] see ESL as remedial; maybe they're weak. There is a lot of work we need to do to educate our students that ESL does not mean they are weak, or they are bad” (5).

The GTAs will very likely hear these complaints at the beginning of the semester right after placement and, being new to the program themselves, struggle to know how to respond. Students may complain to the GTAs or ask for them to advocate for a higher placement. GTAs need to understand the placement exam and know how to handle such inquiries from students. Veteran GTAs have learned that if they cannot advocate for a higher placement, they can accommodate students in other ways. For example, one GTA encountered two graduate students from Nigeria where English is widely known and an official language, but their placement scores placed them in an ESLC Program course. When confronted by the students, the GTA was able to reframe the course from a punishment to a helpful service. He told them, “I know you're writing things; you're in grad school. Just think of me as someone who's willing to help you improve your writing” (11). The GTA acknowledged their feelings and promised to make the course worth their while by supporting their writing in other courses. How GTAs approach students is critical to their ultimate experience in the classroom. As another GTA put it, “just because a student doesn’t want to be there, doesn’t mean that they can’t learn” (6).

New GTAs need to understand the department big picture and their place within that picture. An orientation should incorporate information about their duties and responsibilities as employees, the department courses, and how their students come to be in ESLC Program courses.

Course design. GTAs need to know about the specific course or courses they will be teaching. They need to know the course objectives, activities, and assignments to best know how to support student learning. The SME in First Year Writing recognized that his GTAs have
diverse teaching experiences coming into his program, but the one thing they all have in common is that none of them have taught his department’s specific class (i.e., English 1110) before. He explained that “there are things that everyone needs to learn about the sequence of assignments, about the philosophy behind the sequence of assignments, like why we teach the class this way” (C). GTAs in the ESLC Program are provided with a syllabus and a pre-prepared online course environment on the LMS Canvas that provide foundational knowledge about the course, textbook, and assignments. However, due to scheduling limitations, GTAs often receive these materials as little as a week before they teach. The GTA Coordinator explained:

We welcome them in and say, "Okay, here's what you're teaching." So, they have to hit the ground running. And because of the difficulties of scheduling, […] we can't set the schedule until [course placement] assessments are done, and we know how many sections, and then we know who's going to teach what. So GTAs get the information about what they're going to be teaching for the first time, like, a week before classes start.

That's horrible.

The coordinator works to mitigate the lack of preparation time by conducting weekly course meetings. The course meetings start the first week of the semester and last about one hour each week. Within the course meetings, the GTA Coordinator and the GTAs teaching that course discuss any issues that have arisen and prepare for upcoming course content, activities, and assignments. The weekly course meetings successfully provide just-in-time support for the GTAs, but there is not enough time for GTAs to explore in-depth the course goals and design. Ideally, GTAs would be equipped with this knowledge and understanding before the start of the semester so that they can confidently answer questions about the course on day one. In particular, GTAs expressed a desire to understand the sequencing of assignments, where students
might run into trouble, and the best approach to assess student work. One lamented, “I spent a lot of time trying to figure out the goals and how each component worked within the course” (8). GTAs want more knowledge of the course, especially where students may have trouble. Another GTA summed it up the need this way:

I think it's 100% important that we take one to two hours to be like ‘here's questions that I know students are going to ask. […] This is where students messed up last time on the grammar quiz. Like, keep this in mind.’ I like to be proactive instead of reactive, right? And so, I think that just sets the whole thing up (6).

Beyond understanding course components, some GTAs, especially those with less teaching experience, expressed apprehension about how to teach the content. One GTA had a master’s in TESOL from a U.S. university but had never taught L2 composition. She confessed that despite knowing the topic for each week, she had to “design all kinds of like, little activities to fill up the time of class session and also to help students understand different concepts.” She continued, “To be honest, I was a little bit challenged in that sense (7).” Another GTA similarly explained, “I took the full instructional responsibilities without knowing how to […] actually [do it]. Even though I had the syllabus, I had the weekly meetings, I really needed someone to help me you know going through this process” (2).

GTAs were equally concerned with having a strong teacher presence. They wanted to feel confident about how they would deliver course instruction, particularly how they would customize the classroom activities to match their individual teaching styles. Through creating instructor videos, adapting assignments, and writing their own materials and assessments, they could gain ownership over the course. The SME from Psychology explained that over the summer GTAs are “preparing their lecture outlines, their lesson plans, and they're getting
feedback on all of that from one another and from the senior coordinator and me” (G). Similarly, the GTAs in First Year Writing write their syllabus and get to choose a theme on which to base their course. ESLC Composition GTAs will realistically never have the time to develop their syllabus with such a tight scheduling timeframe, but some suggested that having direct access to someone who did design course components could help them better understand how they might adapt the materials for their own classroom. One GTA imagined a course tour:

In the beginning, I want to walk through the process - who designed the rubric and evaluation system - and think about at some point, what do I want to keep? What do I want to exclude? Something like that. And such discussion with some expert or someone who is experienced might be helpful for me to see what other aspects I need. […] So, it is hard to make visible everything in one page at the first time, but talking with someone who knows much better than me might help me see something in advance, right (3)?

The GTA Coordinator, the SMEs, and the GTAs all recognize a need for greater familiarity with the course design before day one of the semester. The current model of support through weekly course meetings is insufficient to help GTAs develop confidence and ownership over the courses they must teach. Having time and space to learn about the course design before the semester would help GTAs to anticipate student problems and prepare solutions.

**Student Profiles.** As discussed in the Department Big Picture section, GTAs need to understand their students’ trajectory of learning and use of academic writing throughout their time at the university. The front-end analysis data revealed that understanding their students’ educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, can also prepare GTAs for the classroom. The SME from the Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning asserted that “teaching is really about facilitating student learning. And I think putting the focus on your students more and less on
yourself can alleviate some anxiety.” While it is impossible to know all details about individual students before the start of the semester, having an idea of an ESLC Program generic student profile can prepare GTAs with, as the GTA Coordinator noted, “the wisdom of how to respond, how to interact, how to do things with students.”

Most GTAs with teaching experience commented that the student population in the ESLC Program courses was markedly different than in past teaching positions. Namely, they found the ESLC Program classrooms to be homogenous with a heavy concentration of students from China. This shift in classroom composition impacted the teaching and learning dynamic. Some felt implicit anxiety at facing the unknown. One GTA explained, “A lot of my students were Spanish speaking and Arabic speaking. But when I came to [university name] - and still now - a lot of them come from mainland China. And that change of demographic also added to the anxiety, I suppose” (9). Other GTAs articulated how the change in student demographics explicitly impacted their teaching. For example, one GTA described being able to leverage her students’ diversity in her previous classrooms:

I had a lot more diversity of cultures and previous experiences, which I think does affect the teaching a little bit. Because I used to be able to do a lot of like, have students talk about their different cultural experiences and learn from each other (4).

Another GTA mentioned the impact of her students’ shared first language (L1) on classroom management:

In many cases, I was the only non-Chinese in the class. So that was a big surprise. And I had to think about how to teach and also manage the classroom because all students share their L1. So, you know, they tend to speak Chinese. So that was one thing that I had to
kind of consider more than worrying about how to teach composition course because I
kind of knew what to do (1).

GTAs also wished they knew more about their students’ educational background, in
particular, their previous language teaching and learning experiences. Several GTAs delineated a
clash between Chinese students’ expectations of a teacher-centered classroom and the ESLC
Program student-centered approach. One GTA explained:

I think they come from learning environments where the teacher was kind of seen as an
authority. So, they expect most the time to be lecture, which is something I hate to do.
And I expect from them to engage in the conversation, dialogue, and interact in small
groups... in pairs, and engage in classroom discussions. So, if I knew what was it like,
learning English in their home countries, I would prepare my lessons accordingly (5).

Other GTAs echoed trying to adapt to their students’ expectations on some level. For
example, one GTA who had experience teaching in China, remarked that he always wore a coat
and tie to class because “in China, you communicate authority by dressing to status” (11).
Simultaneously, there was an acknowledgment that not all Chinese students had authoritative
teaching and learning experiences. The same GTA warned:

And I think a key part of that is de-homogenizing the Chinese students, and it goes for
everybody, too. But obviously, there's a lot of Chinese students and China is extremely
diverse. And it's easy to assume, oh, well, they're all atheist communists, and they're all
from Beijing. And they all speak Mandarin [...] We have to talk to them (11).

Veteran GTAs learned the value of understanding the prevailing teaching style in China, but they
emphasized the need to be on the lookout for exceptions to the rule even within the Chinese
student population.
GTAs found that they must also resist the temptation to assume their students know little of English language grammar and rules. Most ESLC Program students had extensive English language training in their home country that needed to be acknowledged. One GTA admitted, “They know all the rules. They know more rules than I can even think of or list. So, that changed the way I dealt with students naturally” (11). Some GTAs even reported receiving pushback from their Chinese students about particular language points that did not match with what they were previously taught. A GTA remembered her students arguing that “they already learned American academic writing styles” because they graduated from international schools. After researching international schools in China, however, she found many differences with academic writing in U.S. universities. She reported, “So I have to assure my students that there is no such right or wrong in academic writing style. You have to just do the context for wherever you are going to be” (10).

Despite having spent much time learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), GTAs found that it did not prepare their students for using language in the U.S. context. After observing his students in their academic courses, a GTA discovered, “They had a very difficult time. I felt like even if they knew as much as their American classmates, they had a very difficult time presenting that fact” (11). This phenomenon was recorded over and over in the data. One GTA reported, “They [students] tell me and I know that they don’t have enough opportunities to use English in other classes. So, our classes become even more important” (5). Similarly, another GTA stated:

They [students] said this was the only class that they talked […] And I really think that that even in itself was perhaps even more instrumental in their journey than even what
they learned in the classes. That they had a safe community where they develop their skills, but it was the only class where they were of the majority” (4).

ESLC Program students are often silenced by their language insecurities and their lack of familiarity with U.S. classroom culture. A SME from the Drake Institute of Teaching and Learning asserted that international students need explicit instruction about “when a [domestic] student does x, what do they mean?” (A). GTAs found this to be particularly true for their undergraduate students because “they're not really interested in writing, but more interested in the cultural differences and try to learn about it in the course, throughout the course” (10). The ESLC Program courses are a space “for students to discover how it is like to study in America” (5). GTAs may be unaccustomed to focusing on the cultural needs of their students. As one GTA expounded:

I think because we're teaching international students, they're from different cultural backgrounds. So how to teach those students from different cultural backgrounds is also essential, I think. And a lot of times, maybe I'm not, like fully aware of my students' cultural needs. I mean, I focus on their linguistic needs, for sure. But sometimes they need more like cultural needs or social needs. But those are not like, [explicitly] addressed in any kind of like L2 writing class (7).

Several GTAs highlighted plagiarism as an area that required explicit explanation in their classrooms. In the U.S. university context, plagiarism is a very serious offense that can result in a student’s expulsion from the university. Both the GTAs and ESLC Program students may have experienced academic culture with a very different view of plagiarism. Chinese culture, for example, values imitation in writing as a way to gain competency, with less emphasis on attribution than is seen in Western cultures (Shel, 2005). In contrast, the United States’ strict
views on plagiarism stem from intellectual property protections, likening imitation to stealing property (Bloch, 2007). There is a danger of misinterpreting students’ attempts at showing writing strength through a Western lens and punishing without explanation or mercy. For this reason, the GTA Coordinator coaches GTAs to approach plagiarism from students as “a developmental process instead of intentional mistakes” (1). IGTAs especially expressed a desire to understand the values of academic integrity underlying the university’s academic misconduct policies and consequences. One IGTAs summarized the need this way:

Many students, including international students, made a mistake because they were not fully aware of academic misconduct policy and how it is consequential to their learning. And I think it can be applied to my own learning as well. […] So as an international GTA, I would appreciate knowing and discussing what counts as academic conduct, rather than ‘this is a rule, if you violate, then the university is going to punish you.’ Rather than that, what is considered as academically appropriate? What is academic integrity? How we can apply that norm to help our students understand what is a good writing, what is a bad writing, and why this is valuable to our community? Things like that” (3).

Understanding ESLC Program students is a complex process, as they are individually influenced by their formative teaching and learning experiences in their home countries. GTAs can make some preparation before day one by having a basic student profile of the students in their courses and anticipating the linguistic and cultural problems they may encounter. Having this knowledge can support GTAs in building a safe, welcoming environment for their students who are navigating an often-brand-new academic culture.
**Teaching Modality.** The ESLC Program classes were migrated into fully online spaces following the COVID-19 pandemic, but several of the courses had been offered online prior to the pandemic as well. At the time of this design case, the GTAs interviewed had experienced teaching both online and face-to-face modalities since working in the department. Most of the GTAs interviewed expressed that teaching online was a new experience for them. One GTA posited, “The assumption that the teachers [GTAs] have teaching experience is probably a safe one, but assuming they have teaching experience online is probably not a safe one” (11). Indeed, though the majority of the participants indicated that they felt confident in teaching online toward the end of their tenure, this lack of experience made GTAs apprehensive, and they recounted several challenges that new GTAs should be prepared to handle.

The most prominent adjustment to online courses was handling the logistics of remote student participation. The GTA Coordinator reported that in Autumn 2020, 61% of students took courses from their home country with 57% of that number being in China. This arrangement had implications for the technology and software that the GTAs can use since China places strict regulations on web browsers, video platforms, and communication channels. Technology limitations meant challenges to collaboration and communication. For example, because China blocks all Google tools, GTAs had to simultaneously learn and teach their students how to use Microsoft tools (i.e., OneDrive). One GTA recounted, “The first assignment was supposed to be collaborative, and our students, most of them are still in China, so it was a challenge to have them collaborate” (5). Another GTA shared a similar experience with email:

> Email is not familiar with a lot of students like that. I know when I taught in Korea, just email is not a common form of communication in their society. And I think China, from what I’ve heard, is similar so... But email is like our life at the American university,
especially during the pandemic. So, just trying to figure out how can I communicate with them (4).

Some GTAs reported having the opposite problem: being inundated by emails from students who did not have regular channels to ask questions as they would in a face-to-face classroom. To combat the influx of emails, GTAs learned to implement virtual office hours over Zoom where “anyone can come at any time” (6) to ask questions. Regular virtual office hours shifted the responsibility to the students rather than the GTA having to return 50 emails a day. Though a great solution, GTAs still struggled to learn the “nitty gritties” (4) of how to use Zoom and finding a time that worked for most of their students. GTAs had to consider what tools they could use to span across several time zones and technology limitations to support synchronous and asynchronous learning in the courses.

One major technological tool GTAs have at their disposal is the LMS Canvas, which is rebranded as CarmenCanvas for the university. As mentioned, the GTA Coordinator prepares each GTA’s CarmenCanvas course shell before the start of the semester, but it is imperative that GTAs are familiar with the space and feel comfortable using the tools to support learning. The CarmenCanvas shells are a good space for GTAs to engage their students through weekly instructor videos, discussion boards, and assignments. CarmenCanvas is so central to their online teaching, GTAs requested focused training as part of orientation. One GTA felt that “guiding people through CarmenCanvas would be a really good idea.” He continued, “I'm still figuring out the whole CarmenCanvas platform because that's super important to teaching. And it takes a while” (11). GTAs need a thorough tour of CarmenCanvas before classes start so that they are prepared to guide student learning within the space.
Beyond building their knowledge of online learning platforms and tools, GTAs were also challenged by how to teach and interact with their students in online spaces. The ESLC Program courses are primarily asynchronous in the online format, so GTAs struggled to transition from having a lot of face time with students to very little. GTAs felt their typical approaches to teaching did not translate online, and they were uncertain about their role in the classroom. One GTA recalled, “My first time teaching online, I told [the GTA Coordinator], I feel like I work 75% as an IT tech support, and I'm teaching ESL 25%. And that was very discouraging to me because I've never aspired to be an IT tech support” (4). Another GTA also felt a shift in her identity as a teacher to that of a tutor in the asynchronous environment:

How to be a teacher... in an asynchronous class. It's something I'm also struggling with now because I feel like I'm more like a tutor. You know, giving students feedback, and I don't talk to them very often. [...] And I grade their assignments, I give comments, I give feedback. To me, I feel like I'm a tutor. Not really a teacher, you know what I mean? That's something I'm trying to figure out. Like, how to present myself. How to establish my identity as a teacher in the class in that particular setting (7).

GTAs who prided themselves on building rapport with their students felt lost about how to accomplish this in the online setting. One GTA described relationship building online as requiring more effort to “humanize” the students as well as themselves towards the students. GTAs noted that engagement was difficult because of not knowing what is happening on the other side of the screen. One GTA expounded that having students who are “black rectangles all the time is genuinely kind of unsettling and trippy to have a relationship with what is in a way, feels like a non-entity” (11). The GTA Coordinator found that GTAs adjusted overtime and found creative ways to build community via synchronous meetings:
I think that the GTAs have really stepped up and found novel ways to make students feel connected. You know, like, teatime. Some of them have like a coffee hour or happy hour. One of them held a game night. You know, so they're doing great things.

Another challenge GTAs faced was trying to gather feedback to support student learning. One GTA described teaching in the face-to-face classroom as “constantly having small feedback as I walk through the classroom” (1) from student body language and facial expressions. This feedback stream is needed to evaluate and adjust lessons on the fly. For example, one GTA explained that “it just informs me as to where I should spend more time, and when I should probably just wrap up and go to the next thing” (5). Likewise, immediate feedback helped GTAs to provide just-in-time support for struggling students:

Like in class, in face to face, if the student is struggling, I can just go up and talk to them or ask them to stay a couple minutes. […] But if they don't, I feel frustrated and discouraged sometimes that if they don't reach out, if they don't email me. If they don't read their emails, there's very little I can do (4).

New GTAs, especially those who have limited or zero online teaching experience, may encounter challenges that come with the new modality. They may be unprepared for how time-consuming online teaching can be compared to the face-to-face classroom as they develop ways to mitigate the problems of communication and connection. There is a need, then, to familiarize them with the online learning tools and platforms available to them, especially as they are situated in L2 writing teaching in the ESLC Program.

Teaching Community. The previous themes from the needs assessment revealed concrete knowledge and skills that ESLC Program GTAs need to possess as they enter their first week of teaching. The presence of a teaching community emerged from the data as a less
tangible but no less critical need for new GTAs. No orientation or professional development can anticipate all situations that a GTA will encounter in the classroom, but a teaching community offers continuous support as a place for GTAs to ask questions, solve problems, grow, and find emotional support. The GTA Coordinator recognized the value of informal networking and mentoring as a resource for GTAs. Similarly, the SME from the First Year Writing program believed that a successful GTA orientation should leave GTAs feeling “that they are part of a teaching community and that they have ways of asking questions” (C).

Responses from veteran GTAs also indicated an appreciation for their ESLC Program community. Community was a frequent theme in the data. Most GTAs agreed that they had a strong sense of belonging to their ESLC community. They reported seeking mentorship from the more experienced GTAs. One illustrated how a GTA who had been in the program for one year helped her survive her first semester:

I remember I turned to [veteran GTA], and she, she was very experienced teaching. I think during that year, when I first time started teaching the composition program, that academic year, I observed [veteran GTA’s] class. She was teaching 1901 or 1902 class, I forgot, but I just asked her, 'I don't know what to do. I have no idea. What should I prepare?' You know, I'm just like very nervous. And she said, “Yeah, come and observe.” […] I observed what she did in the class. […] I'm just like a blank paper you know, I really need someone to write on it, so I can have some information (2).

Further, GTAs appreciated opportunities to share advice and materials among other GTAs, no matter their years of experience. One GTA described using the course meetings to share “our concerns, some challenges we faced and some tips and strategies we employed” (3). GTAs sought out problem-solving support from one another, especially if their colleagues might
have expertise in an area that they did not. For example, one GTA reached out to Chinese GTAs to find out if one of her Chinese student’s behavior was explained through their “Chinese cultural background” or was “just that person’s problem” (10). GTAs also expressed gratitude for sharing materials when they are balancing teaching with their coursework and research. A GTA recounted, “So when people send their stuff over, I’m like, ‘Yay’” (9).

The GTAs also related the emotional support they received from their teaching community. One GTA appreciated her network for what she called, “teacher room talk.” She explained, “A lot of people love having discussions with other teachers: ‘This is what I’m frustrated with. This is what I love. Look at what my student did. This student really messed up my day’” (9). Teacher room talk allowed busy, overwhelmed GTAs the space to vent frustrations and receive empathy in return. Another GTA expressed how this helped them through the transition to remote teaching during COVID-19:

It was one of those hard weeks, you know, during COVID. And everyone's just like, ‘Man, how's it going?’ And it was like, we honestly didn't talk about the courses, but we just talked about, like, ‘I'm struggling with candidacy. Yeah, I'm struggling…’ You know? And it was honestly, like, the best hour. I needed it (6).

These discussions were, as one GTA put it, ‘emotionally productive’ (9); they helped GTAs feel like they were not alone in their struggles. They were not isolated but felt “part of this bigger family” (8). One GTA shared how this solidarity with his colleagues helped guard against feelings of failure:

So, I often found myself depressed, I felt that I was not well-prepared. I was not able to deal with some issues that occurred in my classroom well. So, often times I felt overwhelmed but seeing and hearing from others talking about their challenges in the
weekly meeting, I was able to see, this is not only me; we are experiencing same problems, and we're learning together (3).”

The data show how a teaching community can help new GTAs on practical and emotional levels, but the data also revealed some hurdles to building and sustaining the community. GTAs contended with feelings of self-doubt as they faced their studies, research, and teaching for the first time. One SME remarked that GTAs “seem to struggle with imposter syndrome, and actually being an imposter” (A). Feelings of being an impostor can silence individuals who do not wish to appear stupid in front of their peers, professors, or supervisors. The ESL Director recalled from his own experience, “When you are new, you do sometimes want to ask questions, but you also don’t want to ask too many questions. You don’t want them to think like, ‘He doesn’t know what he’s doing.’” Impostor syndrome silences new GTAs who stand to benefit the most from participating in the teaching community. Another GTA remembered feeling like a “small potato” among the “old pros” in her weekly meetings. She recalled, “I feel most of the time in my memory, we were quiet. […] I’m really a small potato, and you’re really great” (2).

At times, feelings of insecurity may also drive GTAs to compete with one another rather than to work in a spirit of collaboration. One SME saw this phenomenon among First Year English GTAs, where “intelligence is almost fetishized, to praise something is to show intellectual weakness. And to criticize it is to show intellectual strength” (C). Another SME called this phenomenon a ‘culture of expertise,’ and asserted that GTAs “don’t want to appear weak, especially to […] professors” (A). GTAs may feel a need to prove themselves in front of their peers and the coordinator. For example, one GTA recalled feeling compelled to speak up during weekly course meetings to prove her expertise:
And I think this is what a lot of instructors kind of, especially the novice and newer teachers experience, is that you feel that you have to constantly like, speak for yourself. […] I wish I talked a little bit less and just listen to a lot more. I felt that I was very young, and I need to prove my legitimacy and almost kind of overcompensate for the lack of writing experience that I have. I wanted to, like prove myself, I guess, to my colleagues then, I think. But I wish that I like listened to it a little bit more. (9)

The GTA Coordinator works hard to create an atmosphere that alleviates GTAs’ anxieties, to assure GTAs that they will not lose funding if they are not expert teachers. The weekly meetings she runs create a de facto community that offers practical and emotional support. However, there remains a need for a formalized teaching community uninhibited by underlying feelings of fear, impostorism, or competition. New GTAs need a safe space where they are actively encouraged to develop their teaching skills through joint problem-solving and collaboration.

Non-Native Speaker of English (NNSE) Self-efficacy and Bias. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 illuminated the experiences of IGTAs in U.S. universities, revealing that they struggled internally with a lack of self-efficacy and externally from the bias and discrimination of others. The needs assessment data revealed similar occurrences in the ESLC Program, often with an implicit connection between the two. The GTA Coordinator pointed out that IGTAs in ESLC Programs feel a more pronounced lack of self-efficacy because of their language-based course content. She remarked that IGTAs “may feel a lack of proficiency in academic English to be teaching it” and experience great anxiety as a result. Some of the IGTAs confirmed this in their interviews. They described struggling with pronunciation and grammar. One GTA remarked, “I was not sure whether I could teach English as a second language as a...
speaker whose English is also the second language” (8). Another confessed, “As an international instructor, it’s always kind of questioning. I mean, I always question myself, if I am really qualified for this position” (10).

Negative encounters with students can compound IGTAs’ struggles and eat away at an IGTA’s identity as an educator. A few IGTAs in the ESLC Program recalled negative experiences with their international students. They described how students’ perceptions made it difficult for them to establish their legitimacy as academic writing instructors. One GTA who had a great deal of teaching experience coming into the program recounted a story from her first year of teaching when a student tried to discredit her in front of the class: “He was like, 'My American teacher back in China said I'm very good at English writing. And then you gave me B or something, and you're wrong.' So, he made a huge scene” (1). She continued, “Usually, when students see me in their class, they were surprised, or they were disappointed because they didn't come to U.S. to study under another Asian teacher” (1). Another GTA recalled being similarly judged for her identity as Asian rather than on her merit as an instructor:

The first thing was that kind of racist issue because I am the international student as well and also instructor. So, like some Chinese or other Asian students, kind of, they’re not really open to my teaching, and what I introduced in my classroom. And they kind of judged my teaching by, not by my teaching skills, but by what I am, what I was in their classroom. So, yeah, that really kind of pushed me in a difficult position (10).

The IGTAs expressed a need for a space where they could embrace their cultural and linguistic identities as educators. Such a space could allow IGTAs and their domestic colleagues to openly discuss ways to handle NNSE bias. Some IGTAs felt they needed to find ways to train their students to tolerate diversity. Another suggested reading and discussing research on IGTA
teacher experiences. She stated, “We have a lot of GTAs who are non-native English speakers; I think there’s something we can talk about related to that” (7). Other IGTAs found they were empowered by harnessing their linguistic diversity as a strength, and they actively encouraged their students to do so as well. For example, one IGTA remarked, “I tell my students that because we have two languages, we have more broader perspective if we want because we can read L1 and L2 sources and so on” (1). Another GTA went into greater detail about enabling IGTAs to embrace their cultural resources:

IGTAs are quite unique and different from some domestic GTAs because they're experiencing cultural and transnational experiences. And resources to draw on might be different from the resources domestic GTAs draw on. So, I would appreciate it if there is a kind of space among GTA or a composition program, when and where people can embrace, I mean, allow international GTAs to embrace in bringing their own cultural resources… what they find helpful. But I mean, how they mitigate the challenges they face with what resources they already have. […] And kind of what social spaces are constructed in the community that allows them to tap on their cultural and linguistic knowledge (3).

In summary, IGTAs as non-native speakers of English face additional challenges in the classroom. First, they may doubt their proficiency and ability to teach academic English. They also must work harder to be recognized as legitimate educators despite many years of teaching experience. There is a need to build awareness of the biases they face and to supply GTAs with a space to discuss and empower one another with strategies to take to the classroom.
Learning Analysis

The front-end analysis data, with a focus on the former and current GTAs, were next analyzed to determine the current skills, attitudes, and preferences of the target learners for the orientation. As mentioned, due to COVID-19 hiring freezes, I was unable to interview the exact audience for the training: new international and domestic GTAs in the ESLC Program. However, the former and current GTAs who participated in the interviews (see Table 4), were asked to reflect on their entire experience as GTAs within the ESL department. Beyond approving of the training, three themes emerged from the data: Situated training, Administrative Support and Sponsorship, and External Training and Recognition (see Table 4).

Table 4

Three Learner Analysis Themes and Subthemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Situated Training</td>
<td>• Authentic problem scenarios</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Assignments with direct application to teaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Peer and coordinator observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Support and</td>
<td>• Continued GTA Coordinator support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>• Sponsorship for sharing ideas and valuing contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Training and</td>
<td>• External training identified and encouraged (e.g., workshops and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>endorsements)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Department level recognition of GTA educator growth and</td>
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Overwhelmingly, the GTAs approved of the idea of training for new GTAs. Interviews revealed that GTAs who had little teaching experience or who had teaching experience that did not prepare them for working in the present study context were the loudest supporters of the training. For example, one GTA expressed apprehension at jumping from being an elementary school teacher in South Korea to teaching college students in the United States: “When my GTA
appointment was assigned to ESL composition program, I was a little bit nervous because I was not prepared” (3). When asked if she would have liked a formal professional development, another GTA expounded:

If the max score is 10, I would say 10 or 9. I think it depends on the GTA's previous experience. I know that some of the GTAs are very experienced teachers in their countries, home countries, or in their undergraduate universities, maybe in the United States or in another English-speaking country. But to me, I had no teaching experiences in English before joining the GTAship. You know, so I would say, if I could, I'm definitely desperate for it (2).

In contrast, the GTAs who came in with greater teaching experience were hesitant about participating in a training. Several of them worried that mandatory training would resemble the university-wide GTA training provided over the summer. The centralized training brought together GTAs from all over campus with many different roles, so much of the training was unrelatable and unhelpful for them. One GTA called it “confusing” because “they’re [trainers] talking about this different body of students than I’m actually working with” (11). Another GTA called it “awful” (6) because the people leading the training were less experienced than her or had a different GTA role than her. The incongruity of the training to the GTAs’ needs left them feeling more stressed than helped:

I'll be honest, like [the university] gives a lot of like GTA training, like general training for the whole university, and I found it very stressful. Because I think that I'm not alone, there are a lot of GTAs who have teaching experience. And in the general GTA training, it's very, very basic. So, it's like how to grade a paper, or how to facilitate a conversation,
a discussion in class. And those are valuable things. And I think that some GTAs can really benefit from that. But some of us have already been teaching for several years (4).

**Situated Training.** It was clear from the data that GTAs desired training specific to the ESLC Program context. To this end, they suggested ways to make the training more situated and authentic to teaching academic writing to international students. First, some suggested opportunities for tackling authentic problem scenarios “especially targeted at ESL writing” (8) like “how to teach writing to multilingual writers” (7). Situated scenarios would allow GTAs to “see that there’s not a right and wrong answer for teaching necessarily” (6) but empower them to make decisions on their own. Several GTAs pushed for practice providing student feedback in a way that would align with the ESLC Program pedagogy:

> Like I said, I came from a really prestigious school, where we had to mark for grading, like we're trying to get kids in the Ivy League. So, I could have benefited from, you know, having a paper and being like, ‘Alright, what grade would you give this? Or what kind of things would you be looking for?’ Probably when I started, I would have been like, you know, C+, like, lots of red marks. But I told you, that's not like how I necessarily teach anymore. So, I think it's very important, maybe day one just to get like, people's background experiences and expectations (6).

Additionally, GTAs wanted training assignments to have direct use for their classrooms or their future. The summer before classes start, GTAs are already overwhelmed with preparations for their first semester of graduate school. The training, then, should be focused on helping them develop artifacts that save them time later. For example, one GTA suggested, “Have us look over what we are teaching or the kind of course design we’re using, and then discuss that. I think that will be directly helpful and also saves time for the teacher” (8). Several
GTAs endorsed the idea of developing a teaching portfolio as part of the training to support eventual job hunting. One GTA explained:

If GTAs were in these professional development courses, and part of it is "download your SEIs." And, you know, just even the practical things. Teaching portfolios, to be honest, are such a pain to make when you're applying for jobs. It's probably our most exhausting things is putting together the portfolio. So, if that's something that we developed over time, and like having like a "take one assignment that a student did that you want to use or like your own assignment prompt or feedback you gave," those could all be part of a portfolio, I would find that very useful. Because I wish I had done that. Now it's hard, going back to several semesters work and like, which do I choose and it's like, it's hard. It's tiring, it's overwhelming (4).

Many GTAs also felt formal observations as a part of training could prepare them for their current and future teaching positions. They acknowledged that being observed would be nerve-wracking, but they felt more acutely that “visiting by the supervisor is not for judging or punishing, but for developing and redesigning and supporting the instructors to be better” (3). Another GTA had the foresight that, “it’s better to have those feedback while we’re GTAs than going to a real workplace” (1). Indeed, one GTA articulated that observations were a reasonable and essential aspect of the job to keep her accountable in the same way that grades kept her accountable as a student and researcher:

I love it when I'm observed. […] I think if the department makes it clear, like, this is a job... Like we want to make it better for you. […] Where it's like, you know, if there were evaluations, maybe something, there might be some more accountability in some ways. I
feel like I'm held accountable in my research. I get grades all the time. I know that my strength is teaching, not my research, so I take the lower grades (6).

**Administrative Support and Sponsorship.** GTAs were united in their appreciation of support from their GTA Coordinator. From weekly meetings to just being able to stop by her office with questions, concerns, and ideas, having the coordinator’s support relieved anxiety and built confidence in their roles. GTAs described the coordinator using words like “awesome”, “great”, “nurturing,” “mother figure” and remarked that they were “lucky to work with [the GTA Coordinator]” (5). Several mentioned how she helped them work through problems. For example, one GTA commented, “I had the race issue, international school students’ issues. I had a really lot of issues, but thanks to her, now I can manage those kinds of problems easily” (10). Another recalled her open-door policy and how her interest in GTAs expanded beyond their duties as GTAs:

[The GTA Coordinator] was very supportive. Like, you know, her office was just across the hallway from my office, so I always visited her on Friday afternoons. Like, we could talk for like three hours about teaching and also my doctoral studies. So, she always listened and gave me suggestions. Yeah, so she's very supportive (7).

Other GTAs felt stretched by the GTA Coordinator to try new things in the classroom or to take on special projects. Some mentioned how her receptiveness to their ideas for the classroom helped them, “to become more involved, invested, confident about my contributions and my work” (5). Another recalled, “[The GTA Coordinator] enthusiastically supported me to take the lead… to provide my own suggestions to the program based on my experience” (3). GTAs mentioned projects that pushed their skills beyond teaching, such as writing textbooks, working on grants, and redesigning courses. One GTA recounted, “We won a grant together. We
completely redesigned 5902, the graduate ESL course. And it’s actually very good. We love it. I’m very proud of it” (6). The GTA’s comments reinforced how “support” as one of the enabling structures of the Community of Practice theory positively impacted their identity:

I think that kind of developed from like first year to my fourth year, in a way. You know, so interacting with [the GTA Coordinator] and interacting with my students kind of improved my or developed my identity or confidence. And that also influenced how I teach as well (1).

The GTAs expressed near-unanimous appreciation for the support from the GTA Coordinator, but a few hinted at being demotivated by a lack of consideration for their ideas and contributions to the rest of the department. They expressed feeling stifled with no way to communicate their ideas. One GTA recalled being helped by a senior lecturer: “She started to realize GTAs actually had a lot to say, but we didn’t have a platform or opportunity to express what we were thinking about the whole program, instructional methods, students’ situations” (2). Others questioned whether or not their efforts to make the program better (e.g., their suggestions, their course redesign, their class-based research) were worth it because policy change in the department occurred frequently and without their input. One GTA explained his frustrations:

Like, what’s the point of publishing or writing any of this stuff or helping other GTAs, if I feel like after this semester, everything will just go back to the way it was? It’s like Sisyphean. And so, feeling these department changes just happen, and there’s nothing I can do about it. […] I change things to make it better. It's not motivating, though, to make it better if I don't feel like the changes matter (11).

A few GTAs sensed a pervasive culture in the college that their teaching was insignificant, that “ESL is kind of seen as not important” (5). Some wanted their academic
advisors and even professors to be aware of and invested in their professional development as educators and not just researchers. One GTA illustrated the point: “If I ever say that I find my identity in teaching, my professors do not like it at all. […] Always they're like, you need to take off your teacher hat; you're a researcher” (6). So, while The GTA Coordinator invested a lot of time and effort into supporting and developing GTAs, a lack of sponsorship from all levels of authority within the department and college for the work they accomplish threatened to diminish their motivation to grow as educators. Sponsorship, as another key enabling structure of CoP, clearly shone through the data as a hurdle to GTAs’ professional identity development.

**External Training and Recognition.** Finally, data from GTA interviews showed a strong preference toward being able to customize their training through development opportunities outside of ESL Programs. Several units on campus offered ways for educators to dig deeper into their areas of interest. GTAs described taking workshops from Writing Across the Curriculum and the library. For example, one GTA who participated in an information literacy workshop from the library appreciated how it helped her to “introduce the searching skills to the international students” (10). A few others praised endorsements available through the Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning (formerlyUITL). One GTA recalled, “So definitely UITL and WAC [Writing Across the Curriculum] supported my professional goals. During the first year, I think I took more than five workshops” (10). Another GTA who had participated in three endorsements from the Drake Institute commented, “I thought it was, again, super powerful and amazing. […] Some of the stuff that I learned, I do every day in my own teaching” (6). One GTA recognized the value of these external opportunities to customize his development, but he wished ESL Programs had helped him find the resources earlier:
But every teacher has needs, right? I believe [university name] is a quite a large Institute, there are lots of opportunities for us to have our professional development. But I was not able to know what resources are out there. I would have much appreciated if the program manager and the people in the community shared some of opportunities for our professional development and try to draw our attention to the program […]. Like, rather than "here is a workshop," I would appreciate it if they point out “this workshop would help you to address this particular issue you might come across in your classroom XYZ.” So very specific and very much personalized, individualized support (3).

In addition to gaining transferrable teaching skills, some of the external professional development provided recognition for the GTAs’ accomplishments. Completion of endorsements, for example, appeared on GTAs’ transcripts. Recognition, as another enabling structure, can support GTAs’ work together in a community of practice. The GTAs commented on other universities creating “motivated accountability” by offering teaching certificates or something that could be put on their CV. One GTA explained, “You want to put people in a position where they feel like the better they do, the more it will help their career” (11). In fact, another GTA found the lack of recognition within the department discouraging:

I just feel like a lot of GTAs work very hard and try different ways of teaching and being creative in their teaching, but they're not recognized in our program. I mean, [the GTA Coordinator] has encouraged us to share our ideas, but basically that's it. Like, there is no like end-of-year recognition, or, you know, sort of that kind of to encouraging GTAs to give them a sense of like, maybe like achievement or something like that. So, I feel like, yeah, we need a community like that. (7)
To conclude, the learner analysis themes aligned well to the CoP enabling structures: support, sponsorship, and recognition. While their comments showed support for a community-based orientation, they also felt strongly that such a community would ultimately fail without these elements from the administration.

**Context Analysis**

Finally, the front-end analysis data also exposed critical practicalities and limitations to consider when designing the training. The orientation could not be designed without a clear understanding of the contextual factors that limit how learning is done or the resources that are available to support it (Dick et al., 2015). The GTA Coordinator interview, along with ongoing conversations with her, primarily helped to identify contextual elements for the training such as time and duration, modality, and resources. The descriptions of other GTA training from SMEs across campus provided precedent for successful training models in the university context. In addition, the focus group illuminated how new GTAs would experience training in the broader picture of their other duties and concerns as students. Three themes emerged from the context analysis: Time and Duration, Modality, and Resources (see Table 5).

**Table 5**

*Three Context Analysis Themes and Subthemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tr>
<td>Time and Duration</td>
<td>• Pre-semester orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Spread over 5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Start of continuous professional development opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modality</td>
<td>• Online for pre-arrival and COVID-19 precautions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In <em>CarmenCanvas</em> to build familiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Asynchronous and synchronous to build community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>• GTA Handbook as cornerstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>H5P</em> for engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>CarmenZoom</em> for synchronous meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Time and Duration. In our initial discussions of the problem of practice, the GTA Coordinator and I talked about the solution as a semester-long, credit-bearing course that GTAs would take in concert with their first semester of teaching. However, as discussions with the SMEs and GTAs continued, we felt more convinced that we should create a new GTA orientation before the start of the semester. We wanted a way to alleviate apprehension of the unknown. As one GTA put it, “I think that that [orientation] will be also some kind of like, relief with less stress for GTA” (8). A summer orientation had successful precedents in both the First Year English and the Introduction to Psychology GTA training programs. The SME from Psychology described the summer orientation as laying the groundwork for the semester to come. Additionally, the focus group GTAs responded well to the idea since new GTAs would not have any classes to split their attention in the summertime. They also felt the orientation would be better spread out over a few weeks to avoid competing with other start-of-the-year activities that tend to occur the week before classes start. We needed the orientation, then, to occur sometime before other campus orientation activities ramped up in late August but after GTAs officially accepted the offer for a graduate assistantship in late April.

Additionally, we recognized that professional development opportunities need to continue and evolve alongside GTAs beyond the orientation as they developed their knowledge and skills as educators. The Center for Life Sciences GTA training model accomplished this by requiring GTAs to take a one-credit hour course every semester that they teach. In this model, GTAs can customize their training by choosing from a menu of existing development opportunities (e.g., book club, university workshops and endorsements, course design, research). The ESLC Program GTAs showed support for a multi-part professional development as well:
Whether it's going to be something formalized or something more of a community kind of embedded… whatever the nature is, just having kind of an ongoing thing, because […] I think the priorities definitely change and shift (9).

While professional development opportunities after orientation are beyond the scope of this design case, the decision to have a multi-part training was significant in deciding how to sequence and pace content and activities.

**Modality.** The orientation needed to be held online for several reasons. First, as most new GTAs are international, they would not be in the United States to attend an in-person orientation five weeks before the semester started. Additionally, lingering COVID-19 cases made online training the safest and most reliable option for continuous participation. Also due to COVID-19, GTAs were likely to continue teaching online for the foreseeable future, so having the orientation online would serve to familiarize them with the online space. Specifically, hosting the training on **CarmenCanvas**, the university’s LMS, would allow new GTAs to experience the site and best practices from the perspective of a student. The online modality meant we could make the orientation flexible to the GTAs’ needs as they prepared for their first semester. As one GTA recognized, the orientation needed to strike balance between the flexibility of self-paced materials with synchronous meetings to at least lay the foundation for a community of practice among GTAs:

I feel like synchronous might be more helpful. I don't know, I just feel like... people will be less engaged in asynchronous discussions. I feel like because synchronous, you get feedback immediately. And, you know, I just feel like that's more engaged and more interactive. Yeah, I would prefer synchronous. But I also understand not all GTAs have time for, you know, for class. So yeah, asynchronous is also fine. But maybe like, if
weekly synchronous class is impossible … for 30 minutes discussion. You know, something like that would be very helpful (7).

**Resources.** The context analysis considered what resources were available to support the orientation. First, discussions with the GTA Coordinator revealed a GTA handbook that she had been writing and revising for the past three years. The handbook, *Teaching College-Level Writing to Multilingual Students*, was written as a resource to support GTAs. Several topics covered by the handbook are meant to orient GTAs to the program with chapters such as: “Being an Effective Writing Teacher”, “Profile of Students”, “Grading Student Work”, and “Resources for GTAs.” Before the time of this study, the coordinator’s motivation for writing the handbook had been to go over sections during course meetings to provide additional resources for GTAs. She found, however, that the GTAs needed the course meeting time to discuss more urgent issues like the logistics of upcoming assignments and teaching activities. As the handbook contains valuable information and resources that directly answered the instructional needs identified by the needs assessment, we wanted to incorporate it into the orientation.

Second, since we knew the five-week orientation would be built online using *CarmenCanvas*, we needed to know what resources were available to support asynchronous and synchronous instructional activities. The GTA Coordinator, as the orientation facilitator, requested that she be able to easily revise the materials. This limitation required that the content be built directly into the *CarmenCanvas* pages rather than through an external authoring tool (e.g., *Articulate*). A meeting in February 2021 with the Academic Technology Director (see Figure 3) revealed that the college of education had a subscription to *H5P* (https://h5p.org/), a tool that can create interactive learning experiences for LMS content pages. The interactive activities embed engagement through activities like flashcards, accordions, interactive videos,
and multiple-choice questions. Examples of H5P activities will be showcased in Chapter 4.

Additionally, the Academic Technology Director recommended using the university’s subscription to Zoom, rebranded as CarmenZoom, for synchronous meetings. The GTA Coordinator had already been using her personal CarmenZoom meeting space for weekly course meetings, so it could also be leveraged for any orientation meetings.

**Front-End Analysis Design Implications**

The front-end analysis, with the themes that emerged from the needs assessment, learner analysis, and context analysis, led to several major design implications. The first was to create a three-part professional development series for all GTAs in the ESLC Program. The initial plan to provide a three-credit-hour, semester-long training during the first semester of teaching morphed into a 1) mandatory five-week summer orientation, 2) a mandatory two-credit hour semester-long course during the first semester of teaching, and 3) an optional one-credit independent study with the GTA Coordinator to focus on GTAs’ individual developmental needs and career goals. This model enabled the GTA Coordinator and me, as lead designer, to prioritize certain content and activities as needed before day one (e.g., student profiles, department policies, etc.) over content and skills that could be covered later (e.g., providing student feedback, developing rubrics, etc.). This three-part model also ensured that all GTAs are given time, space, and resources to become familiar with teaching in the ESLC Program context while providing professional development that grows with their needs.

The second major design decision was to offer the summer orientation over the five weeks running up to the start of the autumn semester. The needs assessment revealed several large themes to be covered in that short period but that the time should be a low-stress way for GTAs to wade into their new role and get to know their colleagues. We could not offer credit or
other incentives (e.g., monetary) for GTAs to attend a summer orientation, so we discussed making a light workload with a limited time commitment. Presenting content asynchronously in *CarmenCanvas* with engaging activities through *H5P* would provide flexibility for GTAs attending in different time zones while also creating a repository of information that could be visited at any time during their service as a GTA. A weekly asynchronous discussion in *CarmenCanvas* and a weekly synchronous meeting with *CarmenZoom* would provide an early platform for GTAs to build community.

I next needed to assign topics to each week of the 5-week orientation and write learning objectives based on the instructional goals. I used instructional goals as described in the needs assessment along with the GTA Coordinator’s handbook to identify a topic and learning objectives for each week (see Table 6). The next chapter discusses the design and development of the five-week summer orientation based on these weekly topics and objectives.

**Table 6**

*Alignment of Front-End Analysis Goals with Weekly Topics and Objectives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Weekly Topic</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Big Picture 1.</td>
<td>The ESL Composition Program</td>
<td>- Identify ESL Program's mission statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify how the program's approaches to teaching have evolved throughout its history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify the major components of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify the program's staff and staff organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Locate the ESL Program's office location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify goals and expectations for working in the program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6 (Continued)

**Alignment of Front-End Analysis Goals with Weekly Topics and Objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Weekly Topic</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Student Profiles | 2. Profiles of Students in ESL Composition | - Identify the international student population trends  
- Identify the perceived linguistic needs of international students  
- Identify the English language learning history of international students  
- Identify cultural differences in teaching and learning of international students  
- Discuss possible student attitudes toward composition courses  
- Discuss the writing journey for students  
Define NNSE Bias and methods for handling student bias in the classroom |
| NNSE Self-Efficacy & Bias | | |
| L2 Writing Best Practices | 3. Being an Effective Writing Teacher | - Define the workshop approach (multiple draft process)  
- Define collaborative writing  
- Identify best practices of peer review  
- Identify best practices of a writing conference  
- Identify how and when to give feedback on students' writing  
- Identify appropriate ways to handle errors  
- Identify desired grading methods  
- Identify the modes in which ESL composition classes are offered and their implications for your teaching  
- Describe the characteristics of synchronous and asynchronous online classes  
- Identify the layout and organization of *CarmenCanvas* course shells  
- Describe how the major *CarmenCanvas* features function  
- Describe ways to set up *CarmenCanvas* to teach 1902  
- Identify ways to prepare learners for learning online  
- Identify best practices for establishing teacher presence, supporting communication, and building community online |
| Teaching Modality | 4. Technology Enabled Learning | |
Table 6 (Continued)

Alignment of Front-End Analysis Goals with Weekly Topics and Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Weekly Topic</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Course Design    | 5. Ready on Day One | • Describe the learning objectives for 1902  
• Describe the major assignments for 1902 and how they measure the accomplishment of the course objectives  
• Identify the 1902 course material and components that support the learning objectives  
• Describe the 1902 course sequence of activities and how they scaffold students toward the learning objectives  
• Identify the resources available to first-time 1902 course instructors  
• Identify policies and expectations for working in the program  
• Describe the purpose of weekly instructor course meetings  
• Identity different formative evaluations meant to support GTAs' professional growth  
• Describe three ways to belong to a community of practice |
| Teaching Community |              |                                                                                                                                              |
CHAPTER FOUR: THE DESIGN

The front-end analysis illuminated the context of the design, identifying several instructional goals and design implications for creating an orientation for new domestic and international GTAs. A five-week, pre-semester orientation was designed within the learning management system (LMS), CarmenCanvas. Additional university-subscribed educational technologies (i.e., H5P and CarmenZoom) aided the design. This chapter showcases the design challenges, decisions, and innovations that emerged from the development process. The trail of decisions recorded here demonstrates how the orientation design was influenced by the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) and instructional goals identified during a front-end analysis (Chapter 3). Thus, it intends to answer the call in the literature to articulate how design elements aligned with the theoretical constructs (Lantz-Andersson et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2017). The chapter foregrounds the design through discussion of the design timeline, the learning environment, and a rich description of the design process. The design is discussed from the point of view of the design team, the author as lead designer and the GTA Coordinator. As this is a first-hand account of the design, the pronouns “we” (design team) and “I” (author/lead designer) are used.

Design Timeline

The design process began with a presentation of the front-end analysis results to the English as a Second Language (ESL) Director on February 19, 2021. The director approved the initial scope and sequence of the five-week orientation, and I consequently established a design team comprising myself and the GTA Coordinator. As a design team, we met weekly from January to July 2021, roughly six months, to discuss the development of the virtual community of practice (VCoP). We also planned an evaluation to gather feedback for the design using
learning experience design (LXD; Tawfik et al., 2021) interviews and post-pilot surveys. I conducted the LXD interviews during the last two weeks in June 2021 after IRB approved the interviews as non-human subject research. Then, the GTA Coordinator used grant funds to recruit four current program GTAs for the pilot since no new GTAs were hired in Autumn 2021. The coordinator and GTAs met from July 19 to August 29, 2021 for the five-week pilot. The design feedback is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. The project timeline (see Figure 4) details the design and development, LXD interviews, and pilot.

### Figure 4

**Timeline for Design & Development, Testing, and Pilot**

**Building the Learning Environment with Enabling Structures**

Before beginning design on the five-week orientation, we constructed the learning environment within the LMS, *CarmenCanvas*. From the front-end analysis, we identified the main orientation topics and learning objectives, but we had not yet determined how new GTAs
would experience the virtual community of practice. The CoP literature points toward enabling structures (i.e., support, sponsorship, and recognition) as playing an important role in creating and sustaining a community of practice (Crede et al., 2010; Wenger, 2004). Enabling structures are driven by the administration, like the GTA Coordinator. Support comes in the form of a welcoming learning environment that supplies new GTAs with department-specific content, authentic problems, and resources to solve them (Ghanem, 2018; Gretton et al., 2017). Sponsorship legitimitizes new GTAs’ voice and respects their ideas (Gretton et al., 2017; Wenger, 2004). Recognition celebrates new GTAs’ growth as educators through formative feedback and awards (Gretton et al., 2017; Wenger, 2004). We planned for recognition elements in the form of peer and coordinator evaluations in the first semester of teaching, pushing it outside the scope of the orientation and this design case. We found that support and sponsorship, however, were important elements to consider in the early stage design of building a learning environment to ensure that new GTAs feel welcome, accepted, and valued. The learning environment must lay the foundation for sense of belonging and identity development.

Support

Mirror 1902 Course Structure. Support drove decisions about how to organize the LMS space that housed the orientation. Considering that new GTAs would need to be comfortable with the LMS environment for their own distance or technology-enhanced courses, we wanted to structure the orientation to mirror the composition courses they would be teaching. Therefore, we mimicked the composition courses’ homepage with quick links to features like the syllabus and other course materials. The orientation LMS environment, however, deviated from composition courses in the use of a module structure to organize the learning activities. The ESLC Program courses have traditionally used pages rather than modules to organize weekly
content; however, modules are considered best practice by the university. Modules help to organize content and signal to learners their progress through the materials (Mayer & Fiorella, 2014). As lead designer, I hoped the orientation would showcase module structure as an alternative option to support the ESL Department’s future course design decisions. Figure 5 compares the orientation homepage (right) to a typical composition course homepage (left) to show similarities and differences. Note that all names and faces were redacted from figures in this chapter to protect privacy.

Figure 5

*Comparison of ESLC Program Course and Orientation Homepages*

**Welcoming, Conversational Tone.** To further support new GTAs, we adopted a conversational tone throughout the materials. We added an introductory module with information about the GTA Coordinator as the orientation facilitator. A separate welcome page contained expectations for the orientation and a video from the coordinator positioning herself as a guide in their journey to develop as educators (see Figure 6). Additionally, we transformed the orientation
sylabus from a traditional, text-heavy document to a colorful, graphic, learner-centered syllabus (see Figure 7). As a first point of contact, the syllabus presents a positive tone, especially when presented with images which act to “soften the tone […] make it more approachable and personal” (Richmond et al., 2019, p. 12).

**Welcome Message & Navigation**

Welcome to the Summer Orientation for the ESL Composition program!

**What to Expect**

In this orientation, you will be introduced to many concepts and resources to help prepare you for your first week of teaching. Over the next five weeks, you will explore the topics below (1 per week). Read the Syllabus and Schedule pages to learn more about readings and assignments associated with each module.

1. Module 1: The ESL Composition Program (July 19-25)
2. Module 2: Profiles of Students in the ESL Composition Classroom (July 26 - August 1)
3. Module 3: Being an Effective Writing Teacher (August 2 - August 8)
4. Module 4: Effective Online Teaching (August 9 - August 15)
5. Module 5: Ready of Day One (August 16 - August 22)

**This is a Resource For You**

It is important to note that you are not expected to master all of this information by the end of the orientation. There is a lot of information in these modules, and at times it may feel like you are drinking from a fire hose! That’s ok! This orientation will remain open to you so that you have it as a resource to visit as often as you would like during your first semester of teaching.

**ESL Community of Practice**

Use the next five weeks as an opportunity to get your feet wet and get to know your ESL Community of Practice. You will have many opportunities to get to know each other and hopefully some other GTAs and program staff through weekly discussion boards and synchronous Zoom meetings.

For now, start by watching this message from your GTA Coordinator, who will be leading you through this orientation and working with you throughout your time as a GTA.

Figure 6

*Orientation Welcome Page*
Active Learning. As mentioned in Chapter 3, we also employed H5P activities (e.g., flashcards, image sliders, etc.) throughout the content presentation to break up text-heavy information and encourage active learning. For example, each module content page ended with a series of true and false, matching, or multiple choice questions to help new GTAs check their understanding of the content on the page (see Figure 8). Other example H5P activities are showcased in the discussion of the each module design.
Finally, we attempted to make the orientation materials specific to the ESLC Programs. These efforts, including gathering veteran GTA stories and problems, as well as recruiting a veteran 1902 course lecturer to provide an instructor’s perspective throughout the design, are discussed in greater detail in the design of each module.

**Sponsorship**

**Facilitate Synchronous Meetings.** Someone must sponsor new GTAs’ voices and ideas within the community; for this orientation, the GTA Coordinator fulfilled this role. We planned space for this in the weekly synchronous meetings, where the coordinator would facilitate discussion, encouraging new GTAs to share their ideas related to the weekly content. Facilitation involved finding a guest speaker to discuss university resources related to the week’s module topic. It also meant leading new GTAs in a discussion of the module materials, their asynchronous discussion posts, and assignments from the week. Finally, the coordinator would invite veteran GTAs to answer new GTAs’ questions through small group discussions.
**Invitation to Research.** Additionally, in the “About Your Facilitator” page, the GTA Coordinator extended an invitation to the new GTAs to use the ESLC Program courses as a research site for their other doctorate-level courses. With this invitation, we hoped to encourage new GTAs’ to share their growing expertise to the community. The front-end analysis revealed that GTAs are highly valued because they are exposed to emergent research and best practices in L2 writing instruction within the courses they take. This early invitation was an attempt to create synergy between the new GTAs’ work and study and provide them an opportunity to drive innovation within the department.

**Building Modules with Three Modes of Belonging**

With the learning environment established with an eye toward support and sponsorship, we next crafted the module structure for the orientation. We wanted five modules to reflect the five topics identified at the end of Chapter 3. It was important to us for the new GTAs to experience each module consistently so they could expend maximum energy on learning (Mayer & Fiorella, 2014). Additionally, we wanted to be intentional about building the module infrastructure around the three modes of belonging: imagination, alignment, engagement. These cornerstones of CoP design shape activities and dialogue within the learning environment to promote a sense of belonging within the community (S. U. Smith et al., 2017; Wenger, 1998).

The image on the left in Figure 9 shows our early attempt to draft a module structure around Wenger’s (1998) three-mode architecture. We envisioned organizing the module into distinct components (i.e., introduction, content presentation, asynchronous discussion, synchronous meeting, and reflection assignment) in alignment with the three modes. The introduction would spark imagination (I) with videos of veteran GTAs telling stories or giving advice related to the module topic. Alignment (A) would happen as new GTAs learned about best
practices through handbook content presented in readings, videos, and H5P interactions to draw attention and reinforce understanding. Engagement (E) was planned through asynchronous discussions of problems GTAs commonly face. Additionally, weekly synchronous meetings on Carmen Zoom would promote engagement (E) by providing space for live discussions with veteran GTAs and guest speakers. Finally, the module would end with a reflection assignment, invoking imagination (I) once more by asking GTAs to make personal connections to the module content. The final orientation module structure, shown on the right in Figure 9, is very similar to the original design. It retained the same major components, though several of our early ideas for achieving imagination, alignment, and engagement shifted during the design, as discussed next.

Figure 9

Comparison of Early Module Structure to Final Module Structure (Module 2 is Shown)

Infrastructure Shifts

Our early plans to design a module infrastructure around the three modes of belonging shifted in several ways. The shifts happened throughout the design process, but they are
discussed here because they resulted in key design elements that are woven throughout each of the modules in the final orientation design. Module 2, as shown in Figure 9, is used to illustrate each shift.

**GTA Introduction Videos Became Text-based GTA Stories.** We initially planned to record videos of veteran GTAs introducing each module to help new GTAs imagine themselves in their new roles. We reasoned that new GTAs would hear tales of teaching and envision themselves doing the same. Unfortunately, it was difficult to obtain videos from the current program GTAs, most of whom were studying for candidacy, writing dissertations, or applying for jobs. Instead, we pivoted to capture authentic GTA voices in text format by inserting brief stories and quotes throughout the module content where relevant. We sourced these stories from the front-end analysis interviews and the GTA Coordinator’s handbook. The stories were plentiful and became a design thread across all modules, adding cohesion and enhancing opportunities for imagination. We set the stories off from the rest of the content with bold, red quotation marks. Figure 10 shows an example GTA story sourced from the handbook that was added to Module 2 to illustrate possible cultural differences among students. More examples appear in the design process section next.

*Figure 10*

*Example GTA Story*
**Asynchronous Discussions became Experience Based.** We initially planned to form the weekly discussion board topics around very specific problems GTAs might face, as engagement can be achieved through joint problem-solving (Wenger, 1998). The GTA Coordinator collected specific problem cases from the current program GTAs for this purpose. New GTAs would engage with one another to solve the problem presented in the case (e.g., A student comes to you upset about their placement in your course. What would you do?). However, we found it challenging to match the problems supplied by the GTAs to the modules. The problems were often suited for content that would be covered in training during their first semester of teaching. Further, we worried new GTAs as novices to the department context and policies might not yet be equipped to answer the questions. We did not want new GTAs to fear having the wrong answer, thus stifling the discussion. We realized our reflection assignment questions were more suitable as discussion questions because of their broad nature and connection to GTAs’ experiences as teachers. For example, the Module 2 reflection assignment question was “Name some ways that you like to build rapport with students.” The question was low risk, encouraging new GTAs to pull from their past teaching and learning experiences to answer without apprehension. Additionally, the GTA Coordinator could highlight some of the discussion board responses during the synchronous sessions, providing continuity between the two areas of engagement. Figure 11 demonstrates how the shift impacted both the asynchronous and synchronous module components as exemplified in Module 2. We retained the specific cases collected by the GTA Coordinator for discussion during GTAs’ first semester of teaching.
Figure 11

*Example Asynchronous and Synchronous Discussions (Module 2)*

**Reflection Assignments Became Artifact Assignments.** The reflection questions for the assignments were moved to the asynchronous discussion space but were quickly replaced with more practical assignment tasks. We realized that the module design lacked an opportunity for
GTAs to create and negotiate instructional materials for their courses, an important piece of engagement (Wenger, 1998). GTAs who participated in the front-end analysis made a similar request to make instructional tools before the semester started. We remediated this by replacing the weekly reflection assignments with practical, artifact-building assignments related to the module topic. For example, Module 2 content was focused on the ESLC Program students, emphasizing how new GTAs should build rapport and relationships early in the semester. A natural extension of the module was to ask new GTAs to prepare an online survey, which they could use to learn more about their students in the first week of classes. The artifacts would also be discussed in the synchronous meetings to provide space for GTAs to help one another with their tool development (see Figure 11). The new assignments enhanced engagement as new GTAs considered with their peers how to best prepare tools for their courses.

**Reflections became Callout Boxes.** We retained the reflection opportunities, as an important component of imagination, by adding smaller reflection points throughout the modules in callout boxes. The callout boxes appeared as black rectangles with a white icon of a head with gears (see Figure 12). They allowed us to break up the content presentation with more frequent reflection opportunities targeting adjacent content. Further, they created space for GTAs to consider some of those frequent problems we initially earmarked for the asynchronous discussion. For example, the callout box in Figure 12 invited new GTAs to reflect on how to handle poor student attitudes. The callout box appears directly after some authentic GTA stories taken from the front-end analysis presented on H5P flashcards. The reflection callout boxes, as with the GTA stories, became a common thread throughout the orientation design, supporting several instructional goals across all modules. They promoted a sense of belonging by
encouraging GTAs to both imagine themselves interacting with students and engage in problem-solving.

In addition to having a different perspective on what makes good writing, students may harbor negative feelings about being in ESL composition in general instead of moving straight into First Year English or their other academic courses. Each of the cards below shows a reason why students may have a poor attitude in your classroom.  

*Click each card to turn it over and read a former GTA quote about their experiences with these attitudes.*

---

**Figure 12**

*Example Reflection Callout Box*

The shifts in module architecture resulted in new ways to foster belonging. GTA stories and reflection callout boxes fostered imagination and were placed throughout the module content pages. The asynchronous discussion evoked engagement through broad questions while the new assignments provided opportunities for creating course artifacts. The final weekly schedule
presented in the orientation (see Figure 13) highlights several of the shifts, including the resulting module discussion topics and assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMER 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **WEEK 1 (Monday, July 19 - Sunday, July 25)** | Module 1: The ESL Composition Program | • ESL Programs Mission  
• About ESL Composition  
• Composition Courses & Placement | Make a 1-2 minute introduction video | Introduction to the ESL Composition Virtual Community of Practice (CoP) on Microsoft Teams: You will ask a question about Module 1 in the Teams space. |
| | Module 2: Profiles of Students in the ESL Composition Classrooms | • ESL Student Population Trends  
• Academic Cultural Adjustments  
• Supporting Your Students | Discuss how to build relationships and rapport with students | You will create an online survey to distribute to your students in week one to learn more about them. |
| | Module 3: Being an Effective Writing Teacher | • Effective Writing Teaching  
• Collaborative Learning  
• Feedback, Handling Errors, and Grading | Discuss how to best approach group activities | You will create an online scheduler for your course to help students make appointments with you for tutorials and office hours |
| | Module 4: Effective Online Teaching | • E-Learning  
• Your Carmen Classroom  
• Best Practices in Online teaching | Discuss how to approach online teaching | You will create an instructor introduction video to put on your Carmen Course shell for week one of your course |
| **WEEK 5 (Monday, August 16 - Sunday, August 22)** | Module 5: Ready for Day One | • 1902 Course Structure  
• ESL Instructor Duties  
• ESL Instructor Community of Practice | Discuss thoughts and concerns about teaching 1902 | You will complete an online orientation evaluation and a reflection about your goals as an ESL instructor for the next year. |

**Figure 13**

**Orientation Weekly Schedule**

**Design Process**

The new module infrastructure helped us to approach the design process module by module, negotiating the content into segments and presenting it in various modalities (e.g., text,
videos, images, graphics, H5P interactions). We considered how instructional materials and activities could support the learning objectives as identified in the front-end analysis. Additionally, design decisions were influenced by the identity theory framework of Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998) and Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). The following sections highlight the design decisions, showcasing the challenges we encountered and emergent design innovations that met those challenges.

**Module 1: The ESL Composition Program**

The first module, *The ESL Composition Program*, was created to respond to the instructional goal described in Chapter 3 as the Department Big Picture. GTAs are stepping into new roles as students, employees, and educators all at once. Module 1 was meant to help ease what can otherwise be an overwhelming transition by focusing particularly on what it means to be an employee and instructor in ESLC Programs. Orienting GTAs in the mission and heritage of the program as well as the current structure, staffing, and resources helps new GTAs see where they fit in and how they can add value to the bigger picture (Wenger, 1998). This notion of seeing one’s place in the larger system further reinforces new GTAs’ imagination and identity as they begin to understand their role and purpose (Wenger, 2004). We found that videos narrated by the coordinator along with presenting organizational connections and jargon helped us to deliver Module 1 content.

**GTA Coordinator Avatar Videos.** The GTA Coordinator is responsible for easing new GTAs into their instructor positions. Before COVID-19 restrictions, she welcomed GTAs to the ESLC Program, showed them around the office, and introduced them to the staff. She disseminated institutional knowledge gradually as she formed individual relationships and shepherded new GTAs into the department. The handbook converted much of that information
into text, charts, and images, but it lacked the personal touch offered by the coordinator’s in-person welcomes. Trying to replicate this warm, personalized journey in a virtual setting required some creativity. First, we decided to translate the static handbook content into videos about the program with the coordinator’s voice narration. However, I felt I could deepen the experience with an onscreen avatar using the animated video tool, Vyond (https://www.vyond.com/). An avatar designed to look like and embody the coordinator could further enhance the learning experience (Clark & Mayer, 2016; Mayer & Fiorella, 2014). Additionally, the decision to build videos was influenced by Wenger’s (1998) imagination, knowing that orienting new GTAs in time and space can enhance how they envision themselves in that time and space.

We made three videos with the avatar: 1) History of ESL Composition, 2) Department Organization, and 4) Program Placement. The videos featured the GTA Coordinator’s avatar next to a whiteboard on which appeared real photos of the ESLC Program offices and staff as well as existing handbook graphics. Figure 1 demonstrates how the videos with the GTA Coordinator’s avatar were incorporated into the content pages. An example video, the History of the ESL Program, can be accessed and viewed through the link in the caption.
Stuff You Should Know Callout Boxes. We also recognized that a large part of orienting oneself to the Big Department Picture is understanding larger organizational connections and jargon. Remembering our own experiences as new instructors in the program, we knew that understanding that larger context by name and acronym could be helpful as new GTAs find their footing. Again, we knew that providing new GTAs with the vocabulary they needed to talk about their new professional environment would further allow them to express belonging through imagination. To this end, we employed callout boxes throughout the module to draw attention to key terms and information. The callout boxes appeared as black boxes with an icon of a lightbulb to distinguish it from surrounding module text. For example, Figure 15 shows a callout box with acronyms commonly used for the college (i.e., EHE) and department (i.e., T&L) in which ESL Programs belongs. As lead designer, I drew inspiration from a popular podcast to name the callout box ‘Stuff You Should Know’ as I felt it matched the informal tone and emphasized the nature of the information within. We used these boxes throughout the
module to share small, but important bits of information like common terms, websites, and resources.

Figure 15

Example Stuff You Should Know Callout Box

Module 2: Profiles of Students in ESL Composition

The second module, Profiles of Students in ESL Composition, was designed to respond to two instructional goals: 1) Student Profiles and 2) NNSE Self-Efficacy and Bias. First, the front-analysis taught us that new GTAs were underprepared for working with students in the ESLC Program for a variety of reasons. The students in the ESLC Program tended to be largely homogenous (i.e., majority Chinese), which was different from most GTAs’ previous teaching experiences. The students were not all the same, though, and GTAs needed to also be prepared for linguistic and cultural differences as well as students’ individual personalities, goals, and attitudes. Interactions with students in a course is an important source of educator identity development for GTAs (Ghanem, 2018; Gretton et al., 2017), so our design challenge was to prepare GTAs for building relationships with their students. Second, we learned from the literature review and front-end analysis that negative interactions with students can adversely impact educator identity. IGTAs who differed greatly from the prototypical GTA in U.S. universities recalled facing NNSE bias from students. We focused Module 2 on centering key
interactions with students and equipping new GTAs with tools and tips for building better relationships.

**Stories of Student Interactions.** The ESLC Program student population reflects international student trends across the entire university. Therefore, we started Module 2 with reports and graphs of the international student population, drawing attention to the large Chinese population. However, the demographics alone would not translate into successful interactions with students. We wanted to center interactions with students, both positive and negative, with the authentic GTA stories. The stories, as mentioned, promoted imagination as new GTAs put themselves in the shoes of new GTAs, envisioning how they, too, might relate to their future students. First, we incorporated several GTA stories from the handbook and front-end analysis that highlighted positive interactions (e.g., students thanking their instructor for improving their writing and supporting their adjustment to U. S. based classrooms). Second, we added stories that new GTAs might find challenging, specifically around cultural adjustments, negative attitudes, and potential student biases. For example, rather than just telling new GTAs that their students might need to adjust to new pedagogical approaches, Figure 16 shows a GTA story that clearly illustrates the point. These stories, which show rather than tell GTAs about student interactions, help them identify as an educator in the ESLC Program space.
It is important to be accessible to students, and for some students this is unfamiliar. They are afraid to contact an instructor with a problem or question. They are afraid of being scolded in tutorials, and they may not understand the multiple draft system (You will learn more about the multiple draft system in Module 4). It’s good to explain (and show) these things.

*When I held the first individual writing conference of the semester, a student came into my office and sat down. Together we went over his rough draft of the first assignment. I pointed out ways to improve but was also careful to applaud what was working out well. I thought I was friendly and encouraging, but the student responded stiffly to my attempts at a conversation and looked down at the floor for most of the tutorial time. When we concluded, and I told him he could go, he stood up and breathed a loud sigh of relief and broke into a smile. He confessed that he had been terrified of the conference. He assumed I would scold him or humiliate him for making grammar mistakes. I was so shocked.*

“Former GTA”

**Figure 16**

**GTA Story Illustrates Student Cultural Adjustment**

**Stories of NNSE Self-Efficacy and Bias.** We again used GTA stories to center and build awareness of NNSE bias. The handbook explicitly described NNSE bias and provided widespread evidence of the phenomenon, but it did not contain personal stories of GTAs confronting biases and discrimination. While, these negative interactions with students are rare, the front-end analysis did prove that they can occur, so we anonymized stories from the front-end analysis for the orientation. The story shown in Figure 17 takes NNSE bias as a distant and abstract problem and situates it in the context of the ESLC Program. The first-hand account illuminates how IGTAs are marginalized and must work harder to identify as an educator in relationships with their students. We followed these stories with strategies and tips for handling NNSE bias and by asking new GTAs to discuss NNSE bias in the week’s synchronous discussion. The stories promoted both imagination and engagement as new GTAs have space to discuss their own salient identities as sources of strength to solve NNSE-related problems.
Student Bias Against International GTAs

Occasionally GTAs find that their ESL students, particularly those from their home cultures, have a bias toward what they consider a “non-native speaker” of English. However, even GTAs who are domestic and are, in fact, what the students call a “native speaker of English” can run into the same bias when they share a language and culture with their students. While the field of TESOL has recognized this problem (Cook, 1999; Davies, 2003) and has done a lot to dispel “the myth of the native speaker,” among professional TESOL, it has been harder to educate our students and wider culture. The most common reason given is that “native speakers” simply speak better English and therefore offer a better model of the language (Honna & Takeshita, 2001). While research does not support this (Mahboob, 2010), the preference for teachers who “look” like native speakers (i.e., Western, Caucasian) persists. One international GTA wrote:

“Usually, when students see me in their class, they were surprised or they were disappointed because they didn’t come to the U.S. to study under another Asian teacher. The first thing was that kind of racist issue because I am the international student as well and also instructor. So, like some Chinese or other Asian students, they’re not really open to my teaching, and what I introduced in my classroom. And they kind of judged my teaching by, not by my teaching skills, but by what I was in their classroom. So, yeah, that really kind of pushed me in a difficult position. And sometimes they had arguments in between the Asians Chinese students versus students from the other countries. So they like to say that “are you going to act like that to the Instructor if the Instructor is American” or “Are you acting like that because she’s Asian? And some students are, yeah, talk like that in class. So that kind of made me very embarrassed. Positioning myself as a real legitimate writing teacher was a bit difficult, even though I felt like I’m pretty confident about teaching, but how students perceive me, was very different.”

~ Former GTA

Figure 17

GTA Story Portrays NNSE Bias

Tools for Supporting Students. GTA stories took abstract details about the program’s student population and built awareness of how students’ backgrounds and attitudes might create positive and challenging interactions. We wanted to accompany awareness-building with tools GTAs could quickly and easily utilize to support their students. These tools would promote engagement with students and enforce future positive interactions. The handbook already provided steps and ideas to help GTAs support students’ cultural adjustments (e.g., how to communicate with professors in U.S. universities). However, we knew new GTAs would be busy planning their instructional activities and lack time to transform these suggestions into instructional materials. This is especially true since ESRC Program students need materials that make accommodations for their lower language proficiency levels. As lead designer, I wanted to transform the existing text-heavy materials into videos with voiceover, onscreen text, and
animated students and professors acting out the concepts to support understanding. Therefore, I again used the video builder Vyond to create brief videos for easy sharing with students through YouTube (or Youku for students in China). These videos are tools that new GTAs can quickly share with students to start conversations about learning in U.S. university classrooms (see Figures 18 and 19 for examples).

Figure 18

Video for Communicating in U.S. Universities (Access to Youtube Video)

Figure 19

Video for Comparing High School to College (Access to Youtube Video)
Module 3: Being an Effective Writing Teacher

Module 3, Being an Effective Writing Teacher, was devoted to addressing the instructional goal of developing new GTAs’ knowledge of L2 writing best practices. Previous research shows that GTAs express belonging and identity through understanding their content and knowing how to best deliver it to students (Ghanem, 2018). The pedagogical approaches used by the program, including the workshop approach, collaborative writing, peer review, and writing conferences, may be new and unfamiliar to GTAs and their students. The challenge of meeting this goal was to present materials in a way that would support buy-in and adoption. Our design solutions promoted alignment, justifying departmental approaches with interactive videos as well as portraying GTAs and lecturers as expert voices to present the research behind and practical applications of the new approaches.

Interactive Video. Collaborative writing would feature largely in students’ future professional lives, therefore, it was important to align new GTAs’ with this pedagogical approach. To justify collaborative writing as an approach, the GTA Coordinator created a nine-minute, voiced-over PowerPoint video explaining why it is a critical skill for many different professions. The video is packed with valuable information, but I worried that it was too long to hold viewers’ attention. Therefore, I used H5P’s interactive video tool to segment the video up into bookmarks that viewers use to navigate to specific sections (Fiorella & Mayer, 2018)(see Figure 20 left). I also inserted quiz questions throughout the video to create engagement and check understanding (Fiorella & Mayer, 2018)(see Figure 20 right). The video enhancements made the video a resource that GTAs could return to time and again. The bookmarks make it easy to navigate to a section to grab just-in-time information as GTAs begin to explore collaborative writing with their students.
Interactive Video Bookmarks and Embedded Questions

GTA Research Presentation. Next, we wanted to show research-based evidence that collaborative approaches work in the ESLC Program L2 writing courses to reinforce buy-in and alignment. To accomplish this, we shared (with permission) a former GTA’s video presentation of his classroom-based research on using collaborative writing (see Figure 20). The presentation illuminated the challenges and successes the GTA encountered in his classroom-based research. It bridged the gap between theory and practice, illustrating how the approach works in composition courses. Further, showing GTAs someone who looked like them applying and researching collaborative writing approaches would increase their ability to see themselves adopting the same approaches. It shows new GTAs a possible future in which they, too, can conduct classroom research and be recognized as an expert in L2 writing instruction. Leveraging GTAs’ (especially IGTA’s as in Figure 21) classroom research as a design element celebrates their identity and growth as educators.
Collaborative Writing in ESL Programs

Collaborative Writing (CW) involves at least two students working together to write a paper and provide continuous feedback to one another - so it is not just 'divide and conquer'! Former GTA conducted research on CW in his classroom. His students had 3 collaborative writing projects:

- Literary Analysis
- Source Paper
- Argument Paper

In this 36 minute video presentation shares his students' positive experience with CW. He lists both the challenges and the affordances of CW. I highly recommend watching the entire presentation.

Figure 21

Collaborative Writing Research Presentation from Former GTA

Lecturer Scaffolding Videos. Alignment stems not just from understanding pedagogical best practices but also from knowing procedures for applying them (Wenger, 1998).

Collaborative writing is easier said than done, especially in an online space. The interactive video and GTA research video justified its use as an approach to L2 writing instruction, but we needed the design to scaffold the process of teaching collaborative writing online. For example, GTAs must learn that they cannot use the popular platform Google Docs for collaborative writing because students in China are blocked from access. GTAs should, instead, know to use the university-supported tool, Microsoft Teams. Scaffolded examples support the successful adoption of complex methods in online spaces (Clark & Mayer, 2016). The challenge was that neither the GTA Coordinator nor I possessed detailed knowledge of the procedures instructors used in 1902. To resolve this issue, we wanted to recruit help from someone who taught the course. Veteran GTAs were unavailable due to their exams and dissertation writing, so we turned to a 1902 lecturer. The lecturer shared his screen during a recorded Zoom conference to model many of these procedures. I originally planned to use these discussions to build new scaffolding videos, but I realized that the video created during our meeting organically and more
authentically accomplished my goal, saving time and effort. So, with the lecturer’s permission, I cut the recording from our interview into smaller segments and added on-screen text to highlight key websites, buttons, or steps (see Figure 22). Knowing both the why and the how behind the ESLC Program pedagogical approaches helps GTAs to align their instructional methods and strengthen their professional identity.

Technology for Collaborative Writing (Teams)

CW can occur in person or virtually through the use of collaborative writing tools, such as Google docs, Wikis, and OneDrive. Google Docs, however, will not work if you have students who are taking your course from China.

supports Microsoft Teams, so it is likely that your students will see and use it again in their future classes, making it a good option.

This (02:57) video demonstrates how ESL lecturer, has used Teams to set up the Literary analysis paper as a collaborative assignments with his students. You will learn more about the literary analysis assignment in Module 5. You can also watch this longer webinar produced by to learn more about the different features of Microsoft Teams.

Figure 22

Example Lecturer Scaffolding Video

Module 4: Technology Enabled Learning

Module 4, Technology Enabled Learning, was designed to support new GTAs in developing their ability to teach within multiple modalities. The front-end analysis showed evidence that it is unwise to assume new GTAs have experience teaching online. They expressed a desire for practical support around using the university’s LMS CarmenCanvas as well as strategies for interacting successfully with students in an online course. GTAs told stories of frustration about establishing presence as an instructor, successfully communicating with students, and establishing rapport and community with their students. Indeed, studies have shown that learning to skillfully teach within multiple modalities can stretch GTAs’ professional
identities (X. Chen et al., 2013; Gannon et al., 2021). While Module 3 sought to promote alignment with pedagogical approaches, Module 4 similarly sought alignment with online teaching best practices. To support identity growth, we designed virtual LMS tours and rooted best practices in the challenges GTAs face in online teaching.

**Lecturer Virtual LMS Tours.** The university provides a great deal of support to help instructors familiarize themselves with the LMS *CarmenCanvas*. These resources are helpful to an extent, but they are disconnected from the specific context of ESLC Programs, making them feel irrelevant to new GTAs who want to know how to use the space for their courses. So, rather than incorporating existing university resources in the orientation, we decided to create new, more contextualized videos to help new GTAs align their online teaching methods. However, as in the last module, the GTA Coordinator and I lacked detailed, day-to-day knowledge of how 1902 course instructors use *CarmenCanvas*. Therefore, I again called upon the services of the 1902 course lecturer to share his screen and take me on a virtual tour of his learning environment. Then, as before, I cut the video into small sections focused on just one tool (e.g., *NameCoach*, *Speedgrader*, *Student View*). Next, taking a screenshot of the lecturer’s 1902 course homepage, I was able to use an *H5P* hotspot activity to embed the short videos within information buttons near the tool location on the screen (see Figure 23). The hope was to create a resource that GTAs could come back to at their point of need to quickly learn about a feature for their courses.
Figure 23

Example Lecturer Virtual LMS Tour

GTA Stories of Online Teaching. GTAs interviewed during the front-end analysis struggled with how to teach and interact through the technology available to them. The last section, therefore, needed to provide situated “best practices” for teaching and interacting with students within these spaces (e.g., CarmenZoom, discussion boards). As with the lecturer videos discussed in the last section, we needed a way to promote alignment with best practices for teaching through multiple modalities. The handbook outlined some best practices for establishing instructor presence, establishing communication, and establishing community. I wanted to
connect the handbook’s lists of helpful tips with the problems situated in the ESLC Program context. To accomplish this, I again employed GTAs’ stories directly from the front-end analysis. I chose six quotes that exemplified GTA challenges related to establishing presence, communication, or community. I added illustrations to accompany each quote for visual interest and placed them in an H5P image slider, as seen in Figure 24. The sliders appeared at the beginning of each section creating a context for the list of best practices to follow. The stories were intended to enhance new GTAs’ ability to envision themselves making instructional decisions in an online learning environment, while tips and strategies that followed each stories provided ways to align with best practices.

**Establishing Presence**

By now, “best practices” for online teaching have become plentiful, with most focusing on interaction, which many consider to be the key to learning (see Darby and Lang, 2019). While this seems agreeable, what constitutes effective interaction can be vast and relies on many contextual factors, as well as teachers’ effort and intention. Teacher presence is naturally more difficult to establish in an online course than in a face-to-face course. These former GTAs expressed the difficulties they faced. Use the arrow to see the next slide.

![Image](image.png)

*It was very difficult to be, um, how should I say it [...] to prepare myself to be a lot more warmer across the screen. It was definitely a different experience than sitting across face-to-face.*

**Figure 24**

*GTA Stories Illustrate Online Teaching Challenges*
Module 5: Ready for Day One

The final module, Ready for Day One, was meant to respond to two instructional goals: understanding course design and joining the ESLC Program teaching community. We intentionally saved these goals for the last module because it would take place the week before the GTAs’ first week of teaching and full immersion into the department. The front-end analysis showed that providing the GTAs with a course syllabus and LMS course shell was insufficient to prepare them for day one of their courses. They reported needing more time to understand the course goals, sequence of assignments, and assessments as well as to build instructional activities for each week. They needed to understand the course design and how they could adjust it to make it their own. We promoted deeper course understanding and alignment through authentic lecturer course design videos. For community engagement, we found GTA stories centering community building and introduced Teams as a platform to replicate water-cooler moments.

**Lecturer Course Design Videos.** A course syllabus supplies a great deal of valuable information such as course objectives, materials, and assignments. As we planned to walk new GTAs through the course, we considered creating an H5P hotspot activity with the syllabus, highlighting certain areas with annotation for further explanation. However, a syllabus provides only isolated information; it does not show how an instructor skillfully weaves the pieces together to reach learning goals. To understand this intricate process and align their own instruction with departmental expectations, new GTAs needed to hear an instructor’s perspective. Here, again, videos from the 1902 course lecturer promoted alignment. For example, after a written explanation of the course textbooks, a brief video with the lecturer demonstrated how students in his course interacted with the textbooks (see Figure 25). It explained how the students accessed the course e-textbooks, including difficulties they might face in using access
codes. It further discussed the chapters a typical course could cover and showed how students’ completed work in the textbooks is reported to the LMS grade book. The lecturer videos transformed a two-dimensional syllabus into a three-dimensional understanding of how those texts serve as tools to support the learning objectives. Additional videos shared information about major assignments as well as an explanation of how the assignment sequence helps scaffold the learners throughout the course. Through these videos, new GTAs can gain ownership of their courses and better align their practice with the department.

**Course Materials**

As of Spring 2021, the course uses two textbooks. Students will access these books in different ways. Read more about each text below.

*An Introduction to Choosing & Using Sources* is an open educational resource (OER) book, so it is free for students to use. The text was developed at [University Libraries](https://www.university-libraries.com) with support from [English Language Learners](https://www.ell.org). They can access it through their instructor’s Carmen Course shell. They can read the text online or download it onto their personal computer. The text covers the basics of source-based academic writing.

*Writing for Academic Purposes: An Introduction to Research-Based Projects* is an interactive textbook written by [GTA](https://www.gta.org) and former GTA. The book was written for 1902 and focuses on research writing. Students access this textbook through TopHat, an [support tool](https://www.tophat.com) that integrates easily with CarmenCanvas. Check out this [resource article](https://www.carmencanvas.com) to learn more about TopHat. Students do not have to pay for this textbook. As instructor, you will provide them with a join code at the beginning of the semester. Students may have trouble initially navigating TopHat. Be sure to have your TopHat link and access code displayed prominently on your CarmenCanvas homepage and walk students through using the site in week one.

**Course Materials in Context**

ESL instructor [explains](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1902) the two textbooks in the context of teaching the course in this (03:43) video. Follow along as he shares his screen while exploring the two textbooks from his 1902 Carmen course shell.

![Example Lecturer Course Design Video](https://www.youtube.com/embed/1902)

**Figure 25**

*Example Lecturer Course Design Video*
**GTA Stories of Community.** The second instructional goal was to prepare new GTAs to enter the larger ESLC Program community of practice. As members of the CoP, they would be expected to attend weekly course meetings and contribute to discussions. Comments from the front-end analysis confirmed that membership in the community was both emotionally and professionally productive, but it also illuminated barriers that hinder new members from engaging with their colleagues. We wanted to use Module 5 to remove these barriers and help new GTAs imagine themselves sharing ideas and asking questions. First, we provided a written explanation of the meetings (e.g., purpose, frequency, duration, etc.) from the handbook. Then, to show rather than just tell GTAs about the meetings, we again highlighted stories from veteran GTAs taken during the front-end analysis about the community promotion of teacher solidarity, problem-solving, and the sharing tips, resources, course materials, and cultural information. Figure 26 shows GTA stories arranged on an *H5P* flash card activity. We hoped the stories would promote imagination and engagement through frequent conversations and meetings to solve problems and vent frustrations as demonstrated in the literature (Bhalla, 2019; Christiansen et al., 2018; Gretton et al., 2017).
Course Meetings

Another duty shared by all GTAs, as mentioned in the evaluation section, is to attend course meetings. Each course will have its own course meeting for those who are teaching it. Weekly course meetings are for the purpose of previewing assignments and lesson plans, sharing different ways of doing something, and Q&A for anyone new to teaching the course. They are a way to make sure everyone feels comfortable with the coming week. No preparation is necessary to attend course meetings. We will discuss ways of improving assignments or activities and resolving any problems from the past week. Then we will discuss the syllabus’s upcoming week – the assignments, grading, and any questions the group may have. The GTA Coordinator will be responsible for any materials needed. Participants are welcome to share success stories or activities they have created.

Click the ‘Turn’ button to flip each card and read about GTAs’ experiences related to course meetings.

Sometimes we did have that ideas exchange in 1901 or 1902 weekly meetings, and I learned from too. Sometimes Ivan or Karen will ask, what would you do? What frustrations did you have? How do you solve it? What other ideas have helped. Let’s help solve this problem together. It’s something I feel is very helpful.

Card 2 of 5

Figure 26

GTA Stories Highlight the Benefits of the ESLC Program Community

Teams Space for Water-Cooler Moments. Module 5 provided a space to start a conversation about the importance of belonging to and engaging with a professional community. We knew that the weekly course meetings, held on CarmenZoom, would continue these conversations, but as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, new GTAs would not experience the informal connections and conversations that occur in a shared office space. The GTAs in the front-end analysis talked about how running into other instructors in the hall or stopping into the coordinator’s office provided “water-cooler” moments that created additional opportunities for
engagement. To recreate this in the virtual community of practice, we discussed using *Microsoft Teams*. The *Teams* space afforded asynchronous messaging and a place to store files shared during meetings. Additionally, while the *CarmenCanvas* shell provided a good space for the orientation, it was exclusive of other members of the larger community (e.g., veteran GTAs, lecturers, course designers, administration). A transition from the LMS into the *Teams* space would open the community up to all members. Though we were hopeful that *Teams* would create additional community space, we had concerns about introducing new technology to new GTAs. We ultimately decided to introduce the *Teams* community space early in the orientation in form of the Module 1 assignment. We reasoned that we could slowly introduce new GTAs to the space by directing any general orientation questions to a *Teams* channel. The assignment introduces the space and requires them to write one question (see Figure 27). I created a video walk-through of the space to further support understanding and usage.

This week, we want you to become familiar with the ESL Composition Virtual Community of Practice (CoP) space. This course takes place on *CarmenCanvas*; however, after this course, you will be expected to remain engaged with others in ESL Composition through the tool *Microsoft Teams*. *Microsoft Teams* is a free tool sponsored by [ ] that provides a place for you and your ESL Comp colleagues (e.g., other GTAs, full-time lecturers, course designers, and GTA coordinator) to communicate and share resources online. You will be expected to check in with this space often to look for announcements, share resources for your classes, and ask questions when you need support. This space will help reduce the amount of work-related emails coming into your inbox. Instead, use the chat feature, channels, and files area to organize your work discussions and projects.

Watch this video to help familiarize you with your CoP space.

![Module 1 Assignment to Introduce Microsoft Teams](image)

This week’s assignment is to write a post in the “GTA Orientation Questions” channel. Write at least one question you had about Module 1 content. Use this space throughout the 5-week course to ask questions that you have about the course materials or about teaching in ESL Composition in general. Your instructor will check this space routinely to provide an answer. Feel free to respond to one another’s posts as well.

- Here is the link to the Team space:

**Figure 27**

*Module 1 Assignment to Introduce Microsoft Teams*
Summary

We began the orientation design process by building the LMS virtual learning environment on the architectural blueprints from Wenger’s (1998) enabling structures, three modes of belonging, and Crenshaw’s (1989) Intersectionality to focus design elements around identity development. The enabling structures, support and sponsorship, warmly welcomed new GTAs into the module and invited their participation. The three modes of belonging infrastructure resulted in a module structure with an introduction, content pages, asynchronous discussion, synchronous meeting, and reflection assignment. These components shifted slightly in the final design, but they remained aligned with the three modes. The shift resulted in design element threads that reinforced each module: GTA stories of imagination, asynchronous and synchronous discussions linked together for engagement, artifact assignments for engagement, and reflection callout boxes for imagination. Each element promotes expression of belonging. The GTA stories additionally addressed the marginalization of the IGTAs’ salient identities through authentic stories of bias and discrimination in the ESLC Program classrooms. New design elements emerged during the design process, each influenced by the identity theoretical framework. The learner experience of the pre-planned and emergent design elements is discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE: DESIGN FEEDBACK, REFLECTIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The value of a design case is determined by its trustworthiness and rigor to hold up as a precedent for future designs (K. M. Smith, 2010). Smith (2010) elaborated:

By gathering, analyzing, and presenting data from multiple people, in varied formats, and at different points throughout the process, the design case author increases the likelihood of identifying key elements of the case, and of presenting to the reader a more comprehensible view of the design process and outcomes (p. 12).

The front-end analysis, weekly design team meetings, and ad hoc support from one English as a Second Language Composition (ESLC) Program lecturer contributed to the design case trustworthiness and rigor in the early and middle stages of design. To gather feedback about the final design, The GTA Coordinator and I elected to conduct learning experience design (LXD) interviews and a pilot with an evaluation survey. The LXD testing included remote, synchronous interviews with eight participants possessing a variety of perspectives (i.e., five current program GTAs, two program lecturers, and one former program administrator). The pilot, run by the GTA Coordinator, resulted in four completed surveys from current program GTAs. The LXD interview protocols and pilot survey items can be seen in Appendix J and K respectively. The feedback discussed here foregrounds how the participants experienced the design elements presented in Chapter 4. This chapter discusses the feedback as it illuminated both positive outcomes and areas for growth. Design recommendations and conclusions follow.

Design Feedback

Wenger’s (2004) enabling structures and three modes of belonging as well as Crenshaw’s (1989) Intersectionality undergirded the design to create a virtual community of practice (VCoP) for IGTAs. Each theoretical component promotes belonging and develops
educator identity. Table 7 describes the theoretical constructs and shows how the design elements described in Chapter 4 align with each. The remainder of this chapter will explore how LXD interview and survey participants experienced each of these design elements.

Table 7

Alignment of the Theoretical Constructs with Design Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Constructs</th>
<th>Construct Descriptions</th>
<th>Design Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Support                | The provision of resources, time, and space for the community to continue its work (Wenger, 2004); Ongoing professional development (Ghanem, 2018) | • Mirror 1902 Course Structure  
• Welcoming, Conversational Tone  
• Active Learning (H5P)  
• Situated Content |
| Sponsorship            | The legitimization of the CoP and their work by encouraging their solutions for the classroom (Wenger, 2004); Respect for new GTAs’ ideas (Gretton et al., 2017) | • Synchronous Space to Share  
• Invitation to Research |
| Imagination            | Participants envision themselves as members of the profession (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Wenger, 1998). | • GTA Coordinator Avatar Videos  
• Stuff You Should Know Callout Boxes  
• GTA Stories  
• Reflection Callout Boxes  
• Interactive video  
• GTA Research Presentation  
• Lecture Videos |
| Alignment              | Participants align themselves with domain best practices (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Gretton et al., 2017). | • Asynchronous and Synchronous Meetings  
• Tools for Supporting Students  
• Artifact Assignments  
• Teams Space for Water Cooler Moments |
| Engagement             | Engagement supports continuity of the practice through elements such as documentation and storytelling to jointly solve problems, negotiate meaning, and create artifacts (Wenger, 1998, 2000). | • GTA Stories of NNSE Bias and Discrimination  
• GTA Stories of Students’ cultural adjustments |
**Enabling Structures**

We attempted to infuse enabling structure in the design, especially support and sponsorship, knowing that recognition would come in later portions of the GTAs’ educator journey (e.g., peer and coordinator observations during the first semester). For support, we focused on making materials welcoming and engaging by adopting a conversational tone and adding in H5P activities. Participants found that the conversational tone and interactive elements throughout the orientation materials also helped them to enjoy the content. One LXD participant remarked that she “found it enjoyable reading the texts. It didn’t feel like reading a manual.” A survey response similarly called the tone “friendly,” giving “a welcoming impression.” Another LXD participant liked that the H5P interactions made the content “not boring” explaining, “it’s not just words; that’s important to me.” Others agreed, remarking on how the inclusion of graphics and interactions broke up the information and made the pages “attractive” and “appealing to the eye.”

Despite feeling welcomed, some evaluation participants noted that the amount of orientation content was “a lot” and “text dense” at times. This could add to new GTA anxiety if they perceive that their participation will be assessed with the reflection questions or the self-check questions. One LXD participant explained:

I can't tell the difference between what's being used to assess my ability as a GTA and possibly cause me to lose my status versus something that's just for reflection. So, there's this constant bubbling anxiety in the back of any new GTA's mind that they could click the wrong dot on a quiz and then get rejected somehow.
We responded to this feedback by rewording some of the introductory materials to frame the orientation as a resource that could be revisited at any time during GTAs’ employment in the program.

With regards to support, we also added elements throughout the design with the intention of situating the orientation materials and activities firmly in the ESLC Program context. LXD and survey participants provided feedback that the design contained “rich” and “detailed” content that was context specific. By situating the training in authentic stories and voices from GTAs and the program lecturer, the new GTAs can gain a better sense of their role. One LXD participant appreciated the contextualized nature, remarking, “Even though I taught composition, I recognized that I had no idea what their curriculum was at [university name] or who these students were going to be or what their expectations were.” As new instructors, it is difficult to know what questions to ask at first. This orientation provided a foundation to help them wrap their minds around being an educator in the ESLC Program. An LXD participant remarked that the orientation provided a “step-by-step” process of getting to know the people and the program from which they could “ask little other questions related with that.”

For sponsorship, we encouraged new GTAs to share their voice in synchronous discussions and invited them to participate in research for ESLC Programs. The section on engagement highlighted that LXD and survey participants felt comfortable and eager to share their voice in the synchronous meetings. Others mentioned that having the synchronous meetings structured around specific topics helped them to focus and prepare what to say. One LDX participant explained, “I’ve been in teacher meetings […] throughout my journey. […] And, you know, if it’s really general, nobody says anything. And it’s hard to navigate because you don’t
want to force people to talk, but then you want this to be productive.” Sharing the discussion topics in advance of synchronous meetings gives new GTAs the space to prepare their ideas.

Additionally, participants appreciated the call to conduct research. The invitation shows new GTAs that their work outside of the program, in their courses and research, are welcome and encouraged during their time as a GTA. One LXD participant remarked:

I like what she said here. ‘I’m always interested in GTA research projects. If you need a sounding board for brainstorming, come find me.’ So, it also provides some kind of like more proactively offer GTAs opportunities to work with her.

Of the three enabling structures (i.e., support, sponsorship, and recognition) department administrators should consider, we found ways to incorporate support and sponsorship into the orientation space with promise of recognition in later professional development opportunities. In fact, after participating in the design case, the GTA Coordinator was inspired to create a newsletter that would feature GTA accomplishments (e.g., publications, awards) and even life updates (e.g., birth of a new family member, new job). The newsletter along with planned observations can support new GTA recognition along with the support and sponsorship ideas discussed in this orientation design.

**Imagination**

Imagination helps new GTAs envision themselves as members of the department (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Wenger, 1998). They must understand the department's history, mission, structure, and personnel to see where they fit in the puzzle. Additionally, they need an opportunity to picture themselves interacting in the department. Reflection, as a final piece of imagination, encourages new GTAs to connect their experiences with their new roles. Several design elements were influenced by imagination as a mode of belonging, including GTA
Coordinator Avatar Videos, Stuff You Should Know Callout Boxes, GTA Stories, and Reflection Callout Boxes. The LXD interviews and surveys illuminated how participants experienced each design element.

**GTA Coordinator Avatar Videos.** The GTA Coordinator Avatar videos were meant to promote imagination through orientation of new GTAs to the program, its history, and it’s people. The videos introduced new GTAs to people “who are the major, big people in the program” so they know who to ask for help. We further hoped to help new GTAs imagine themselves as part of the ESLC Program community. One survey response indicated that the videos fulfilled this role:

I learned more about the history of the ESL program through this course, which made me feel that I have joined a welcoming and supportive community. I felt like I have people in the ESL community that I can turn to if I encounter difficulties in teaching.

The videos were also an attempt to replace the GTA Coordinator’s warm reception new GTAs would receive pre-COVID-19. LXD participants were delighted by the avatar, calling it “reassuring” and “comforting.” One survey response called the avatar “a pleasant improvement over generic figures and disembodied voice-overs.” Another noted, “I was so amazed by her [GTA Coordinator avatar], you know, this image. It really matched with her appearance. The video is made for this orientation. It's not like, um, borrowed from a YouTube video.” The avatar’s resemblance to the GTA Coordinator appeared to increase her presence and support in the VCoP.

**Stuff You Should Know Callout Boxes.** The Stuff You Should Know Callout Boxes provided bite-sized bits of information and jargon used in the department. The intention was to highlight acronyms and structures that are often taken for granted by people who have been in
the department a long time. If they heard an acronym (e.g., EHE, ALP) in passing, they could quickly find the answer in the callout boxes. The LXD participants appreciated the boxes. One explained, “You hear so many names and acronyms and departments, and you see people, and you have no idea how they fit into everything.” Feedback indicated that the boxes were useful resources to which new GTAs could return for quick refreshers.

**GTA Stories.** GTA stories featured prominently in multiple modules as discussed in Chapter 4. Module 2 highlighted stories of student interaction, Module 4 featured stories of online teaching, and Module 5 drew attention to stories of community. LXD participants described the GTA stories as “real” and “authentic” cases that “could really happen.” One LXD participant remarked, “I think that they’re good because they're always very on point. So, they're always […] a problem that they did have specifically. I think making the quotations very prominent is a good idea.” The stories help new GTAs see themselves interacting with students and solving problems in their future courses, promoting the modes of both imagination and engagement. One survey response remarked succinctly that “the experiences shared by previous GTAs through quotes were very helpful for me to imagine [emphasis added] scenarios and strategies in my future classes.”

**Reflection Callout Boxes.** Reflection Callout Boxes spaced throughout the modules provided a space for new GTAs to pause and make connections to the orientation content. One LXD participant explained, “Yeah. I like the [reflection] questions here. It kind of, it gets them [GTAs] to think about their own experiences and what they might do. I think this is good.” Several LXD participants similarly found value in the reflection points but felt they would skip over them without further incentive such as being asked to discuss their reflections later on. One LXD participant recommended tying the reflections to the synchronous discussions “because if
I'm going to maybe be asked these questions again in the synchronous, then I'll think about it more, to be honest.” She reasoned, “Because I think the questions are interesting, but I would kind of want to be able to hear what others think or share my reflection.”

Alignment

New GTAs can also express belonging by subscribing to domain best practices, through “coordination of their energies, actions, and practices” (Wenger, 1998, p. 121). Alignment involves buying into the departments’ pedagogical approaches as well as adopting instructional practices in line with the approaches. The Interactive Video and GTA Research Videos were designed to promote alignment by justifying the pedagogical approaches. Additionally, videos featuring an ESLC Program lecturer hoped to tell and show new GTAs how to align their classroom practices. The LXD and survey feedback reveals first impressions of these design elements.

Interactive Video. The interactive video provided an in-depth explanation of collaborative writing. LXD participants appreciated being told the GTA Coordinator’s expectations and the source-based rationale that justified them. One LXD participant explained that “having sources and feeling like this is a legitimate thing that research really backs up is critical.” The explanations can support new GTAs as they reconcile their teaching beliefs in a new space. One survey response explained, “becoming aware of how my own teaching philosophy sits within the greater heritage of ESL instruction is useful for understanding how other instructors, students, or researchers may understand and respond to my teaching.”

GTA Research Presentation. The video featuring a veteran GTA’s classroom research with collaborative writing was meant to provide further justification for the ESLC Program’s approach to teaching L2 writing. The LXD feedback, however, indicated that participants
appreciated how the video presented “the opportunity for students to transition from merely teachers or merely researchers to teacher-researchers […] who truly shape the field in a positive and effectual way.” The video appeared to promote both alignment and imagination, as GTAs envision themselves conducting their own classroom research to improve the department and domain.

**Lecturer Videos.** Videos featuring an ESLC Program lecturer appeared in several modules. Module 3 videos provided scaffolding for how to conduct collaborative writing assignments. In Module 4 videos, the lecturer highlighted features of the LMS *CarmenCanvas* and how to integrate them into teaching. In Module 5 videos, the lecturer provided detailed explanations of the 1902 course structure, materials, and assignments. The LXD participants valued the videos because they would help new GTAs “see how somebody else does it.”

Similarly, participants appreciated that the videos, especially the LMS tours, drew attention to helpful features that new GTAs do not typically figure out until “two or three years in.” However, while participants liked the ‘how to’ videos, they pointed out that new GTAs “will still need hands-on experience with it.” Similarly, LXD feedback noted that new GTAs need to know how far they can deviate from the lecturer’s model. One participant explained:

> As a new GTA, or like in any new position or job, the question between ‘I want to do a good job and I want to meet the expectations’, but how much deviation am I allowed to do? So, I think like hearing the instructor helps to explain how they’ve done it and why they do it that way. But maybe as a new GTA, I might wonder like, ‘Okay, should I do it exactly like that? Or […] am I allowed to sometimes, you know, modify things or not?”
Engagement

Engagement, as the final mode of belonging, describes how new GTAs can express belonging through professional dialogue and mutual activities. It is a space for interacting and developing artifacts to support practice (Wenger, 1998, 2000). The orientation design included asynchronous and synchronous spaces to promote engagement through professional dialogue. We also added a Teams space to extend the dialogue beyond the orientation and LMS space. Additionally, we designed the Tools for Supporting Students and Assignments around the notion of preparing artifacts for the classroom. Evaluation feedback of these design elements highlighted the potential value of these spaces.

Asynchronous and Synchronous Discussions. Asynchronous and synchronous discussions were planned as space where new GTAs can begin to share ideas and help one another. One survey response described the spaces as a place to “envision future difficulties and discuss them organically.” The spaces seemed to lower initial feelings of anxiety. One LXD participant noted that “knowing the concerns of other people that might align with mine, […] that'll make me feel more comfortable to share.” The opportunity to share views across multiple platforms (e.g., discussion board and CarmenZoom) helped to further reduce fears:

New GTAs who may feel self-conscious posting written texts in the discussion may have a chance to elaborate their points in the synchronous session. Similarly, people who feel more self-conscious talking in synchronous sessions may feel more comfortable to express in the written form.

However the asynchronous and synchronous spaces are used, they lay the foundation for professional collaboration. One LXD participant called it “an opportunity for us to help each
other.” He elaborated, “I have multiple publications that I would not have had without anyone's help.”

**Teams Space for Water-Cooler Moments.** We tried to replicate the informal discussions that GTAs have with one another, their coordinator, and other colleagues, a virtual space using *Microsoft Teams*. LXD data revealed participants were unfamiliar with the platform and lacked the willingness to navigate outside of the *CarmenCanvas* orientation space. In fact, the pilot participants did not use the space at all. One LXD participant wondered, “Why do I have to ask questions there in *Microsoft Teams*? I mean, can I just ask questions to [the GTA Coordinator] or just post questions to the discussion board?” Future design iterations need to address this concern by collapsing the orientation LMS and *Teams* space or by lowering the barrier to use.

**Tools for Supporting Students.** In Module 2, we described designing tools that new GTAs could use to engage with their students. We made videos that they could quickly share with students to support discussions around academic cultural differences. LXD participants expressed eagerness to use the videos. For example, one LXD participant felt the video that explained how to communicate with professors in U.S.-based classrooms could be a springboard for future discussions. She remarked that “emailing professors, you know, that's something very new to these students. So, this could start off as a general platform in leading to more specific ones that are more related with writing.” Other feedback viewed the tools as a time-saving device:

Well, a lot of students tend to actually say cultural adjustment is difficult, and, um, I never had the time to really address this in like length, to be honest, because there's so
much content to cover for writing. [...] So, um, knowing how to probably, I don't know, tap into those areas naturally somewhere in your course, in my course, will be great.

**Assignments.** The assignments were re-envisioned during the design process as opportunities for new GTAs to develop artifacts for their classroom (i.e., welcome video, online scheduler, online survey). Most LXD participants considered the module assignments “practical”, “helpful”, and “a good idea.” Several admitted that they had wanted to incorporate an online scheduler into their courses but lacked time to try it out. Playing with the tools as assignments before classes started created this time. One LXD participant further explained she would be more motivated to build the tools during orientation because “it’s kind of fun because you’re doing it with other people. It’s not like a chore.”

**Intersectionality**

Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) centers the lived experiences of those who are subordinated and oppressed because of the intersection of their salient identities within a certain context. Module 2 used IGTA stories to draw attention to the bias and discrimination some have faced in the ESLC Program space. As we noted, the stories helped GTAs to imagine themselves resolving these issues. Additionally, though, the LXD and survey participants found the discussion of their students’ cultural adjustments in Module 2 also promoted self-reflection of their personal cultural strengths as educators. Participants drew a parallel between their students’ experiences and their own. A survey response noted, “The academic cultural adjustments section prepared me better before entering my classrooms. I was able to reflect on my own culture and also increase my awareness that my students would be from diverse cultures.” Another explained:
‘Cause they're [students] in a foreign country, it's inevitable that they'll feel like they're not part of the core community. It's, it's impossible for them to feel it that way when they first come here. And even after many years. Just personally, I feel that way. But it's important to let them know that I endorse, you know, them adjusting here. I'm here for them when they feel like they're not fitting in because that could happen in their personal life.

As new GTAs prepare for a classroom of students whose experiences often mirror their own, they are encouraged to consider how to support and celebrate their students’ differences by first honoring their own.

**Design Reflection**

The design process was non-linear and messy as we wove together elements to respond to the instructional goals and build opportunities for belonging through the theoretical framework of Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998) and Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). Early planning of the learning environment around enabling structures and the three modes of belonging helped to direct the design and promote a sense of belonging and educator identity development for new GTAs. Additional elements emerged during the design process that aligned with the theoretical framework. The LXD interviews and survey results outlined positive design outcomes as well as areas for growth, which are summarized below.

**Positive Outcomes**

The evaluation feedback about the design was overwhelmingly positive. In general, evaluation participants felt it would alleviate anxiety for new instructors and make them feel “like they’re ready to rock and roll.” This feedback stands in stark contrast to how front-end analysis participants described their first weeks as a new GTA, using words like
“overwhelming”, “dreadful”, “not smooth”, and “struggle.” By using the enabling structures of support and sponsorship, we were able to create a foundation that fostered sense of belonging by making new GTAs feel safe and valued. Support through mirroring the ESLC Program course structure, conversational tone, active learning opportunities, and context-specific content helped new GTAs feel welcome in the five-week orientation. Additionally, sponsorship efforts via topic-driven discussions and an early invitation to research gave new GTAs avenues and assurances for their voices to be heard. This survey participant’s comment summarized the potential impact of these efforts on new GTAs:

I think having a chance to think about all this upcoming journey itself is already a good step to start preparing for their classes. That way, they will engage in critical reflection more often and in-depth. Courses like this should make them feel less scared when they are first assigned to teach new courses.

Additionally, certain key design elements stood out as innovative ways to promote the three modes of belonging. First, the GTA stories, pulled largely from the front-end analysis, created many spaces for new GTAs to imagine their role as instructor of record (IoR) in the ESLC Program. The authenticity of the stories fostered reflection and spurred an exchange of ideas and joint problem solving, both hallmarks of a strong community of practice. Additionally, the short lecturer videos helped show rather than simply tell new GTAs how they can align their instructional practices with the department. As an authority on the course design, materials, and assignments, the lecturer provided procedural knowledge that would normally take new GTAs many semesters to master. Finally, the asynchronous and synchronous discussion spaces encouraged engagement within the community. One survey respondent noted, “This course helped me connect with my supervisor, previous GTAs both through the Carmen assignments
and the synchronous session.” They paved the way for continued discussions during weekly course meetings, professional development opportunities, and professional collaborations.

**Areas for Growth**

The resulting design, as a first iteration, had clear areas for growth. First, feedback for the enabling structures revealed there must be clear expectations early in the orientation about how, if at all, GTAs will be assessed. We failed to make it clear that the self-check questions and reflections were just for formative learning, designed to help them pause and engage with the materials. We remediated this design failure by explicitly calling the orientation a resource with not points or grades attached in the syllabus. Additionally, we made it clear that the reflection callout boxes would be revisited in the synchronous discussions, so GTAs should prepare to discuss their reflections verbally. Next, feedback indicated that new GTAs could achieve alignment by seeing many aspects of their future courses explained and modeled by an experienced lecturer. However, evaluation participants expressed a desire for hands-on exploration of the space. A hands-on orientation would help them internalize and own the course as well as modify it to their unique teaching styles. Finally, feedback showed that evaluation participants were confused by the additional Teams space for water-cooler moments. They did not want to learn a new platform in addition to learning the LMS, CarmenCanvas. These two spaces should be simplified to one to streamline navigation and remove extraneous load (van Merriënboer & Sluijsmans, 2009), leaving new GTAs to focus on learning.
Conclusion

*I think I'll be less overwhelmed knowing that [...] there is a formal setting for me to learn because without such things it's, you know, sometimes people don't feel like they're brave enough to ask all these questions because you feel like it's just your job.*

- *Former ESLC Program International Graduate Teaching Assistant*

The goal of the orientation design transcended simply preparing new GTAs, domestic and international, for their first days and weeks in the classroom. The design was grounded in the theoretical framework of Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998) and Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) to intentionally foster a sense of belonging and identity development. It created a space for new GTAs to view teaching as more than “just your job,” but as an opportunity to cultivate an identity as an educator at the intersection with their other salient identities. The space was especially needed for IGTAs who face additional hurdles to ‘fitting the mold’ of GTAs in U.S.-based universities. A five-week orientation seeded a virtual community of practice in which new GTAs could overcome anxiety about teaching in a new context, with new pedagogical approaches, and new students.

As a design team, we set out to build an orientation as a virtual community of practice and to establish precedent for future designers working in a similar space. To do this, we designed the learning environment around the architecture prescribed by Wenger’s (1998) Community of Practice (e.g., enabling structures and three modes of belonging) and Crenshaw’s (1989) Intersectionality. First, we wove the enabling structures of support and sponsorship into the learning environment. Then, we built our module structure, shifting to accommodate the realities of our learners and limitation of resources. Further, as we considered how to reach the
instructional goals for each module as identified in the front-end analysis, new design elements emerged that further promoted the three modes of belonging and Intersectionality. Design elements helped new IGTAs imagine their new roles through veteran GTA stories and reflection, align their practice through lecturer videos, and engage in professional dialogue in linked asynchronous and synchronous discussions. Further, new IGTAs are encouraged to draw from their own salient identities as a strength in the classroom. They can pull from their cultural and linguistic identity to better support their multicultural students as they transition to a new academic culture.

This design case, rooted in an identity theoretical framework and front-end analysis, created precedent for future designs by illuminating several design elements that can support the educator identity development of new IGTAs in the ESLC Program. In doing so, it answered a call in the empirical literature to show how to design a virtual community of practice for GTAs (Lantz-Andersson et al., 2018; S. U. Smith et al., 2017). The design case provided rich, detailed explanations of platforms, tools, and activities employed to create the orientation. It also discussed in detail how these design elements were each influenced by the components of the theoretical framework. LXD interviews and pilot surveys added rigor and trustworthiness to the design by illuminating how participants experienced the design elements. Recommendations for future design include: considering support and sponsorship early in the constructing the learning environment, incorporating authentic I GTA voices and problems to contextualize the content, balance scaffolding with opportunities for hands-on exploration, follow reflection with written and verbal discussion, and focusing on a single virtual platform that can be used for continuous professional development. An orientation with these elements can lay the foundation for professional dialogue and collaborations that will buoy IGTAs’ educator identity. Hopefully,
future designers can draw inspiration from this design case as a precedent for supporting IGTAs’
educator identity development with a virtual community of practice.
REFERENCES


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http://www.proquest.com/docview/1877649174/abstract/6956C045B14E4F41PQ/1


APPENDIX A

IRB Approval from Degree-Granting University

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<td>Needs assessment for GEA Training in ESL Composition Program</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
<td>Jackie Gottschaugher</td>
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<td>12/08/2020</td>
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APPENDIX B

The Research Site University’s Letters of Permission for the Study

September 14, 2020

Dear Jackie,

As a doctoral student from the University of Memphis in Instructional Design & Technology, combined with your knowledge, skills, and disposition toward online learning, we are proud to approve your request for you to conduct your study, specifically focusing on designing and developing an online training for the GTAs in ESL Composition.

We understand that your plan is to conduct a needs analysis in Fall 2020, followed by course construction and usability testing in Spring and Summer 2021, leading to a Fall 2021 pilot launch. It is imperative to obtain University of Memphis IRB approval before you begin.

For this study, it is recommended that Dr. [REDACTED] be your immediate supervisor, with Dr. [REDACTED] as your liaison between universities.

We wish you well in conducting this study and keep us informed of your progress.

Sincerely,

Patricia Brosnan

Patti Brosnan, Associate Chair
Department of Teaching and Learning
March 18, 2022

To Whom This May Concern:

This is to confirm that Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman, of the University of Memphis, has been granted permission from the English as a Second Language Programs at [University name] to use the following videos related to the GTA training course in the ESL Composition Program for her dissertation and future publications:

1. Example GTA Coordinator Avatar Video (Access to [YouTube Video]) related to ESL Program’s History
2. Video for Communicating in U.S. Universities (Access to [YouTube Video])
3. Video for Comparing High School to College (Access to [YouTube Video])

Ms. Gish-Lieberman collected data in our program in 2021 and created a summer orientation course design with Dr. Karen Macbeth. I am happy to further assist Ms. Gish-Lieberman in any way I can.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ivan Stefano, PhD
Director of ESL Programs
APPENDIX C

Recruitment Materials

Email script to recruit Subject Matter Experts

Dear _____________:

You are being invited to participate in a needs assessment research study related to Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) working in the ESL Composition Program. The purpose of the research is to gather data from various stakeholders to inform the future design and development of a semester-long professional development course for new GTAs in the program. Imperative to the research goal are the perspectives and experiences of GTA trainers. The interview will take 45-60 minutes to complete.

While the research will not result in any direct benefits to GTA trainers, future GTAs will benefit from your interview responses. Your responses will inform the design and development of the future GTA training. Note that all survey and interview data will be de-identified to protect respondent privacy prior to distribution to stakeholders. This research is being conducted by primary investigator, Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman, a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw of the Department of Instructional and Curriculum Leadership at the University of Memphis.

To participate in the study, please email me at jjgshbgh@memphis.edu.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman
Email script to recruit Former GTAs

Dear ______________:

You are being invited to participate in a needs assessment research study related to Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) working in the ESL Composition Program. The purpose of the research is to gather data from various stakeholders to inform the future design and development of a semester-long professional development course for new GTAs in the program. Imperative to the research goal are the perspectives and experiences of former GTAs related to their professional development. The interview will take 45-60 minutes to complete.

While the research will not result in any direct benefits for former GTAs, future GTAs will benefit from your interview responses. Your responses will inform the design and development of the future GTA training. Note that all survey and interview data will be de-identified to protect respondent privacy prior to distribution to stakeholders. This research is being conducted by the primary investigator, Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman, a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw of the Department of Instructional and Curriculum Leadership at the University of Memphis.

To participate in the study, follow email Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman at jjgshbgh@memphis.edu

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen Macbeth
Email script to recruit Current GTAs

Dear ____________: 

Thank you for participating in the GTA survey*. In the last email, you were told that you would be asked at the end of the survey if you can be contacted for a follow-up interview with the primary investigator, Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, the survey did not include this question. In lieu of this, the Jaclyn asks that you contact her directly about participation in a 45-60 minute interview about your professional development needs as a GTA in the ESL composition program.

Please email Jaclyn at jjgshbgh@memphis.edu if you are interested in participating in an interview. If you would like to participate in an interview, please also sign and return the attached consent document to Jaclyn.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen Macbeth

*Note that a survey was originally included as part of the study and was approved in the IRB. However, the data was determined to not significantly impact the design and was, therefore, disregarded.
Email script to recruit Current GTAs for Focus Group

Dear ______________:

As a follow up to the GTA needs assessment study survey and interviews, you are being asked to participate in a focus group to check the accuracy of the study findings. The focus group will comprise other GTAs who participated in the earlier study. If you agree to participate, you will be sent three documents in advance: 1). Ten themes resulting from the survey and interviews, 2). A syllabus for a summer orientation for new GTAs, and 3). A syllabus for an Autumn professional development course for new GTAs. You will be asked to review these documents in preparation for the synchronous, Zoom-based focus group where you will be asked several questions about each to determine how well they reflect the needs discussed during the earlier study. This focus group will take 60 – 75 minutes to complete.

While the research will not result in any direct benefits to current GTAs, future GTAs will benefit from your participation in this focus group. Your responses will continue to inform and strengthen the design and development of future GTA training. Note that all focus group data will be de-identified to protect respondent privacy prior to distribution to stakeholders. This research is being conducted by myself, the primary investigator and doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw of the Department of Instructional and Curriculum Leadership at the University of Memphis.

To participate in the study, please sign and return the attached consent form to jjgshbg@memphis.edu

Sincerely,

Jackie Gish-Lieberman
APPENDIX D

Consent Materials

Consent form for Subject Matter Experts (including GTA Coordinator)

Consent for Research Participation

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<td></td>
<td>Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman, University of Memphis</td>
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Researchers Contact Information  234-855-2021, jjgshbgh@memphis.edu

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The box below highlights key information for you to consider when deciding if you want to participate. More detailed information is provided below the box. Please ask the researcher(s) any questions about the study before you make your decision. If you volunteer, you will be one of about 5 people to do so.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> The purpose of the research is to gather data from various stakeholders to inform the future design and development of a semester-long professional development course for new GTAs in the program. Imperative to the research goal is the perspectives and experiences of current and former GTA trainers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> It is expected that your participation will last 45-60 minutes.  Procedures and Activities: You will be asked to participate in an interview with the lead investigator. The interview will take place on the online video-conference platform, Zoom.  <strong>Risk:</strong> This risk is not considered to be beyond what is experienced in everyday life.  <strong>Benefits:</strong> Some of the benefits that may be expected include directly supporting the professional development of future GTAs in ESP composition programs. There will be no direct benefit to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternatives:</strong> Participation is voluntary, and the only alternative is to not participate.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Who is conducting this research?

Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman of the University of Memphis, Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership is in charge of the study. Her faculty advisor is Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw. There may be other research team members assisting during the study.
What happens if I agree to participate in this Research?

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in an interview about GTA professional development best practice. The interview will take place on the video conferencing platform Zoom. You will be sent a link and password to the password-protected Zoom room the day prior to the interview. Your university ID will be the only personally identifiable information retained by the researcher. The interview should last 45-60 minutes. The Zoom meeting will be video recorded. You may skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable, and you may stop at any time.

The lead investigator may contact you in the future to review quotes or to ask follow-up questions.

What happens to the information collected for this research?

Information collected for this research will be used to inform the design and development of future GTA training programs in the department. The information collected may also be used the lead investigator’s future dissertation work, publications, or presentations. We may publish/present the results in this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

How will my privacy and data confidentiality be protected?

We promise to protect your privacy and security of your personal information as best we can. Although you need to know about some limits to this promise. Measures we will take include: conducting research in a password protected Zoom room and storing interview recordings in a secured, encrypted cloud-based server. Only the lead investigator and the LI’s faculty advisor will have access to the cloud-based server. The data will be stored for a period of time in compliance with the Federal guidelines for keeping data. The data will be de-identified of any personal identifying information after all analysis and member-checking is complete.

Individuals and organization that monitor this research may be permitted access to inspect the research records. This monitoring may include access to your private information. These individual and organization include:

- Institutional Review Board

What if I want to stop participating in this research?

It is up to you to decide whether you want to volunteer for this study. It is also ok to decide to end your participation at any time. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decided to withdraw your participation. Your decision about participating will not affect your relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Memphis.
Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

There are no costs associated with participation in this research study

Will I receive any compensation or reward for participating in this research?

You will not be compensated for taking part in this research

Who can answer my question about this research?

Before you decide to volunteer for this study, please ask any questions that might come to mind. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman at jjgshbgh@memphis.edu. You may also contact the LI’s faculty advisor, Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw at rcknsnsz@memphis.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705 or email irb@memphis.edu. We will give you a signed copy of this consent to take with you.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to consider the information in this document. I have asked any questions needed for me to decide about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions through the study.

By signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been given a copy of this consent document. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, my legal representative or I may be asked to consent again prior to my continued participation.

As described above, you will be video recorded while performing the activities described above. The video will be used for transcription and analysis of data. Initial the space below if you consent to the use of video as described

_____ I agree to the use of video recorded

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<tr>
<th>Name of Adult Participant</th>
<th>Signature of Adult Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</table>

Researcher Signature (To be completed at the time of Informed Consent)
I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understand the information described in this consent and freely consent to participate.

Name of Research Team Member  Signature of Research Team Member  Date
Consent form for GTAs

## Consent for Research Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Needs assessment for GTA Training in ESL Composition Program</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman, University of Memphis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher(s)</td>
<td>Memphis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Researchers Contact Information | 234-855-2021, jjgshbgh@memphis.edu |

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The box below highlights key information for you to consider when deciding if you want to participate. More detailed information is provided below the box. Please ask the researcher(s) any questions about the study before you make your decision. If you volunteer, you will be one of about 16 people to do so.

### Key Information for You to Consider

**Voluntary Consent:** You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the research is to gather data from various stakeholders to inform the future design and development of a semester-long professional development course for new GTAs in the program. Imperative to the research goal is the perspectives and experiences of current and former GTAs related to their professional development.

**Duration:** It is expected that your participation will last 45-60.

**Procedures and Activities:** You will be asked to participate in an interview with the lead investigator. The interview will take place on the online video-conference platform, Zoom.

**Risk:** Some of the foreseeable risk or discomforts of your participation include minimal risk related to the disclosure of your personal beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions related to GTA professional development. This risk is not considered to be beyond what is experienced in everyday life.

**Benefits:** Some of the benefits that may be expected include directly supporting the professional development of future GTAs in ESP composition programs. There will be no direct benefit to you.

**Alternatives:** Participation is voluntary, and the only alternative is to not participate. As a student, if you decide not to take part in this study your choice will not affect your academic status or grade in your class.

### Who is conducting this research?

Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman of the University of Memphis, Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership is in charge of the study. Her faculty advisor is Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw. There may be other research team members assisting during the study.

### What happens if I agree to participate in this Research?

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If you agree, you will be asked to participate in an interview about your professional development experiences. The interview will take place on the video conferencing platform Zoom. You will be sent a link and password to the password-protected Zoom room the day prior to the interview. Your university ID will be the only personally identifiable information retained by the researcher. The interview should last 45-60 minutes. The Zoom meeting will be video recorded. You may skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable, and you may stop at any time.

The lead investigator may contact you in the future to review quotes or to ask follow-up questions.

**What happens to the information collected for this research?**

Information collected for this research will be used to inform the design and development of future GTA training programs in the department. The information collected may also be used for the lead investigator’s future dissertation work, publications, or presentations. Your name may be used in the lead investigator’s dissertation, published reports, or presentations. We may publish/present the results in this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

**How will my privacy and data confidentiality be protected?**

We promise to protect your privacy and security of your personal information as best we can. Although you need to know about some limits to this promise. Measures we will take include: conducting research in a password-protected Zoom room and storing interview recordings in a secured, encrypted cloud-based server. Only the lead investigator and the LI’s faculty advisor will have access to the cloud-based server. The data will be stored for a period of time in compliance with the Federal guidelines for keeping data. The data will be de-identified of any personal identifying information after all analysis and member-checking is complete.

Individuals and organization that monitor this research may be permitted access to inspect the research records. This monitoring may include access to your private information. These individual and organization include:

- Institutional Review Board

**What if I want to stop participating in this research?**

It is up to you to decide whether you want to volunteer for this study. It is also ok to decide to end your participation at any time. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decided to withdraw your participation. Your decision about participating will not affect your relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Memphis.
Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

There are no costs associated with participation in this research study.

Will I receive any compensation or reward for participating in this research?

You will not be compensated for taking part in this research.

Who can answer my question about this research?

Before you decide to volunteer for this study, please ask any questions that might come to mind. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman at jjgshbggh@memphis.edu. You may also contact the LL’s faculty advisor, Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw at rcknsnsz@memphis.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705 or email irb@memphis.edu. We will give you a signed copy of this consent to take with you.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to consider the information in this document. I have asked any questions needed for me to decide about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions through the study.

By signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been given a copy of this consent document. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, my legal representative or I may be asked to consent again prior to my continued participation.

As described above, you will be video recorded while performing the activities described above. The video will be used for transcription and analysis of data. Initial the space below if you consent to the use of video as described.

____ I agree to the use of video recorded.

Name of Adult Participant        Signature of Adult Participant        Date
Researcher Signature (To be completed at the time of Informed Consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understand the information described in this consent and freely consent to participate.

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<th>Name of Research Team Member</th>
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</table>
Consent form for Focus Group Participation

Thank you for your participation in the Autumn 2020 research study regarding a needs assessment for the professional development experiences and needs of graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in ESL Programs at [university name]. Your participation via survey and interviews informed the initial design of an online training and development program for future GTAs.

Now, as an expansion to the initial needs assessment study protocol, you are being asked to participate in a focus group about the design. Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman of the University of Memphis, Department of Instruction and Curriculum Leadership is in charge of the study and will lead the focus group. She is being guided by Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw. You will be one of 8 people asked to participate in the research.

The purpose of this focus group is to check that the information gathered and synthesized from the initial stages of the research study are well-represented in the GTA training and development program design. Should you agree to participate, you will be shared in advance three documents: 1) a list of 10 themes garnered from the survey and interview responses, 2) a syllabus for a summer GTA orientation program, and 3) a syllabus for an Autumn GTA professional development course. During the focus group, you will be asked to share your ideas and opinions on the accuracy of the themes and the soundness of the syllabi based on your previous reflections. At that time, you may also be asked to look at an example of an online module from the proposed summer orientation to check for user-friendliness.

Your participation should take about 60-75 minutes if you elect to participate. Participating in this study is completely voluntary and if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any point. The focus group will take place on Zoom. You will be sent a link and password to the password-protected Zoom room the day prior to the focus group. The Zoom meeting will be video recorded for research purposes. We may publish/present the results in this focus group. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

As a participant in this research study, there may not be any direct benefits for you. You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

If you have questions about the research, you may contact Jaclyn Gish-Lieberman (jjgshbgh@memphis.edu) and Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the University of Memphis Institutional Review Board at 901.678.2705.
STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to consider the information in this document. I have asked any questions needed for me to decide about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions through the study.

By signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been given a copy of this consent document. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, my legal representative or I may be asked to consent again prior to my continued participation.

As described above, you will be video recorded while performing the activities described above. The video will be used for transcription and analysis of data. Initial the space below if you consent to the use of video as described

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Name of Adult Participant    Signature of Adult Participant       Date

Researcher Signature (To be completed at the time of Informed Consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understand the information described in this consent and freely consent to participate.

________________________________________  ____________________________  ____________
Name of Research Team Member    Signature of Research Team Member       Date
APPENDIX E

GTA Coordinator Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview about the professional
development needs of GTAs teaching in the ESL Composition Program. Our conversation will
last about 45-60 minutes. Anything reported from the interview will be done with pseudonyms to
protect your confidentiality. Is it okay if I record the interview for research purposes?

The purpose of this interview is to illuminate ways that we can support new GTAs in ESL’s
composition program. Your responses will inform the design and development of a semester-
long, 3-credit course designed to prepare the GTAs for teaching composition courses. During
this interview, you will be asked several questions. You are not required to answer any of them.
If you would like to skip a question, just say so. Additionally, if you do not understand a
question, feel free to ask for clarification. Do you have any questions or concerns before we
begin the interview? Let’s get started.

1. What philosophies or theories does the ESLC Program adhere to that should be reflected
in the training?

2. What pedagogy does the ESLC Program adhere to that should be reflected in the
training?

3. What would be the ideal knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of GTAs teaching academic
writing in the ESLC Program?

4. How would you describe the actual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of new GTAs
teaching academic writing.

5. How do you account for any gap between the desired and actual knowledge, attitudes,
and behaviors of GTAs in the ESLC Program?

6. How would you rank, in order of importance, the instructional needs that should be met
by any training for the GTAs?

7. What currently exists to support GTA professional development? (e.g., resources,
curriculum, webinars, etc.)
   a. Before their first semester?
   b. During their first semester?
   c. After their first semester?

8. How do GTAs currently support their own professional development, if at all?

9. What do you observe regarding GTA attitudes toward the need for training?
10. How has COVID-19 impacted the duties, and therefore needs, of GTAs?

11. What organizational/departmental policies might impact any GTA training?

12. As the future instructor, how comfortable are you with teaching the course online?
   Especially in the following areas:
   a. Running synchronous sessions
   b. Facilitating asynchronous discussions
   c. Preparing instructional videos

13. What is your vision for the course structure, including (but not limited to) the answers to the following questions:
   a. Where will the course materials reside?
   b. What topics will be covered?
   c. What will be the format for the instructional materials?
   d. How often, if at all, will the GTAs meet synchronously?
   e. How, if at all, will asynchronous discussion be used in the course?

14. What resources exist to support the development of the GTA training?
APPENDIX F

SME Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

(The following introduction will be used for every SME interview though the questions after the intro vary from SME to SME.)

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview about the professional development needs of GTAs teaching in the ESL Composition Program. Our conversation will last about 30-45 minutes. Anything reported from the interview will be done with pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality. Is it okay if I record the interview for research purposes?

The purpose of this interview is to illuminate ways that we can support new GTAs in ESL’s composition program. Your responses will inform the design and development of a semester-long, 3-credit course designed to prepare the GTAs for teaching composition courses. During this interview, you will be asked several questions. You are not required to answer any of them. If you would like to skip a question, just say so. Additionally, if you do not understand a question, feel free to ask for clarification. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin the interview? Let’s get started.

The Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning (formerly)

1. What type of GTA trainings have you supported in the past? (as part of UCAT or otherwise)
   a. Which were the most highly requested/attended? Why?
   b. What training topics have you found to be most effective in supporting GTAs?

2. What did GTAs (domestic and international) seem to struggle with the most?
   a. Domestic
   b. International
   c. What do you view as the source of these struggles?

3. What was your underlying philosophy/theory that guides your GTA training?
   a. Please explain why it supported your training.

4. Had you explored building Communities of Practice as part of GTA support?
   a. If so, what was the impact on GTAs? Successes? Challenges?

5. What recommendations do you have for building a semester-long, online GTA training for a small group of domestic and international GTAs teaching composition?

6. Is there anything that you wish to add?
The Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning

1. What type of GTA trainings have you supported in the past? (as part of UCAT or otherwise)
   a. Which were the most highly requested/attended? Why?
   b. What training topics have you found to be most effective in supporting GTAs?

2. What do/did GTAs (domestic and international) seem to struggle with the most?
   a. Domestic
   b. International
   c. What do you view as the source of these struggles?

3. Does the Drake Institute provide training or resources for GTAs at present?
   a. If so, please share.

4. What is/was your underlying philosophy/theory that guides your GTA training?
   a. Please explain why it supports your training.

5. Have you explored building Communities of Practice as part of GTA support?
   a. If so, what has been the impact on GTAs? Successes? Challenges?

6. How has COVID impacted training needs and trainings/resources available?

7. What recommendations do you have for building a semester-long, online GTA training for a small group of domestic and international GTAs teaching composition

8. Is there anything that you wish to add?
First-Year Writing program

1. How many GTAs are teaching in the First-Year Writing program?

2. How many new GTAs do you typically get each Autumn?

3. What training do you make available to new GTAs
   a. Before, during, and after their first semester of teaching?
   b. What are the key topics of the training?

4. What are the most common problems your GTAs, especially new GTAs, face when they start teaching composition?
   a. What do you view as the source of these problems?

5. What is the underlying philosophy or theory that guides your GTA training?
   a. Please explain why it supports your training.

6. What have been the most successful parts of the GTA training?

7. What have been the greatest challenges to GTA training?

8. Do you provide continuous support the GTAs after their first semester?
   a. If so, what does it look like?

9. How are GTAs encouraged to support one another?
   a. If so, how does this happen formally or informally?

10. Do you encourage GTAs to use resources external to your department (university or otherwise?) for their professional development?
    a. If so, please describe them.

11. How has COVID changed the way your GTAs must teach?

12. How have you adapted your training/support to GTAs because of COVID?

13. Anything else that you would like to share about how to successfully prepare GTAs for teaching composition?

Writing Across the Curriculum

1. What type of training do you offer to GTAs who are teaching writing?

2. When supporting the teaching of writing across campus, which GTA trainings have been the most popular or requested?

3. What is your underlying philosophy/theory that guides your GTA training?
   a. Please explain why it supports your training sessions/workshops.
4. What do GTAs seem to struggle with the most?
   a. What do you view as the source of these struggles?
5. Had you explored building Communities of Practice as part of GTA support?
   a. If so, what was the impact on GTAs? Successes? Challenges?
6. What recommendations do you have for building a semester-long, online GTA training for GTAs teaching writing?
7. Is there anything that you wish to add?
1. What type of GTA trainings have you supported in the past?
   a. Which were the most highly requested/attended? Why?
   b. What training topics have you found to be most effective in supporting GTAs?

2. What did GTAs (domestic and international) seem to struggle with the most?
   a. Domestic
   b. International
   c. What do you view as the source of these struggles?

3. What was your underlying philosophy/theory that guides your GTA training?
   a. Please explain why it supported your training.

4. Had you explored building Communities of Practice as part of GTA support?
   a. If so, what was the impact on GTAs? Successes? Challenges?

5. What recommendations do you have for building a semester-long, online GTA training for a small group of domestic and international GTAs teaching composition?

6. Is there anything that you wish to add?
Introduction to Psychology

1. What type of GTA trainings have you supported in the past?
   a. Which were the most highly requested/attended? Why?
   b. What training topics have you found to be most effective in supporting GTAs?

2. What did GTAs (domestic and international) seem to struggle with the most?
   a. Domestic
   b. International
   c. What do you view as the source of these struggles?

3. What was your underlying philosophy/theory that guides your GTA training?
   a. Please explain why it supported your training.

4. Had you explored building Communities of Practice as part of GTA support?
   a. If so, what was the impact on GTAs? Successes? Challenges?

5. What recommendations do you have for building a semester-long, online GTA training for a small group of domestic and international GTAs teaching composition?

6. Is there anything that you wish to add?
APPENDIX G

Former GTA Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview about your experiences and needs for professional development while teaching ESL composition as a GTA. Our conversation will last about 45-60 minutes. Anything reported from the interview will be done with pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality. Is it okay if I record the interview for research purposes?

As you know, this interview is about your professional development needs and experiences as a GTA. I am interested in these experiences because they will inform the development of a formal professional development opportunity for new GTAs in the ESL composition program. Thus, your perspectives may influence how the course is designed. During this interview, you will be asked several questions. You are not required to answer any of them. If you would like to skip a question, just say so. Additionally, if you do not understand a question, feel free to ask for clarification. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin the interview? Let’s get started.

Questions

1. How confident did you feel about being an academic writing instructor during your first semester of teaching?
   • How did your confidence change over your time as a GTA?
2. To what extent, if at all, did you identify as an academic writing instructor during your first semester of teaching?
   • How did your identity change over your time as a GTA?
3. The ESL Composition program has its own pedagogy that all instructors are required to adopt. To what extent was the pedagogy difficult or easy for you to adopt as a teacher in relation to your past teaching and learning experiences?
   • How did this impact your ability to teach?
4. What were the most difficult aspects about teaching composition in the ESLC Program when you first started teaching?
   • What other challenges did you encounter as you continued to teach?
   • Were there aspects that were still challenging at the end of your assistantship?
5. To what extent did you feel that you needed or wanted professional development support during your time as a GTA?
6. What resources did you need to support your professional development as a writing instructor in the ESLC Program when you first started teaching?
   • What resources did you need as you continued to grow and develop as an instructor in the program?
7. What professional development activities or resources were available through the program?
   • Were their other professional development activities that you pursued that were external to the program? If so, please describe them.
8. To what extent, if at all, did you rely on your fellow GTAs to support your own professional development?
• To what extent did you try to support the professional development of the other GTAs?

8. If you could design a semester-long professional development training for new GTAs in the ESLC Program, what elements would it have?
   a. What structure would be most appropriate for GTAs balancing a busy work, study, and research schedule?
   b. What advice would you give to new GTAs teaching in the ESLC Program?

9. Is there anything else you would like to mention regarding this topic?
APPENDIX H

Current GTA Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview about your experiences and needs for professional development while teaching ESL composition as a GTA. Our conversation will last about 45-60 minutes. Anything reported from the interview will be done with pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality. Is it okay if I record the interview for research purposes?

As you know, this interview is about your professional development needs and experiences as a GTA. I am interested in these experiences because they will inform the development of a formal professional development opportunity for new GTAs in the ESL composition program. Thus, your perspectives may influence how the course is designed. During this interview, you will be asked several questions. You are not required to answer any of them. If you would like to skip a question, just say so. Additionally, if you do not understand a question, feel free to ask for clarification. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin the interview? Let’s get started.

1. What experiences did you have before becoming a GTA in composition that supported your abilities to do your job?
2. In what ways have your past experiences been similar or different to teaching in ESL composition?
3. Tell me about your professional journey as an instructor in ESL Composition at [university name] from your first semester to now. In what ways, if it all, have you gained expertise?
4. How, if at all, does your own research interests intersect with your GAship?
5. How, if it all, will this experience help you to reach your future career goals?
6. What stands out as experiences that helped stretch you as an instructor or made you more confident?
7. What do you wish you knew about your students that would have helped you prepare as an instructor?
8. What do you wish you knew about teaching L2 academic writing that would have helped you to prepare as an instructor?
9. What do you wish you knew about teaching online that would have helped you to prepare as an instructor?
10. How could a formal professional development course help you to apply the knowledge and skills from your degree course work into your classrooms?
11. In what ways, if at all, has the ESL program created a professional learning community or community of practice to support your professional growth?
12. In what ways could the program strengthen a professional community to support your development as an instructor for your present and future career goals?
13. What components would you want in an online professional development opportunity for ESL composition GTAs that hasn’t been mentioned already?
14. What advice would you give to new GTAs?
APPENDIX I

Focus Group Member-Checking Protocol

Thank you all for your willingness to participate in this focus group to check that the data from the initial surveys and interviews in which you participated are accurately reflected in both the found themes and the design for the Summer and Autumn GTA professional development courses. Our conversation will last about 60 minutes. Anything reported from the interview will be done with pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality. Is it okay if I record the interview for research purposes?

The purpose of this focus group is to ensure that your previous inputs are accurately reflected in the course design and objectives of both a Summer orientation and an Autumn professional development course. You should have received several documents prior to this focus group, including: a list of ten themes synthesized from the earlier survey and interviews, a syllabus for a summer orientation, and a syllabus for an Autumn professional development course. During this focus group, I will ask you to review and make any comments, clarifications, corrections, or recommendations about these items. You are not required to provide any input at all. If you have nothing to add to the discussion, please feel free to say so or remain silent. Additionally, if you do not understand a question, feel free to ask for clarification. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin the interview? Let’s get started.

Questions about the ten themes

Several themes were found as a result of your earlier participation in both an online survey and/or individual interviews. Let’s look at those themes now. I will ask you several questions to make sure that these themes represent what the researcher and other key stakeholders in the department need to know to ensure an effective GTA training design.

1. To what extent do these themes reflect what the designers and instructors for any future GTA training and development courses need to know?
2. Which themes, if any, stuck out to you as inaccurately reflecting the viewpoints you stated earlier in either the survey or the individual interviews?
3. Is there anything that you would like to clarify or add to the information presented here that you think would support the researcher in designing future GTA training and development courses?

Questions about the Summer training course design

As the lead investigator, I used the themes - along with guidance from several subject matter experts in GTA training – to design a 5-week, online orientation for new GTAs. The overarching goals for the course are to: 1) prepare GTAs for their first week of teaching, 2) provide a model of online teaching, and 3) engender a community of practice that supports L2 writing instructor
identity development. I will ask you several questions to find to what extent you feel this design will accomplish these goals.

1. This course is designed to last five weeks, beginning in mid-July and ending the week before the Autumn semester begins. How do you feel about the appropriateness of the length of the course?

2. The course is designed to be mostly self-paced with one asynchronous discussion and one synchronous video-based meeting each week. Additionally, the GTAs will be asked to write one 1-2 page reflection each week. How do you feel about the appropriateness of the workload?

3. Next, I would like to look at the course content. Each module has a different topic with several sub-topics.
   a. To what extent do you feel these topics and sub-topics will successfully prepare new GTAs for their first week of teaching?
   b. Do you have any suggestions for the course topics?

4. For modules 2-5, the asynchronous discussion asks the new GTAs to discuss how they would handle a case that they might encounter as the instructor of record.
   a. To what extent do you feel these cases are authentic?
   b. To what extent do you feel they will help prepare future GTAs?
   c. Do you have any suggestions for these cases?

5. Now, I would like to talk about the synchronous sessions planned for each week.
   d. How do you feel about the format of these sessions with 45 minutes for a main speaker, 10 minutes for small group discussion with more veteran GTAs, and a 5 minute wrap up?
   e. How do you feel about the choice of speakers and topics to prepare GTAs for week 1?
   f. Do you have any suggestions for the synchronous meetings?

6. Each week has a reflection assignment.
   g. How do you feel about the format for the reflection assignment?
   h. To what extent do you feel the questions asked in the reflection assignment will support the identity development of the new GTAs?
   i. Do you have any suggestions for the reflection assignments?

7. Is there anything that you would like to add, change, or recommend regarding this summer orientation design?
APPENDIX J

Learning Experience Design Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this study. The aim of this study is to learn the effectiveness of online training modules to prepare new Graduate Teaching Associates (GTAs) to be the instructor of record in ESL composition courses. The training has five modules, but today I’ll ask you to take a closer look at only a few modules. Keep in mind that this course will be taken in the summer, the five weeks prior to GTA’s first semester of teaching. They will complete one module per week. With this in mind, try to remember that this will be the first time many of these GTAs have taught comp or have worked with Carmen as you explore this training.

Your participation will help us to uncover any design problems, discover ways to improve the design, and learn about user preferences. Your participation is voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time. The study is expected to last 60 to 90 minutes. You will be asked to navigate the online modules and complete certain tasks. During this time, you are encouraged to think out loud about your experience. You may also be asked questions about your experience throughout. You will be recorded for the purposes of the study, but you will remain anonymous.

Do you have any questions?

Let’s get started.

I. Course Overview
   a. Please log into CarmenCanvas and select the course called “Course - Summer Orientation 2021.” Share your screen when you are ready.
   b. Take a few minutes to explore the home page for the course. When you are done, I will ask you some questions.
      i. What are your initial thoughts on the home page?
      ii. Any suggestions for improvement?
   c. Now, click on the modules section. Read the 5 module headings and the content headings under each.
      i. What are your initial thoughts on the course scope and sequence?
      ii. What are your initial thoughts on the module and content topics?

II. Example Module Protocol
   d. Click on the Module 1 overview. Take a minute to explore this page.
      i. Where would you learn about the learning objectives for this module?
      ii. Where would you learn about the learning tasks for this module?
      iii. How does this page prepare you, or not prepare you, for the successful completion of this module?
e. Click on the first content page: ESL Program Mission. Take a minute to explore this page.
   i. Where would you find information about where [university name’s] international students come from?
   ii. Where would you find the ESL program mission statements?
   iii. There are a few “Reflection” points on the page. How do you think you would use or not use these?
   iv. Where would you check your understanding of the content on the page?
f. Click ‘Next’ to go to the next content page in module 1. Take a minute to explore this page.
   i. How would you find out how ESL composition has evolved over the past 70 years?
   ii. Where would you learn more about all of [university name’s] ESL programs?
   iii. How would you learn more about the team you would work with in ESL composition?
g. Click ‘Next’ to go to the next content page in module 1. Take a minute to explore this page.
   i. Where would you go to learn more about the 6 goals of ESL composition courses?
   ii. How you learn more about each of the courses taught in ESL composition?
   iii. How would you learn more about how undergraduate and graduate students are placed into ESL composition courses?
h. Module 1 Debrief Questions
   i. Now, I want to ask you a few questions about your experience with Module 1
      1. What were your impressions of the aesthetics and tone of the pages?
      2. What were your impressions of the layout, organization, amount of content of the pages you saw?
      3. What were your impressions of the navigation and functionality of learning activities?
      4. What were your impressions of how the content was presented or your interactions with that content?
      5. How do you think the content and presentation of content would impact your learning?
      6. In what ways would you use this learning tool?
      7. How would you improve the design if you could?
APPENDIX K

Pilot Evaluation Survey

This course evaluation is meant to help us strengthen the design and effectiveness of this course for future implementations. Your answers are anonymous. Please give us your honest opinion.

1. Select the response the best reflects your level of agreement for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel more prepared to teach ESL Composition as a result of this course.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will likely use this course as a resource during my first semester of teaching.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like a part of the ESL Composition Community of Practice as a result of this course.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>This course has effectively modeled how to use Carmen for my own course.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of this course, I am more likely to seek out support from the GTA Coordinator or other instructors in ESL Composition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How, if at all, has this course prepared you for teaching your own course?

3. How, if at all, has this course helped you feel connected to the ESL Composition Community of Practice?

4. Select the response that best reflects your level of agreement for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The content pages supported my preparation as an instructor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The discussion posts supported my preparation as an instructor.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assignments supported my preparation as an instructor.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. How, if at all, did the course components (i.e., content pages, reflection questions, discussions, synchronous sessions, and assignments) support your preparation as an instructor?

6. What suggestions or recommendations do you have to improve any of the course components (i.e., content pages, reflection questions, discussions, synchronous sessions, and assignments)?

7. Select the response that best reflects your level of agreement for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I liked the course aesthetics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the tone of the course materials.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt engaged by the course materials.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt the course layout and navigation were easy to follow.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt the amount of content in each week was appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the way the content was presented in the content pages.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt the scope and sequence of the content topics was appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How well, if at all, did the scope and sequence of the content topics prepare you for future instruction? How could this aspect of the course be improved?

9. How well, if at all, did the course layout, navigation, aesthetic, and/or tone support your learning experience? How could this aspect of the course be improved?

10. How well, if at all, did the presentation of content support your learning experience? How could this aspect of the course be improved?

11. Please provide any final thoughts, feelings, or suggestions to improve future implementations of this course.
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