Illinois State University

- **Summer Training**
  Our summer training program involves a thorough orientation to the school of communication and the role of COM 110 in our general education program, instruction on various pedagogical issues including instructional strategies, grading and evaluation, and creating a positive climate in the classroom. Our pedagogy is student centered and focuses on instructional discussion and experiential learning. We provide video instruction on these pedagogical strategies as well as thorough discussion facilitation guides and numerous activities to meet a variety of instructional strategies. Perhaps our most noteworthy and distinctive aspect of our summer training program is our systematic speech evaluation training.

- **Peer Mentor Program**
  The Department of Communication at Illinois State University takes teaching seriously. In addition to the formal instruction presented in COM 110 training, all new teaching assistants in the department are expected to participate in the mentor program. The mentor program has been developed to help teaching assistants refine their teaching skills by working collaboratively with an experienced graduate student. Teaching assistants are afforded the unique opportunity to teach one section of Communication 110 while simultaneously attending a mentor's class to observe how he or she prepares lectures, and structures exercises, conducts class discussion, evaluates students, and deals with the array of situations and issues likely to arise in the classroom. This structure allows the teaching assistant to observe, apply, perform, and discuss instructional techniques with his or her peer mentor.

- **Pedagogy Seminar**
  This course plays a vital role in the ongoing professional development of graduate students teaching COM 110. The purpose of our weekly meetings is to assist students in becoming more effective instructors. To meet this objective, we discuss matters related to course content and instructional theory. Teaching assistants are also afforded the opportunity to practice their teaching and receive constructive feedback.

Texas State University

- **Pre-Semester Teacher Training**
  The basic course director and basic course administrator (graduate teaching assistant) plan and host a five-day Teaching and Learning Academy (TLA) one week prior to the start of each semester. New instructional assistants are required to attend each day, with graduate teaching assistants and adjunct instructors attending the final day. Each day of training is organized to meet the following objectives:
  - Understand COMM 1310: principled approach, learning objectives, lecture/lab format, & its importance to the department, college, and university.
  - Understand and be able to administer, fairly and consistently, basic course policies
  - Be able to use TRACS university software to set up grade book, post announcements, etc.
Be able to Plan, Prepare, Present, and Assess an experiential lab that meets the course’s learning objectives outlined in the Student Guidebook.

- Be able to use communication in the classroom to develop teacher-student relationships that yield appropriate power and influence.
- Be able to manage student misbehaviors in and out of the classroom.
- Be able to conduct student labs making a favorable impression, being confident, posed, organized, credible, and appropriately assertive.

Each day of the TLA is organized into Instructional Modules: Perceptions, Power, and Learning in the Classroom; First Impressions: Preparing for Your 1st lab; Dark Side of Being a Lab Instructor; Lab Demonstrations; and Basic Course Administration. Though labs are standardized, it is our hope to help each new instructional assistant locate their personal “teaching voice” to create course ownership.

**Instructor Support Materials**
Aside from the materials utilized for the week-long Teaching and Learning Academy training, the basic course director creates, and each year updates, the Student Guidebook. Each student purchases this 250 page text which directs them through the course by providing chapter activities, grading rubrics, exam study guides, and sample examination questions. This text helps students prepare for lab sessions and cuts down on lab preparation time for instructional assistants (e.g., preventing duplication of grading rubrics on speech days).

- The Instructor Resource Manual (IRM) is also created by the basic course director for each instructional assistant, graduate teaching assistant, and adjunct instructor. This 200 page text contains sample syllabi, course rules and regulations, exam procedures, new chapter activities, and research advice for educational practices in higher education.

- The Sample of Student Speeches, created by the Basic Course Director, is offered to each student purchasing a textbook for class. Students are supplied with an online access code that allows them to access six student speeches (three Informative and three Persuasive speeches) and their corresponding speech outlines. Assistants use these sample speeches for in-class activities and homework assignments. We find this helps considerably with the communication apprehension students frequently experience and hope to avoid (Ayres & Huett, 2000).

- Just-In-Time Workshops
  - To avoid information overload for the new instructional assistants, seven preparatory workshops are held at pertinent times throughout the semester.
  - Exam Administration
  - Multicultural Awareness
  - Interpersonal & Small Group
  - Presentational Speaking
  - Informative Presentation
  - Persuasive Presentation
  - Course Wrap-Up

**The Communication Lab**
The primary goal of the Communication Lab is to enhance the oral communication competence of students through application of theory to course instruction and individual skill development. The Lab gives students opportunities to learn by practicing and recording assignments and experiential activities. Both multicultural activities and speech presentations are videotaped. Students then view themselves and engage in self-critique along with a trained staff member who
provides assessment and constructive criticism of student skills. In addition the staff, made up of instructional teaching assistants, work with individual students experiencing communication reticence and communication apprehension.

**University of Nebraska – Omaha**

- **Basic Course Training & Supervision**
  Every fall, the Basic Course Director prepares the instructors, who teach in the Basic Course program, beginning with a week-long "Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation." The sessions include for example, "Smart College Lecturing and Pedagogy," "Micro-teaching," and "Speech Center Consulting," as well the intensive public speaking course training. In addition, the course director continues to conduct, facilitate, and teach weekly two-hour sessions with all speech GTAs to mentor them and guide them in use of teaching strategies, evaluation criteria, grade computations, and other procedures related to teaching public speaking. Each year the director prepares a new GTA Public Speaking Instructor's Manual (220 pages), including detailed daily lesson plans, outlines for every class that the GTAs teach, student grade sheets, and evaluation criteria. In addition, the course director offers workshops for adjuncts and faculty who teach the classes. All basic course instructors and GTAs continue to meet together monthly to discuss the many issues related to basic speech course pedagogy, assessment, materials, etc.

- **High-Tech Classrooms**
  Over the last eight years, the public speaking program has acquired four permanent public speaking classrooms that have been equipped with the latest technology for teaching and recording student speeches. Each classroom is equipped with an instructor’s computer station, a camera, DVD recording equipment, and microphones. A built-in cabinet is attached to a back wall to house the recording equipment and small microphones hang from the ceiling near the front of the room. All students’ speeches are recorded onto DVDs, labeled, and then taken to the speech center. They are viewed in the Speech Center by students as part of required self-assessment assignments and can be used in the creation of student DVD portfolios.

- **The Speech Center Overview**
  The UNO School of Communication Basic Course program offers a state-of-the-art Speech Center, to support all public speaking students. All students enrolled in a basic course can drop by during any of the forty hours the Speech Center is open to receive help in any aspect of their public speaking course.

**University of Nevada – Las Vegas**

With the exception of the Advising staff for COM 100, all instructors go through a training program at the start of each academic year. Over the course of this four-day training session instructors are trained on the ancillary materials for the textbook by the author of the book (or an author of the ancillary materials), receive intensive training on speech grading, are introduced to university and departmental policies ranging from such things as copying to sexual harassment, and produce their syllabi and lecture notes for the first month of the semester. During this orientation GTAs also get time with their immediate VI supervisor to go over any issues relevant to their particular assignment. Additionally, graduate teaching assistants all must complete a three credit course, COM 725: College Teaching in Communication, with the Basic Course Director during their first semester in the program. This class serves as a practicum for first-year GTAs where they finish developing course materials, discuss issues that arise in their classroom, and learn about various teaching philosophies and approaches that help aid them in developing as college instructors.
The basic course program at UNLV contains a regimented and detailed training program for instructors. Training begins several weeks before the start of the semester when all instructors receive a copy of the department’s *Teaching Manual for the Basic Course* and the textbook and ancillary package for their respective course. They are asked to review the materials in time for the start of the four day orientation schedule which begins the week prior to the start of the semester. The second component of the training program is the required Fall course for all first year GTAs, COM 725: College Teaching in Communication. Finally, all instructors are encouraged to participate in the workshops offered through the university’s Teaching and Learning Center.

The teaching manual contains all the information necessary to develop a syllabus for either COM 101 or COM 102, as well as guidelines for grading and requirements and responsibilities for all teachers in the program. At the four day orientation students unpack this manual with the BCD as well as go over a variety of other issues pertinent to their job, the department and the university.

At orientation all instructors participate in grading exercises designed to help streamline the grading practices and expectations within the basic course program. They also receive training from a representative from student conduct on how to handle classroom disciplinary issues as well as report plagiarism. Furthermore, instructors receive instruction on the university’s sexual harassment policy and the rules and regulations regarding FERPA. GTAs also get time to work with their supervising Visiting Instructors and develop their lecture notes and first speech assignments. Finally, they are prepared for entering the classroom on day one. This orientation approach is viewed as a model for the rest of the campus’ departments and as a result has received an exemption from the general university GTA teaching training program that occurs during the same time period.

All GTAs also must take and pass COM 725: College Teaching in Communication during their first semester. This class serves two purposes. First, it is a business meeting where students can discuss issues that arise in their classes, and where the BCD can remind them of certain responsibilities and deadlines associated with instruction. Secondly, it exposes new GTAs to both practical and theoretical elements associated with teaching. For assignments GTAs complete all necessary activities for teaching in the basic course (i.e. create tests, lecture notes, speech assignments), as well as write short papers on pedagogical theories. In the last three years two graduate students have won “Top Paper” in the Basic Course Division at NCA for term papers produced in fulfillment of this class.

During their employment as instructors in the basic course program, all teachers are encouraged to take part in workshops offered by the Teaching and Learning Center on campus. These can help with classroom issues, incorporating technology into the classroom as well as crafting good assignments. This allows for a continuation of professional development for instructors within the program.