CITL Advanced TA Support Program Structure

Launch Date: August 2025
Modality: In-person workshops, monthly cohort meetings, and on-demand consultations with CITL staff
Duration: Two semesters
Tracks:

- **Track 1 – Teaching TAs (Instructor of Record)**: Eligible for the Graduate Teacher Certificate

- **Track 2 – Non-Teaching TAs**: Eligible for the Certificate in Foundations of Teaching

Program Goals

- Cultivate a strong cohort identity among graduate instructors and future teachers.

- Support TAs in designing inclusive, engaging courses and reflecting on teaching practice.

- Provide tailored, just-in-time support for teaching responsibilities or preparation.

- Help participants build professional documentation (teaching philosophy, portfolio, reflections).

- Recognize achievement through CITL teaching certificates.

Track Requirements

Track 1 – Graduate Teacher Certificate (Teaching TAs)

Participants must:

- Teach two semesters at Illinois as instructor of record.
- Attend Graduate Academy or a departmental orientation.
- Complete peer and faculty teaching observations and submit reflective essays.
- Collect and reflect on student feedback (IEF + ICES/FLEX).
- Attend 6+ hours of teaching development workshops (in addition to pre-semester training).
- Develop teaching materials: teaching portfolio, teaching philosophy statement.

Track 2 – Certificate in Foundations of Teaching (Non-Teaching TAs)

Participants must:

- Attend Graduate Academy, equivalent to pre-semester orientation, or 8 hours of workshops.
- Arrange and deliver a mock lesson or single class session observed by a faculty member or CITL consultant; submit a reflection.
- Read and reflect on teaching and learning literature.
- Observe an experienced instructor's class and write a reflective essay.
- Write a teaching philosophy statement.

Program Monthly Schedule for 2025 Fall

AUGUST – Kick off and First Days of Class

Focus: Syllabus design, policies, first day strategies, Canvas setup

Suggested Activities:

Track 1 (Teaching):

- Attend orientation (Graduate Academy or departmental)
- Join cohort kickoff meeting

Track 2 (Non-Teaching):

- Attend orientation (Graduate Academy or departmental) or plan to attend workshops totaling at least 8 hours
- Join cohort kickoff meeting

CITL Workshops:

Note: Please check the CITL Calendar for the most up-to-date workshop information.

- 📅 Aug 19 – *Canvas Bootcamp Part 1: Canvas Course Design Fundamental* (1–2 pm)
- 📅 Aug 19 – *Inclusive Syllabus: Inclusive Policies* (9–10 am)
- 📅 Aug 19 – *Canvas Bootcamp Part 2: Enhancing Navigation and Visual Design with DesignPLUS* (1–2 pm)
- 📅 Aug 26 – *Inclusive Syllabus: Structures & Strategies* (9–10 am)

Canvas Module: First day's class learning materials, Workshop Log

SEPTEMBER – Student Engagement & Early Feedback

Focus: Informal Early Feedback (IEF), cooperative learning, engagement strategies
Certificate Connection: IEF collection (semester 1), teaching development hours

Suggested Activities:

Track 1 (Teaching):

- Attend CITL workshops

    o Required to take one of the IEF workshops first

- Collect IEF during the week of 9/22 – 9/26

- Join the cohort meeting:

    o Discuss IEF results with your peers and CITL

- Submit a few notes or an initial reflection on IEF and classroom engagement strategies

Track 2 (Non-Teaching):

- Practice interpreting **IEF data** collected by teaching TAs in the cohort
    o Debrief with teaching TAs together in a group
- Attend CITL workshops
- Write a reflection on engagement strategies based on IEF results
- Discuss insights in the cohort meeting

CITL Workshops:

Note: Please check the CITL Calendar for the most up-to-date workshop information.

- 📅 Sept 2 – *Inclusive Course Design: Representation & Diverse Voices* (9–10am)

- 📅 Sept 4 – *Art of Teaching Lunchtime Seminar* (12–1 pm, Zoom)

- 📅 Sept 9 – *Facilitating Sensitive Discussions*

- 📅 Sept 10 – *Designing Cooperative Learning* (11:30–12:45 pm, Zoom)

- 📅 Sept 17 – *IEF (Lucas & Manny)* (11:30 am–1 pm)

- 📅 Sept 18 – *Using IEF (Lucas)* (1:30–3 pm, Zoom)

- 📅 Sept 24 – *Active Learning Strategies* (11:30 am–1 pm)

- 📅 Sept 29 – *Developing Teaching Philosophy Statement* (1:30–3 pm)

Canvas Module: IEF resources, reflection prompt on IEF process and results, workshop log

OCTOBER – Reflective Teaching & Peer Observation

Focus: Peer/faculty observation, reflection, assessment strategies

Suggested Activities:

Track 1 (Teaching):

- Join the cohort meeting ***before the peer observation***
- Observe a peer's class session during the weeks of 10/20 – 10/31, includes
  - A pre-observation meeting
  - Classroom observation
  - Post observation debrief meeting
- Provide feedback for your peer
- Submit the complete peer observation package: pre-observation notes, observation notes, post-observation debrief
- Attend CITL workshops (optional)

Track 2 (Non-Teaching):

- Observe a **faculty member's class**
  - Ask the faculty the TA works for to arrange the observation.
  - Schedule a pre-observation meeting with the faculty sometime before the class to learn about the course design, lesson plan, and teaching strategies.
  - No post-observation requirement.
- Write a reflection on teaching strategies and student engagement observed
- Reflect in the cohort meeting

CITL Workshops:

Note: *Please check the* [CITL Calendar](#) *for the most up-to-date workshop information.*

- 📅 Oct 1 – *Assessment Strategies*

- 📅 Oct 2 – *Art of Teaching Lunchtime Seminar* (12–1 pm, Zoom)

- 📅 Oct 8 – *Peer Observations* (11:30 am–1 pm, Armory 182)
- 📅 Oct 15 – *Syllabus* (11:30 am–1 pm, Armory 182)
- 📅 Oct 22 – *Promoting Student Engagement (Flow)* (10–11:15 am, Zoom)

Canvas Module: Observation template & feedback guide, assignment submission, workshop log

NOVEMBER – Teaching Showcase & Faculty Observation

Focus: Complete formal teaching observation and reflect on teaching practice

Suggested Activities:

Track 1 (Teaching):

- Join the cohort meeting
- Arrange and complete the observation by the faculty
    - You will identify a faculty member who you believe is the best candidate to observe your teaching, and who can also write a letter of recommendation for your future job search.
- Submit teaching observation reflection
- Attend CITL workshops (optional)

Track 2 (Non-Teaching):

- Deliver a **guest lesson** (TA teaches on behalf of the faculty who might be traveling) OR
- Deliver a **mock lesson** (30–45 mins)
    - TA will find mock students
    - 2 students + 1 observer/1 CITL affiliate
    - Optional to record in the studio here (for individuals who would like to develop online teaching skills)
- Invite a **CITL consultant** to observe and provide feedback
- Submit reflection on feedback received
- Share insights in the cohort meeting

CITL Workshops:

Note: Please check the CITL Calendar for the most up-to-date workshop information.

- 📅 Nov 6 – *Art of Teaching Lunchtime Seminar* (12–1 pm, Zoom)

- 📅 Nov 18 – *Cultivating Learning Communities* (3–4:15 pm, Zoom)

Canvas Module: Faculty observation reflection submission

DECEMBER – Wrapping Up Semester 1, Course Redesign

Focus: Reflection, syllabus design, and teaching literature

Suggested Activities:

Track 1 (Teaching):

- Join the cohort meeting and reflect on Semester 1 teaching experiences
- Submit a redesigned syllabus for review and feedback
- Collect ICES/FLEX results
- Revise the course syllabus
- Attend workshops (optional)

Track 2 (Non-Teaching):

- Join the cohort meeting and reflect on Semester 1 program experiences
- Read the **teaching and learning literature** (a book or several articles about teaching and/or learning)
  - Recommendation:
    - How Learning Works: Eight Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching (Book)
    - Field-specific literature (4+ articles)
- Write a short reflection connecting literature to their own teaching development

CITL Workshops:

Note: Please check the CITL Calendar for the most up-to-date workshop information.

- 📅 Dec 3 – *Course Design Foundations* (11:30 am–12:45 pm, Zoom)

- 📅 Dec 4 – *Art of Teaching Lunchtime Seminar* (12–1 pm, Zoom)

Canvas Module: Revised syllabus submission, collect ICES/FLEX results, workshop log

Program Requirements for 2026 Spring

Track 1 – Teaching TAs (Instructor of Record)

If you have a teaching appointment, CITL will continue to support you through individual consultations. In the meantime, we encourage you to follow best practices by collecting student feedback (IEF and FLEX) and taking time to reflect on the results, and to attend at least three workshops to meet the CITL Graduate Teacher Certificate requirements.

Looking ahead to Spring 2026, this program will shift focus to help you prepare for the academic job market by supporting you in developing key teaching portfolio materials, including:

- Teaching philosophy statement
- Syllabus/course plan
- Reflection on engagement & feedback
- Observation notes/reflection
- Teaching lesson plan + feedback summary
  - Collect IEF and FLEX in the second semester

Track 2: Non-Teaching TAs

The overall goal for semester 2 is to strengthen knowledge of college teaching and produce a teaching philosophy and teaching portfolio components:

1. Submit a teaching philosophy statement that reflects on lessons from workshops, observations, and practice teaching.
2. Assemble a mini teaching portfolio including:

- Mock syllabus/course plan
- Reflection on engagement & feedback
- Observation notes/reflection
- Mock teaching lesson plan + feedback summary