

Writing an Argumentative Research Paper

Writing a substantial argumentative research paper can be a valuable learning process, particularly if you research a topic with which you become genuinely engaged. Instead of describing your own research process, a successful argumentative paper directly joins an ongoing conversation regarding a problem about which reasonable and informed people disagree.

Writing an argumentative research paper lets you:

- use the rhetorical understanding you have developed,
- frame the research gathered in your inquiry for a particular audience,
- produce an argument that will help you experience entering the conversation of a discourse community and writing for an academic audience, and
- use conventions of a particular domain of academic research and writing.

Although each such assignment has its own requirements, the general features of this kind of paper may already be familiar to you:

- It is long enough to require a substantial inquiry.
- It makes a well-reasoned argument based on evidence from reliable sources.
- It contains an assigned number of cited sources, that is, references that are actually used in the paper, for summaries, paraphrases, or quotations. There may also be a required balance of print and online sources.
- The sources demonstrate your mastery of the research process and your growing expertise in a field; that is, they must be relevant to the argument and clearly used in relationship to it (as support for it, as alternatives to be refuted, as sources of evidence, etc.).
- The sources are cited and documented according to a specified set of scholarly conventions (normally MLA or APA).

As with other kinds of writing, the specific requirements vary from field to field and assignment to assignment, but argumentative research papers are commonly

assigned in upper-level college courses, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Because this is a student version of a kind of paper researchers in many fields write, it can help to develop understanding of the ways specific fields approach issues and use evidence, and it can offer practice in how to use, respond to, and make an argument about sources in ways appropriate for a field. This is the kind of disciplinary knowledge described in Chapter 8. Moreover, through the processes of reading, writing, and revising, researchers often discover new questions about or approaches to their topics, and working on an extended research project can introduce you to the excitement of the kinds of discovery possible in different academic fields.

REASSESSING THE THESIS

When starting an argumentative research paper, reviewing notes and responses from earlier work can help you clarify your thinking about your inquiry and decide specifically how it can be framed in this genre. By this point in your inquiry, you may have reformulated several times the thesis that you first constructed in Chapter 4, and your argument may have taken its final form. However, many writers discover their final claims only through the process of writing and rewriting a paper or series of papers, and thus they revise the emerging thesis many times. Often writers who need to start writing in order to meet a deadline use a “working or exploratory thesis” when they start writing, rather than a conclusive thesis statement that includes topic, question, and impact or significance. A working thesis tells readers what you are going to investigate, rather than what you have concluded about your research. By the time you rewrite the first draft of the argumentative paper, you should turn this exploratory statement into a definitive statement, as part of an introduction that explains how and why you pursued the inquiry.

EXAMPLE 10.1 *From Working Thesis to Final Thesis*

The proposal in Chapter 4 has a working thesis (p. 80):

In my research project, I intend to investigate the use of international teaching assistants, in order to see whether they actually hurt the education of American undergraduates.

A thesis like this is weak because it states the question the writer intends to explore rather than the results of the inquiry, but it can be used to start an early draft if necessary. The thesis in the final draft of the argumentative paper in this chapter (p. 195), however, makes a much stronger claim and anticipates the significance of the argument:

Obviously, many students are resistant to the idea of having TAs who are other than American-born, even students who haven’t had any personal experience with international TAs. However, this resistance may stem from problems much deeper than just speaking English, and it definitely obscures the fact that international TAs are very valuable to diversity on campus.

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PLANNING THE PAPER

Start with the basic organizational planning described on page 159 in Chapter 9. Then consider whether you are the kind of writer who works best from a polished outline that organizes most of your thinking, or from a more informal organizational plan that allows more room for thinking as you write.

Constructing an Outline

A planning outline is similar to the reading and revision outlines you have already worked with. An outline is a formal, hierarchical plan for organizing writing. It can be a useful way to organize material and plan an argument because it clearly shows the relationships among evidence, reasons, and claims. There are two basic writing styles for outlines: topic outlines (which are written in grammatically parallel phrases) and sentence outlines. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. It can be a bit easier to arrange and visualize the hierarchy of ideas in a topical outline because its clearly hierarchical format can help you to visualize parts of the argument and to arrange claims, reasons, and evidence at the appropriate levels. On the other hand, in a sentence outline, some of the sentences can become topic sentences of paragraphs in the paper, as they are in a revision outline. This preliminary work can put some key words and transitions in place before you start drafting the whole paper. Whatever format suits you best, start with the preliminary planning suggested in Focus Points: Reviewing and Organizing Information (Chapter 9, p. 159).

Because you are the primary audience for a planning outline, and its sole purpose is to help you organize your thinking, it may not matter very much whether you get the format exactly right. More informal outlining may also be sufficient for understanding difficult readings and for checking the coherence of your own written work. However, having some knowledge about how to construct a formal outline is useful because in many professions outlines are an important part of project proposals, making the case for the usefulness or profitability of the final work. Outlines for these public purposes need to be very well organized and clearly formulated.

Formatting Outlines

In the humanities and social sciences, researchers who use outlines usually use a number and letter format, with roman numerals indicating divisions of the largest magnitude, capital letters at the next level down, and so on—as in the example that follows.

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Thesis Statement: (optional)

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II. XXXX

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- C. YYYYYY
 - 1. ZZZZZZ
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III. XXXX

- A. YYYYYY
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In the sciences, technology, and business, the decimal outline is common.

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 - 2.3.3 ZZZZZ
- 3. XXXXXXX
 - 3.1 YYYYY
 - 3.1.1 XXXXX
 - 3.1.2 XXXXX
 - 3.2 YYYYY

Word-processing programs provide several other formats. The format you use might be designated by the assignment you are working on or the field you are working in. These preset formats give you the highest (main claims) level of numbering first. To get to levels for reasons and evidence, use the tab key. These formats can help you think about the different levels of magnitude of your argument and can help you manage the difference between main claims, reasons, and supporting evidence. They also take care of spacing and capitalization, leaving you to focus on the content of the argument rather than the mechanics of outlining.

However, many writers find these programmed formats unwieldy to use, particularly when the writer's ideas do not fit a strictly parallel design or when they want to cut and paste into the outline. As when using any writing technology or strategy, if you find that the preset format causes more problems than it solves, there is nothing wrong with doing the formatting yourself.

In the following outline, notice that short references to sources are incorporated into the outline, as prompts to help the writer remember where to locate appropriate information in the working bibliography and in project notes. Although formal outlining formats may not provide a place for the thesis statement, many writers find it useful to begin the outline with it. Notice that the thesis for this preliminary draft has not yet been revised to what will be its final form.

EXAMPLE 10.2 *Topic Outline*

The Problem of Negative Views of ITAs

Thesis: Even though many American undergraduates resent being taught by international graduate students, we should look at the positive aspects of this situation.

I. Why graduate teaching assistants are used as instructors for undergraduates

A. Classes needing instructors

1. Started in 1940s (Ouzts)
2. Graduate education and research valued more than undergraduate (Fox)

B. International students needing jobs

1. Started in 1980s (Fox, Plakans, Ouzts)
2. Numbers large (Iowa State and Purdue Examples)

II. Complaints by American undergraduates

A. Different customs (Sarkodie-Mensah)

1. Large lectures rather than small classes
2. American students' expectations
3. Other cultural factors (Ouzts)

B. Who complains (Plakans and Smith)

C. Language skills

D. Pronunciation

E. The real problem

1. Frustrated undergraduates
2. Underclassmen vs. seniors (Plakans)
3. Majors vs. nonmajors

III. Intervention strategies

A. Programs for undergraduates

1. Learning techniques for good communication (Oppenheim)
2. Univ. of Missouri at Columbia (Plakans)

B. Undergraduates participating in screening (Fox)

C. Opportunities to interact (Plakans)

D. Video at Texas Tech

E. Training programs

IV. Positive aspects of international teaching assistants

A. Diversity: Adjusting to new cultures

B. Substitute for travel abroad

C. Preparation for global workforce

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EXAMPLE 10.3 *Sentence Outline*

The Problem of Negative Views of ITAs

Thesis: Even though many American undergraduates resent being taught by international graduate students, we should look at the positive aspects of this situation.

- I. Graduate teaching assistants have been used as instructors for undergraduates since the 1940s (Ouzts 21).
 - A. The foreign TA problem started in the 1980s (Fox, Plakans, Ouzts).
 - B. Iowa State (Plakans) and Purdue (Fox) illustrate large numbers.
 - C. ITA training programs started in the 1980s (Smith et al.).
- II. The problem is that ITAs have little experience with teaching in an interactive manner (Plakans 3).
 - A. American students are used to interaction.
 - B. International students may be used to large lecture halls and formal manners (Sarkodie-Mensah).
 - C. International students may not know that American students pay for college, and so have higher expectations for how they are treated.
 - D. Even when the ITA has clear speaking patterns and pronunciation, he may have a hard time relating to students (Fox 203).
- III. One problem may be that many undergraduates get disillusioned and frustrated.
 - A. Failing students blame ITAs (Fox 207).
 - B. Seniors accept the system (Plakans 137-39).
 - C. Undergrads who learn techniques for good communication with an international teaching assistant rate the ITAs higher (Oppenheim 9).
 - D. Some studies show that undergraduates are less critical of ITAs in courses in their majors.
- IV. There are several possible intervention strategies to help undergraduates deal with ITAs.
 - A. Michigan State uses a program in residence halls (Plakans).
 - B. The University of Missouri-Columbia and Iowa State use brochures (Plakans).
 - C. Fox recommends making students part of the screening and training process (217-18).

- D. Undergraduates benefit from this participation.
 - E. Texas Tech has a video that stresses the positive aspects of having an international teaching assistant.
 - F. Some of these interventions may not work very well (Plakans 16).
- V. There are advantages to having international teaching assistants.
- A. They are often the “cream of the crop” in their own countries.
 - B. We need to learn to interact with people from other countries, but not everyone can travel to another country.
 - C. We would all be better off with a more positive perspective.

Informal Paper Planning

Writers who find it difficult to use a formal outline nonetheless need to plan and organize, even though they know their plan may change significantly as they write. Informal paper plans look less orderly than outlines, because they seldom clearly show the relationship among claims, reasons, and supporting evidence—a relationship that may become clear to the writer only in the process of drafting. However, any kind of written planning can help keep the writer on track and make the process of drafting a paper easier. There are other ways in which writers document their planning, and if you have discovered one that works well for you, you may want to share it with your class.

FOCUS POINTS: CREATING AN INFORMAL PAPER PLAN

The following informal plan shows how a writer can organize ideas and evidence for an argument without arranging the ideas into a fixed hierarchy:

1. Use the preplanning strategies in the Focus Points in Chapter 9, Reviewing and Organizing Information (p. 159), to pull your information and ideas together.
2. Paste your revised thesis into a new file.
3. If you have written a synthesis or history of the issue that can be modified for an introduction, paste it in before the thesis. Be sure to clearly state the issue or controversy you are addressing: the gap that you intend to fill or the question you intend to answer. Also make sure that the introductory synthesis provides sufficient context for that issue and prepares for the thesis.
4. Write down your major claims and the main reasons to support it. Paste in pieces you have already written where you think they might fit under those claims and reasons. Think about the order in which to arrange them, and rearrange them until you see a clear progression.
5. Identify sources for reasons and evidence as you go along. Add reminders of your own thinking (short identifiers to take you to sections of your notes and parts of other papers) at places where you agree with, disagree with, or otherwise respond to the sources.

6. Make a list of things that you do not want to forget, tasks that still need to be done, and ideas about which you still feel uncertain.
7. Reread your plan, rethinking the order and arrangement of the assembled material.
8. Quickly review your notes and responses. Can you see a place for anything you have left out of this early plan? If so, paste it in at the likely place, with a note to yourself if necessary.
9. Write some final thoughts about what you foresee as strong points and problems in the paper you are planning.

EXAMPLE 10.4 *Informal Paper Plan*

The Problem of Negative Views of ITAs

Context: Undergraduates at nearly any major university will tell you they have had a teaching assistant, or TA, for a teacher. Many of those students probably had an international student as a TA, especially if they were in a math class or chemistry/biology class with labs. And many students will probably tell you they would rather have a TA who can "speak English," if they have to have a TA at all. Obviously, many students are resistant to the idea of having TAs who are other than American-born, even those who haven't had any personal experience with them.

Controversy: Why do American undergraduates resent having international students as instructors? (Chang, Fox, Plakans) How realistic are their objections? What are the advantages of having international students as teachers?

Thesis: Even though many American undergraduates resent being taught by international graduate students, we should look at the positive aspects of this situation.

Main Claims

1. There really are two problems (which sometimes get confused):
 - Some ITAs are not prepared to teach American students (Plakans, Sarkodie-Mensah).
 - Some American students are prejudiced against international students and perceive them through their preconceptions (Fox, Smith, Ouzts, Rao, Oppenheim).

2. Both American students (Plakans, Rao, Fox, Texas Tech) and international students (Smith, Davis, Oppenheim) need training to be able to work most effectively with each other.

- Reason: cultural misunderstandings can be overcome, but it takes effort.

3. It is valuable for American students to experience the cultural diversity that ITAs can offer (Johnson & Lollar, Goodin, Plakans).

- Increasingly, global business expectations require cooperation among people from difficult cultures.
- Relatively few American students get to study abroad.

Reminders

- Find some quotes that don't make American students look really awful; I want to illustrate their misunderstanding or not appreciating international teaching assistants—but I don't want to make us look like ignorant bigots!
- I'm not sure how to refer to the Texas Tech videotape in this paper.

Things to Do

- I may need to find some more general articles on graduate students teaching undergraduates, so that I can put international graduate students into the context of all graduate students, American and foreign.
- Is there anyone I can interview locally about this? Or can I just rely on general observations about how my friends (undergraduates) feel?
- Find a background book on different kinds of American colleges and universities.

Final thoughts: I have learned a lot from having international graduate students as my teachers. They have made me think about wanting to study abroad, either during my junior year or after I finish my undergraduate work. I really want to get across the idea that while there may be problems with communication, international graduate students give us something of extra value in our education, a cross-cultural experience that we would not get otherwise. They should not have to become pseudo-Americans, although most of the ITAs I've met do want to understand and participate in American life, particularly the life at the university. We American students can learn a lot from helping the ITAs help us learn.

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Reviewing the Outline or Plan

You will see how well the planning worked only when actually drafting the paper. However, it may be useful to review and revise it before you start the work of drafting. These questions can direct that revision:

- What are the strongest parts of the outline or plan? Are these the same as the parts of the proposal or other work on the issue that you really believed in? How has your thinking developed since the proposal?
- Where do your claims seem weak? Can you support them with the sources you have? Where do you need to do more research or consult your sources again?
- How clearly can you see important connections between the ideas in the paper? Add some markers to describe transitions that you should make (for example, relational terms like *addition*, *contrast*, or *part/whole*; or actual transition words, like *moreover*, *however*, and so on). These reminders can help you make clear connections when drafting.

FOCUS POINTS: PEER EVALUATION OF THE PLAN

If you share the outline or plan and self-evaluation with a partner, use these questions to guide your thinking:

- What do you think the most exciting part of the paper will be? How does that part relate to the overall organizational structure of the argument? What suggestions can you make to increase its effectiveness or impact?
- Can you see any gaps in the reasoning? Do you see any logical fallacies? What warrants does the argument rest upon? Do any of them need to be more explicitly stated or defended?
- Can you see a clear progression from reason to reason?
- Can you point out places where particularly clear transitions will be needed to move the reader from part to part?
- Does any important aspect of the argument seem to be missing? Is there any irrelevant evidence?

MOVING FROM PLANNING TO DRAFTING

Although you may have already had considerable practice writing short papers, drafting a longer paper can seem intimidating. One reason for starting to draft from an outline or plan is that it cuts the project into shorter, more manageable parts. Also, the more time and thought you spend on planning, the less time you will need to spend on the actual drafting process.

You may have heard this many times, but it bears repeating: start drafting early enough to avoid being overly rushed in meeting deadlines. Take your personal writing style and needs into account when deciding when and where to work on the paper: how much time you need, what kind of writing environment, and so on. However you draft, the first thing to decide is with what part of the paper to start. This will depend

both on your own personal style of writing and also on which pieces of writing you have already done.

FOCUS POINTS: STRATEGIES FOR DRAFTING

If you already have an approach that works well for you, you should use it, but if you find that you have trouble starting or if you get stuck, one of the approaches below might help you restart the drafting process.

- Some writers *use the outline or plan to clarify their reasoning*, and then draft the paper separately, paragraph by paragraph, glancing at the outline from time to time, and adapting the outline to draft and the draft to outline as necessary. This approach often appeals to writers who like to think through their argument in detail before starting to write it.
- Some writers start by *writing a condensed version of their draft*, with only their major claims and reasons, and then revise it to fill in evidence and specific sources after they have worked their way through their ideas.
- Some writers *first draft a fairly complete and polished introduction*, in order to rethink carefully the thesis statement and assess their claims. Revising a proposal or synthesis written earlier can help move drafting this introduction along.
- Some writers start drafting by *inserting text from their own earlier writing directly into a copy of the outline or plan*. This method uses parts of the research that are already written, which can make the task of drafting seem easier. These writers start filling sentences directly into a copy of the outline, eliminating the formatting as paragraphs emerge. They may insert sections of their notes, summaries, and responses, as well as excerpts from proposals and other preliminary writing, including quotations copied from sources. This process allows a writer to see the parts of the paper that are already written and to rethink the relationship of the parts to the whole. A writer might even discover a new line of reasoning around what he or she has extracted from earlier work, and then reposition the supporting information to fit the purpose of this particular project. Researchers who write this way must be particularly careful to integrate the imported pieces into their argument smoothly and without distortion, and, as always, to keep track of references for sources. They usually need to spend more time on revision.

EXAMPLE 10.5 *Drafting into an Outline*

Here is the example sentence outline from pages 177–178 in this chapter, with the automatic formatting removed and some of the already-written parts extracted from the writer's notes and added to the outline in the early phases of drafting:

The Problem of Negative Views of ITAs

Talk to undergraduates at nearly any major university and they will tell you they have had a teaching assistant, or TA, for a teacher. Many of those students probably had an

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international student as a TA, especially if they were in a math class or chemistry or biology class with labs. And many students will probably tell you they would rather have a TA who can "speak English," if they have to have a TA at all. Obviously, many students are resistant to the idea of having TAs who are other than American-born, even those who haven't had any personal experience with them. International students, who are sometimes still called foreign students, are increasing on campuses nationwide, and graduate international teaching assistants, or ITAs, are increasing as well. I am looking at research done mainly at universities in order to find out why American students have such a hard time with international teaching assistants because it helps us address how to see the situation as a positive one.

Thesis: Even though many American undergraduates resent being taught by international graduate students, we should look at the positive aspects of this situation.

I. Graduate teaching assistants have been used as instructors for undergraduates since the 1940s (Ouzts 21).

- A. The foreign TA problem started in the 1980s (Fox, Plakans, Ouzts).
- B. Iowa State (Plakans) and Purdue (Fox) illustrate large numbers.

In a study done by Barbara Sweeney Plakans at Iowa State University, over 72% of the undergraduates she studied had been in a course taught by an ITA.

ITAs at Iowa State comprised nearly a third of all the TAs and were found mainly in math, engineering, and the physical sciences. In a study by Wanda Fox at Purdue University, about 30% of the TAs were international and found mainly in the Engineering and Science schools (190-91).

- C. ITA training programs started in the 1980s (Smith et al.).

II. The problem is that ITAs have little experience with teaching in an interactive manner (Plakans 3).

- A. American Students are used to interaction.
- B. International students may not know that American students pay for college and have higher expectations for how they are treated.
- C. Even when the ITA has clear speech, he may have a hard time relating to students (Fox 203).

III. One problem may be that many undergraduates get disillusioned and frustrated.

- A. Failing students blame ITAs (Fox 207).
- B. Seniors accept the system (Plakans 137–39).
- C. Undergrads who learn techniques for good communication with an international teaching assistant rate the ITAs higher (Oppenheim 9).
- D. Some studies show that undergraduates are less critical of ITAs in courses in their majors.

IV. There are several possible intervention strategies to help undergraduates deal with ITAs.

- A. Michigan State uses a program in residence halls (Plakans).
- B. The University of Missouri-Columbia and Iowa State use brochures (Plakans).
- C. Fox recommends making students part of the screening and training process (217–18).
- D. Undergraduates benefit from this participation.

Sarkodie-Mensah states:

“Encouraging interaction of college-bound students and TAs from other countries also will foster understanding between the two groups and will prepare the new students for some of the culture shock they will experience in the hands of the foreign TAs” (116).

- E. Texas Tech has a video that stresses the positive aspects of having an international teaching assistant. Texas Tech University put out a video in 1988 called *You and the International TA: Paths to Better Understanding*—why international teaching assistants are beneficial.
 - 1. statistics on the increase of international students and TAs (here to stay).
 - 2. interviews with TAs from Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Peru on how American students are different.
 - 3. positive aspects too: friendly and more independent.
 - 4. Professors explain why ITAs are used, but Americans tend to be wary of people who are different or students are coming from a conservative part of the country, such as the south. (Is this a fair reason?)

- F. Some of these interventions may not work very well (Plakans 16): one of the studies Plakans referred to in her study showed that undergraduates were "neutral about whether the experience of having an ITA increased cultural understanding" (16). Another showed that mentoring did not affect undergraduate acceptance and what was needed was "more informal, interpersonal contact to change attitudes and more overseas travel by undergrads" (16).
- V. There are advantages to having international teaching assistants.
 - A. They are often the "cream of the crop" in their own countries.
 - B. We need to learn to interact with people from other countries, but not everyone can travel to another country.

One comment by Plakans claims that the students need to give more than the ITAs regarding cultural difference:

"I think we are placing too much of an emphasis on making these TAs conform to American ways. I'm not expecting an ITA to give up their culture just because they're here. I think we have a lot to learn just having an ITA as an instructor. There isn't much chance that you are going to go out into the business world and everyone you run into is an American. I think in a lot of cases we are being too inflexible and that bothers me. . . . Americans are just so egocentric we don't want to allow other people to be what they are." (112)

- C. We would all be better off with a more positive perspective. Most of the ITAs I've met do want to understand and participate in American life, particularly the life at the university. We American students can learn a lot from helping the ITAs help us learn.

Keep your thesis and your main reasons clearly in mind as you draft. Having a printout of your outline or plan with these elements highlighted can help you move particular parts around without losing track of the overall claim you are supporting. If you get stuck, move to an easier part to write, and come back to the problematic part later. Longer writing projects need not be written in the order in which they are read, and sometimes you will find solutions to problems when you "write around" them.

Your outline, your thesis, and your main claims may very well change in the course of your writing. As you assemble evidence for your reasons, you may find new objections

to be overcome, and you may discover new reasons to support your claims. There is usually considerable discovery involved in the process of drafting. You might want to construct a revision outline (see Focus Points: Revising for Coherence in Chapter 7, p. 130) as you move from drafting to revision. Review page 161 in Chapter 9, Focus Points: Keeping Sources under Control, to make managing sources easier.

EXAMPLE 10.6 *Early Draft of an Argumentative Research Paper*
(with Instructor's Comments)

Here is the first draft of a student paper on the topic of international teaching assistants and what they can offer to American students, based on the outline and paper plan above. The comments point out where the student is achieving what she seems to be aiming for, and where she needs to make her case more clearly.

The Problem of Negative Views of ITAs

Talk to undergraduates at nearly any major university and they will tell you they have had a teaching assistant, or TA, for a teacher. Many of those students probably had an international student as a TA, especially if they were in a math class or chemistry/biology class with labs. And many students will probably tell you they would rather have a TA who can "speak English," if they have to have a TA at all. Obviously, many students are resistant to the idea of having TAs who are other than American-born, even those who haven't had any personal experience with them. International students, who are sometimes still called foreign students, are increasing on campuses nationwide. According to the Institute of International Education, there are nearly 600,000 international students at US campuses. Moreover, graduate international teaching assistants, or ITAs, are increasing as well. I am looking at research done mainly at universities in order to find out why American students have such a hard time with international teaching assistants because it helps us address how to see the situation as a positive one.

Graduate students started to be used as teaching assistants in the 1940s and 1950s (Ouzts 21). Possibly a quarter of all undergraduate courses at big research institutions are taught by teaching assistants (Ouzts 3), whose use has always been controversial (Fox 2), and where too much value is being placed on graduate education and research (Smith et al.). "The Foreign TA Problem," as it has been called (Plakans 4, Smith et al.), has been around since the mid-1980s.

Can you revise the title to give a clearer sense of how the paper will address this topic? Will the abbreviation *ITAs* come up in a key word search in a database? If not, use the full term in the title.

The thesis still states your question; try reading through your draft again to find your answer to that question, and then reformulate your thesis as the argument for your conclusion.

How does the use of graduate students as teaching assistants place too much value on graduate education?

It was then that larger numbers of undergraduate courses began being taught by TAs who did not speak English as a first language. Those students came to the United States to study but couldn't get visas to work off-campus. While many would work in cafeterias and libraries, some were eligible to teach low-level introductory courses that professors wanted to be freed from anyway. So being a TA is a way satisfying the need to finance an education for the ITA and staff low-level, often required courses for the college (Fox, Plakans, Ouzts).

In a study done by Barbara Sweeney Plakans at Iowa State University, over 72% of the undergraduates she studied had been in a course taught by an ITA. ITAs at Iowa State comprised nearly a third of all the TAs and were found mainly in math, engineering, and the physical sciences. In a study by Wanda Fox at Purdue University, about 30% of the TAs were international and found mainly in the Engineering and Science schools (190-91). A study conducted by Florence Louise Ouzts added business to the list (1) and reported that most of the ITAs getting complaints were from Taiwan, China, and India (6) and most of the complaints were in math, physics, and chemistry (30).

ITA training programs have been going on since the 1980s. Smith states that since 1982, laws have been passed or state mandates required for assessing language abilities of ITAs in 18 states. Some of these assessments also include training programs. Orientation programs are short, one- to five-day training sessions, concurrent programs go along with the teaching in the first semester, pre-term and concurrent combine both (Smith et al.) She states that we need more assessment instruments to address both language and teaching skills of ITAs including student evaluations, surveys of ITAs and supervisors, and student improvement evaluation.

In *The Professional Development of Graduate Teaching Assistants*, several authors discuss training of ITAs (Marincovich, Prostko, and Stout). They state part of the problem as being that ITAs have little experience with teaching in an interactive manner such as is common in the US. Using TAs are unique to the US (Plakans 3). In their own countries, they were probably in a very large lecture hall that was very formal. Kwasi Sarkodie-Mensah states in some countries, it is considered rude to walk in late into the classroom or raise the

It would help to give more context here—from the undergraduate's point of view as well as from the graduate students'.

Think about how topic sentences of paragraphs can contribute to your argument. Try making a revision outline of this draft, and see how well you can follow the argument.

I'm confused here.

What kinds of things do ITAs report about these training programs?

How does this information fit into the point of the paragraph? Is this related to class size and conduct?

left hand to ask a question. He says that many ITAs also don't know that American students have to pay for their tuition instead of the government funding them as in other countries which leads to lack of understanding about the special circumstances of the American classroom (115–16). Fox talks about the importance of “cultural factors” in the classroom, stating that even when the ITA has clear speech he may have a hard time relating to the students but students should also adapt. Fox seems to see a particular responsibility on the undergraduate's part to overcome bias and prejudice (206).

You have lots of good research, and you show some of your sources in conversation with each other's ideas; but where does your own thinking fit into the picture?

Plakans compared her study at Iowa State University with one conducted by Wanda Fox at Purdue. Plakans's study and Fox's study both researched attitudes of undergraduates who had had experiences with an ITA. For her study, Fox developed the Questionnaire of Undergraduates about International Teaching Assistants (QUITA) as well as interviews (190–91). Fox's study surveyed 540 undergraduates, but only 18 of these were freshmen (192).

One interesting finding in Plakans's study and confirmed by Smith et al. is that when students complained about ITAs, they usually blamed the problem on pronunciation, but her study showed that many other kinds of communication problems were actually behind that complaint (131). Ouzts's study confirms that cultural problems add to the problem most often cited as language-based (5). One of the problems could be a general disillusionment and frustration with college that many undergraduates experience in the first two years, which could find a scapegoat in the ITA. Fox also reports that some students blamed the ITA for their poor academic performance (207). According to Plakans, seniors will be more lenient on ITA evaluations because they've mellowed and accepted the system (Plakans 137–39).

A study by Nancy Ann Oppenheim suggested that students in upper levels have more “domain knowledge” to be able to “negotiate meaning” and figure out what the ITA is saying (vii, 212). The hypothesis of her study was that the real problem isn't the ITAs ability to speak clearly or teach well but that undergraduate negative and resistant attitudes were based on their perceptual bias (7). Negative stereotyping, prejudice, and overgeneralizations learned

early, situational factors of seeing the foreign students as competition, and high emotions and insecurity are four causes she finds (22-27). She states that undergrads who learn techniques for good communication with an international teaching assistant rate the ITAs higher (9).

It's hard to see what Plakans is saying about undergrads and what she's saying about ITAs.

Plakans' study showed that undergraduates that weren't as critical had positive attitudes, believing the ITA was a good teacher, were open to cultural differences, and took some of the responsibility for good communication (132). Some other studies she refers to show that undergraduates were less critical if the ITA was teaching in a course they were majoring in (also in Oppenheim 212), that personality made a big difference in acceptance, and that the lecture topic affected comprehension more than how the ITA talked. Fox's study showed that one student could understand an ITA when the topic was discussed in casual conversation but not when the ITA talked about math (203). Ouzts states that more critical ratings came from males, from nonmajors, which contradicts some other studies, from students who hadn't studied a foreign language, and from students who expected a low grade (142).

What is the focus of this paragraph? How does listing results of these studies contribute to your argument?

Based on the results of her study, Plakans suggested "intervention strategies" (vii) for undergraduate students to deal with ITAs. She discusses one Michigan State approach that uses programs in residence halls conducted by an ITA and an undergraduate that talks about stereotyping, shows a video, and gets the students talking about the subject. Using this kind of program in freshmen orientation might also work. The University of Missouri-Columbia uses a brochure called "TAs at Mizzou" that gives tips on better communication. However, Plakans says that a brochure used at Iowa State was criticized by a foreign student for being discriminating, and the video used at the parents' orientation created more anxieties and questions than answering them (147-48).

This is interesting. Could you give more details?

Do you think the critics of these strategies are correct, given the research you have done?

Fox's study recommends making undergraduates part of a screening process for new ITAs and having them participate in the ITA training course, which would help the undergraduates feel more confident about the TA program (217-18). Plakans says that trying to get undergraduates more involved in the ITA program as well as making it clear how much the ITAs are qualified would be good but hasn't been studied. The authors in *The Professional Development of*

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Graduate Teaching Assistants also state that many colleges have established conversation groups, informal lunches, and focused meetings involving role-playing (171). These opportunities make the undergraduates more comfortable with ITAs and the ITAs more confident and comfortable as teachers. Having undergraduates in a training program, according to the authors, "has the added benefit of preparing undergraduates for cultural diversity. Many undergraduates who participate view ITAs with new respect and understanding, an attitude that they may pass on to their peers" (172). They also suggest more opportunities for feedback and evaluation before the end of the semester (177), a suggestion that Fox seconds (220). For example, Sarkodie-Mensah states:

"Encouraging interaction of college-bound students and TAs from other countries also will foster understanding between the two groups and will prepare the new students for some of the culture shock they will experience in the hands of the foreign TAs." (116)

Texas Tech University put out a video in 1988 called *You and the International TA: Paths to Better Understanding*. The 30-minute video explains why international teaching assistants are beneficial. It gives statistics on the increase of international students and TAs, showing that they are something that is here to stay. Three international TAs are interviewed from Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Peru, and each explains how different American students are, but stressing the positive aspects such as their being friendly and more independent. Professors explain why American students are resistant as being wary of people who are different or coming from a conservative part of the country, such as the south.

Joe Goodin, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Texas Tech, explains how students become "sensitized to international education, international problems" in a class taught by an ITA, which is important in a globalized world becoming more interdependent. Goodin states it is important that American students go into a class taught by an ITA with the attitude that "the cultural experience" will be positive, that with "receptivity" they will end up "on the learning end" and be better off than if all TAs were American. The international TAs help American students understand cultural diversity.

Good introduction to quote, but do not use quotation marks when quotes are set off.

Could this be seen as a faulty generalization by the professors?

Let's see your point come through more clearly in this transition. Also, does this paragraph continue to describe the video, or does it go back to a more general discussion of various means of promoting cultural awareness and diversity?

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However, one of the studies Plakans referred to in her study showed that undergraduates were "neutral about whether the experience of having an ITA increased cultural understanding" (16). Another showed that mentoring did not affect undergraduate acceptance and what was needed was "more informal, interpersonal contact to change attitudes and more overseas travel by undergrads" (Plakans 16).

Professors in the video list benefits, including being exposed to different cultures, and getting a better understanding of the world we live in. They also stress that many ITAs are the "cream of the crop" among students in their countries and earn awards here in the US. The video ends with six steps for the American student to handle difficulty understanding an ITA and four suggestions for how to speak better to the ITA, which Oppenheim stresses as the key to better relations (213). The video stresses being fair and patient and ends with the message that the international TAs are needed. The video would have been even better with student comments supporting using ITAs. One comment from Plakans's study even shows how the students need to give more than the ITAs regarding cultural difference:

I think we are placing too much of an emphasis on making these TAs conform to American ways. I'm not expecting an ITA to give up their culture just because they're here. I think we have a lot to learn just having an ITA as an instructor. There isn't much chance that you are going to go out into the business world and everyone you run into is an American. I think in a lot of cases we are being too inflexible and that bothers me. . . . Americans are just so egocentric we don't want to allow other people to be what they are. (112)

Citing another study, Ouzts refers to the ITA having to take on a "culturally alien persona" in order to try to fit in, and Smith refers to the "Americanization" of ITAs, which shows how difficult and maybe wrong it is for the ITA to do all the accomodating.

ITAs in most colleges and universities go through training programs for GTAs, and many are specific for the international graduate student. Stephen Davis and Jason Kring describe the GTA training at their institution as a model

Is this your own critique or does it come from one of your sources? You might speculate a bit about why students were not included.

When you say "refers to," what position does that source take in regards to the enforced Americanization of ITAs?

Be sure to proofread your final draft very thoroughly. For example, since your spell-check will pick up many authors' names, make sure that they are spelled as they should be.

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for GTA training. It uses GPA, background courses, a personal statement and philosophy of teaching as selection criteria, and supervisor reviews and visits to the classroom as well as other detailed curriculum materials that go into a portfolio evaluation (Davis and Kring). All of these would be good if geared specifically to ITAs.

Whether students see the ITA as a necessary evil or a benefit, it is clear that they are part of our education process. ~~So we would all be better off with a more positive perspective, such as that of the Texas Tech video.~~ This should start in high school, but some of the suggestions made by the researchers covered in this paper are also good. It would be best if every student had the chance to spend time in another country by themselves. But since that isn't possible, we need to find ways to show students how important it is to accept people who are different first of all, then try to understand them. Then we can help the ITA help us learn.

The conclusion might have a clearer sense of ending if it included more key terms. For instance, "some of the suggestions made by the researchers covered in this paper are also good" could be strengthened by terms like "undergraduates," "international teaching assistants," "cultural differences," "understanding," and "contact." You might consider using an evaluative term like "improving relations." Or, instead of a general term like "positive perspective," how about something more specific like "appreciation of cultural differences"?

Your appreciation of the significance of this issue is a strong point of the paper.

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This sample paper is a good first draft, with strong sources and an important point. But all first drafts need revision. To revise it, the writer needs to build in key terms, work on transitions, and build a stronger recognition of the overall argument.

FOCUS POINTS: STRATEGIES FOR REVIEWING THE ARGUMENT

1. Before reviewing the paper, put the draft aside for awhile—really.
2. Quickly read the draft through to get an overall view of what it says. Edit only when you can't stand not to. Your goal in this reading is to get the big picture, and you may lose it if you spend too long working on any one part. You may discover through this quick reading that a different organization would be more reasonable for your argument, or that you need additional reasons or evidence to support your claims. Make notes to yourself or jot down suggestions for changes on the page when you're afraid you'll forget an idea or insight. Reading out loud is a useful approach to this task, especially if you can find someone who will listen and take notes but refrain from commenting until you are finished.
3. Underline your major claim. Is it located in the statement you identified as your thesis? Do you need to revise your thesis?
4. Reread the introduction closely. You may see the context of your thesis differently after finishing the draft, since many writers find that writing is a process of discovery. If so, you may need to revise the introduction.

5. Check the support for claims against the list of logical fallacies in Chapter 1. Is the argument reasonable? Are the reasons and conclusions based on warrants your readers will accept? Do any of these assumptions need explanation or justification?
6. Think about the argument you have made. What is the most serious objection to your argument? Where and how well do you address it?
7. Identify and adjust the transitions that clarify your organization for your readers and that increase the coherence of your paper (see Focus Points: Revising to Improve Transitions Chapter 7, p. 131).
8. Run a “find” search for key words, and make sure their repetition is consistent and their placement reasonable. Do you need to add transition words to make the relationships among your ideas clearer?
9. Skim the paper, reading the introduction, first sentences, and conclusion. Can you grasp the progression of the argument from this skimming? Rewrite the first sentences of the paragraphs in which the progression is not clear. If you are not sure, make a revision outline (Chapter 7, p. 130).
10. What difference does your argument make? Do you address that further significance in your paper? Does your conclusion emphasize that significance and transmit a sense of ending?

FOCUS POINTS: QUESTIONS FOR PEER REVIEW

- Identify the part of the paper that you find most convincing.
- Identify points in the paper where you have trouble following the writer’s argument.
- Write a short evaluation of the introduction and conclusion. If you think they still need work, give the writer some suggestions about what seems lacking or out of place in these crucial parts of the paper.
- Write a paragraph of response to the writer’s argument, in which you state the grounds on which you agree with it and address your own sense of the significance of the point the writer has made or, if you disagree, the significance of the writer’s failure to convince you in the argument.
- Make a list of sentence-level errors you recognize—but do not correct them in the paper.

EXAMPLE 10.7 *Final Draft of the Argumentative Research Paper*

Negative Views of International Teaching Assistants: Causes and Solutions

Talk to undergraduates at nearly any major university and they will tell you they have had a teaching assistant, or TA, for a teacher. Many of those students probably had an international student as a TA, especially if they were in a math class or chemistry/biology class with labs. And many students will probably tell you they would rather have a TA who can “speak English,” if they have to have a TA at all. According to the Institute of International Education, there are nearly 600,000 international students

on US campuses. Moreover, graduate international teaching assistants, or ITAs, are increasing as well. In response, many American students have gone public with their views, getting their complaints published in campus newspapers (Chang 6). Obviously, many students are resistant to the idea of having TAs who are other than American-born, even students who haven't had any personal experience with international TAs. However, this resistance may stem from problems much deeper than just speaking English, and it definitely obscures the fact that international TAs are very valuable to diversity on campus.

International students, who are sometimes still called foreign students, are increasing on campuses nationwide, and graduate international teaching assistants, or ITAs, are increasing as well. With this increase comes the opportunity for more diversity on American campuses. Our world is quickly becoming more and more connected globally thanks to technology and strong economies. We as students now have the opportunity to learn about other cultures and appreciate them, to live in a world community instead of just a local one. As graduates we will probably find jobs working side by side with people from different countries, so being exposed to diverse cultures early in college has a great benefit for adjustment later. As Susan Johnson and Xia Li Lollar state, "Universities and colleges are a place where students from homogenous backgrounds can be introduced to the diverse environment in which they will live their adult lives" (306). Not only is the benefit of learning to live with and respect others who are different ignored by many complaints against ITAs, many of those complaints may be unjustified. I am looking at research done mainly by graduate students at universities in order to find out why American students really have such a hard time with international teaching assistants, to address some of the misconceptions, and offer suggestions in order to argue that we should appreciate the diversity value of study with international TAs.

Graduate students started to be used as teaching assistants in the 1940s and 1950s (Ouzts 21). According to one author, possibly a quarter of all undergraduate courses at big research institutions are taught by teaching assistants (Ouzts 3), but another states that the figure could be as high as half (Chang 1). The use of teaching assistants has always been controversial (Fox 2), because using graduate students to teach undergraduates can be seen as placing too much value on graduate education and research (Smith et al.) at the expense of good undergraduate education. The controversy has grown with the use

of international TAs. "The Foreign TA Problem," as it has been called (Chang, Plakans, Smith et al.), has been around since the mid-1980s. It was then that larger numbers of undergraduate courses began being taught by TAs who did not speak English as a first language. Those students came to the United States to study but couldn't get visas to work off-campus. While many would work in cafeterias and libraries, some were eligible to teach low-level introductory courses that professors did not have time to teach, or to serve as lab instructors, graders, and recitation section leaders. Thus, working as a teaching assistant is a way of satisfying the graduate students' need to finance their education as well as the university's need to staff low-level, often required courses for relatively low cost (Fox, Plakans, Ouzts).

In a study done by Barbara Sweeney Plakans at Iowa State University, over 72 percent of the undergraduates she studied had been in a course taught by an ITA. ITAs at Iowa State comprised nearly a third of all the TAs and were found mainly in math, engineering, and the physical sciences. In a study by Wanda Fox at Purdue University, about 30 percent of the TAs were international and found mainly in the Engineering and Science schools (190–91). A study conducted by Florence Louise Ouzts added business to the list (1) and reported that most of the ITAs getting complaints were from Taiwan, China, and India (6), and that most of the complaints were from students in sections of in math, physics, and chemistry (30).

While most ITAs are chosen because they excel in their fields, they aren't all prepared to be good teachers, let alone teachers of American students. In order to improve teaching performance, many universities have instituted ITA training programs, which orient international students to American universities and work to assess and improve their English language skills. These programs began in the 1980s. Smith et al. state that since 1982, laws have been passed or state mandates required for assessing language abilities of ITAs in 18 states. Some of these assessments also include training programs. The training includes orientation programs, which are short, one- to five-day training sessions that students take before they start teaching. Concurrent programs are given while the teaching assistants are in their first semester of teaching, and may involve some mentoring. Some training programs combine pre-term and concurrent work with teaching assistants (Smith et al.). Smith et al. observe that we need more assessment instruments to address both the language and teaching abilities of ITAs and suggest the use of student evaluations, surveys of ITAs and supervisors, and student improvement evaluation.

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ITAs in most colleges and universities go through training programs initially designed for American graduate teaching assistants, although some programs are specifically designed for international graduate students. Stephen Davis and Jason Kring describe the GTA training at their institution as a model for GTA training. It uses GPA, background courses, a personal statement and philosophy of teaching as selection criteria, and supervisor reviews and visits to the classroom as well as other detailed curriculum materials that go into a portfolio evaluation. All of these would be good for international TAs if geared specifically to their needs as instructors of American undergraduates. Cai Lun Jia and Amy Aldous Bergerson report that ITAs that attending these sorts of training seminars not only value the pedagogical advice but are then able "to develop networks both among international students and across campus," which contribute greatly to their cultural experience and the way they relate to American students (92).

Using TAs is unique to the United States (Plakans 3). In their own countries, the international graduate students probably took their classes in a very large lecture hall that was very formal. Kwasi Sarkodie-Mensah states that in some countries, it is considered rude to walk in late into the classroom or raise the left hand to ask a question. He says that many ITAs also don't know that American students have to pay for their tuition instead of the government funding them as in other countries, which leads to lack of understanding about the special circumstances of the American classroom and about the expectations of American students (115–16). Wanda Fox talks about the importance of "cultural factors" in the classroom, stating that even when the ITA has clear speech, he or she may have a hard time relating to the students (203). In a similar way, Kwasi Sarkodie-Mensah states that ITAs should not "become dictators in the classroom" (116), but that American students also need to adapt their expectations to some extent. Fox seems to see a particular responsibility on the undergraduate's part to overcome bias and prejudice (206).

So, while part of the problem may rest with ITA preparation to teach American students, much of it seems to rest with American students' perceptions. Barbara Plakans compared her study at Iowa State University with one conducted by Wanda Fox at Purdue. Plakans and Fox both researched attitudes of undergraduates who had had experiences with an ITA. For her study, Fox developed the Questionnaire of Undergraduates about International Teaching Assistants (QUITA) as well as interviews (190–91). Fox surveyed 540 undergraduates, but only 18 of these were freshmen (192). Nagesh Rao also conducted a

dissertation study on negative views on ITAs held by undergraduates, finding that American undergraduates are at least equally responsible for the negative views (6). And Mei-Hsia Chang studied real versus perceived comprehension of ITAs, finding that undergraduates understand what their ITAs say more than they report they do (6).

Students often use criticism of international students' language skills as a mask for other issues. One interesting finding in Plakans's study and confirmed by Smith is that when students complained about ITAs, they usually claimed that the problem was pronunciation, but her study showed that many other kinds of communication problems were actually behind undergraduates' complaints about the speaking abilities of international teaching assistants (Plakans 131). Florence Ouzts's study confirms that cultural problems add to the problem of understanding most often identified as language-based (5). Chang discusses a study that suggests that an increased attitude of consumerism and getting one's money's worth, more ITA visibility, and ethnocentrism may be at the base of many complaints (6). Rao studied the importance of undergraduate expectations when encountering an ITA. In addition, one of the problems could be a general disillusionment and frustration with college that many undergraduates experience in the first two years, which could find a scapegoat in the ITA. Fox also reports that some students blamed the ITA for their poor academic performance (207). According to Plakans, seniors tend to be more lenient on ITA evaluations because they've mellowed and accepted the system (137-39).

A study by Nancy Ann Oppenheim suggested that students in upper-level courses have more "domain knowledge" to be able to "negotiate meaning" and figure out what the ITA is saying (vii, 212). The hypothesis of her study was that the real problem isn't the ITAs' ability to speak clearly or teach well, but that undergraduate negative and resistant attitudes were based on their perceptual bias (7). She identifies four causes of this bias: (1) negative stereotyping, (2) prejudice and overgeneralizations learned early, (3) situational factors, especially seeing the foreign students as competition, and (4) high emotions and insecurity (22-27). She states that undergraduates who learn techniques for good communication with an international teaching assistant give the ITAs higher ratings (9).

Plakans' study showed that the undergraduates who were not as critical of their instructors had positive attitudes, believing the ITA was a good teacher, was open to cultural differences, and took some of the responsibility for maintaining good

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Schools have devised a number of programs to help American students adjust to instructors with foreign backgrounds. Based on the results of her study, Plakans suggested "intervention strategies" (vii) to help American undergraduate students deal with ITAs. She discusses one Michigan State approach that uses programs in residence halls conducted jointly by an ITA and an undergraduate. They talk about stereotyping, show a video, and get the students talking about the subject. Using this kind of program in freshmen orientation might also work, an idea strongly suggested by Chang along with more regular intercultural activities (149). Rao suggests sending a letter informing new undergraduates that they will have international instructors (100-03). The University of Missouri-Columbia uses a brochure called "TAs at Mizzou" that gives tips on better communication. However, Plakans says that a similar brochure used at Iowa State was criticized by a foreign student for being discriminating, and the video used at the parents' orientation created more anxieties and questions than answering them (147-48).

Fox's study recommends making undergraduates part of a screening process for new ITAs and having them participate in the ITA training course, which would help the undergraduates feel more confident about the TA program (217-18). Plakans says that trying to get undergraduates more involved in the ITA program as well as making it clear how much the ITAs are qualified might be good strategies, but they have not yet been carefully studied. Rao discusses "buddy programs" that pair an ITA with an undergraduate (104). These opportunities make the undergraduates more comfortable with ITAs and the ITAs more confident and comfortable as teachers. Sarkodie-Mensah states:

Encouraging interaction of college-bound students and TAs from other countries also will foster understanding between the two

groups and will prepare the new students for some of the culture shock they will experience in the hands of the foreign TAs. (116)

Texas Tech University produced a video in 1988 called *You and the International TA: Paths to Better Understanding*. The 30-minute video explains why international teaching assistants are beneficial. It gives statistics on the increase of international students and TAs, showing that they are something that is here to stay. Three international TAs—from Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Peru—are interviewed, and each explains how different American students are from students in their home countries. However, they all stress the positive aspects of teaching in America such as American students' being friendly and more independent. Professors explain that some American students are resistant to classes with international instructors because they are wary of people who are different or because they come from conservative parts of the country, where people with different cultures or beliefs can be seen as threatening or dangerous.

Joe Goodin, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Texas Tech, describes some of the positive benefits to American undergraduates from studying with international teaching assistants. He explains how students become "sensitized to international education, international problems" in a class taught by an ITA, which is important in a globalized world becoming more interdependent. Goodin states it is important that American students go into a class taught by an ITA with the attitude that "the cultural experience" will be positive, that with "receptivity" they will end up "on the learning end" and be better off than if all their TAs were American. The international TAs help American students experience and understand cultural diversity. However, one of the studies Plakans referred to in her study showed that undergraduates were "neutral about whether the experience of having an ITA increased cultural understanding" (16). Another study showed that mentoring did not affect undergraduate acceptance and suggested that what is needed is "more informal, interpersonal contact to change attitudes and more overseas travel by undergrads" (Plakans 16).

Professors in the video list benefits, including being exposed to different cultures, and getting a better understanding of the world we live in. They also stress that many ITAs are the "cream of the crop" among students in their countries and earn awards here in the United States. The video ends with six steps for the American student to handle difficulty

understanding an ITA and four suggestions for how to speak more effectively to the ITA, which Oppenheim stresses as the key to better relations (213). The video stresses being fair and patient and ends with the message that that the international TAs are needed. The video would have been even better with student comments supporting using ITAs. One comment from Plakans's study even shows how the students need to learn to adapt to people from different cultures rather than expecting their teaching assistants to do all the accommodating:

I think we are placing too much of an emphasis on making these TAs conform to American ways. I'm not expecting an ITA to give up their culture just because they're here. I think we have a lot to learn just having an ITA as an instructor. There isn't much chance that you are going to go out into the business world and everyone you run into is an American. I think in a lot of cases we are being too inflexible and that bothers me. . . . Americans are just so egocentric we don't want to allow other people to be what they are. (112)

Citing another study, Ouzts refers to the ITA having to take on a "culturally alien persona" in order to try to fit in, and Smith et al. refer to the "Americanization" of ITAs, which shows how difficult and maybe wrong it is for the ITA to do all the accommodating.

International students, and ITAs in particular as very visible and authoritative international students, contribute to and support American society and education. Dennis Peterson et al. discuss their "vast and various contributions," including the fact that it is because of ITAs that many required courses can be offered regularly (68). They also state that international students contribute through their spending to a strong U.S. economy, and that their home countries show their appreciation by supporting U.S. goods and services (68). Johnson and Lollar discuss their study's findings on the important influence cultural diversity exposure in education has on American students' functioning as citizens, providing better, more democratic political participation as well as the ability to handle different perspectives and disputes better (306).

But the greatest contribution international teaching assistants make to American education is the learning opportunities they provide for undergraduates. Through working with international students and teaching assistants, American students can learn about other

cultures and countries, learn about the issues we face that are unique as well as common. This learning can help us in fighting stereotyping (Peterson et al. 71) and "promoting racial understanding" (Johnson and Lollar 313). This kind of learning "could be a beacon, illuminating a world of cultural differences and a common global humanity, building blocks for a just and peaceful world" (76). The key, according to Johnson and Lollar, is exposure: "the greater the exposure to diversity the more culturally aware the students" (315).

Whether students see the ITA as a necessary evil or as the benefit they are, it is clear that they are part of our education process. So we would all be better off with a more positive perspective, like that promoted by the Texas Tech video. This positive appreciation of cultural differences should start in high school, but the suggestions made by the researchers for improving relations between undergraduates and international teaching assistants are also important. It would be best if every American student had the chance to spend time in another country. But since that isn't possible, international teaching assistants can help expand the diversity of American students' experience and teach them how important it is to first accept people who are different from themselves, and then try to understand them. Then we can help the ITAs help us learn.

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Exercises

Since this chapter is devoted to writing, revising, and editing an argumentative research paper, these exercises point to various phases of that process and offer practice using the strategies for revision and editing suggested in the chapter and elsewhere in the book. Your campus writing center can offer help with the planning, drafting and editing stages of this process. Writing centers do not proofread, although they can help you learn how to do it. However, writing centers do usually provide a concerned and impartial reader, and this can help build your confidence in the knowledge you have gained from the inquiry.

10.1 PLANNING THE RESEARCH PAPER

1. Use Focus Points: Reviewing and Organizing Information (Chapter 9, p. 159) to review your inquiry and revise your thesis.
2. Use one of the planning strategies described in this chapter—either the outline or informal paper plan—to organize your argument.
3. Exchange plans with a classmate or a group, and revise your plan, anticipating how well your plan addresses the issues raised in Focus Points: Questions for Peer Review (Chapter 10, p. 194).
4. If neither of these planning strategies seems to work for you, write a paragraph explaining why, using specific examples.

10.2 DRAFTING THE RESEARCH PAPER

Working from your outline or plan as much as you can, and using whatever drafting methods (see Focus Points: Strategies for Drafting, p. 182) you find most productive, write a first draft of the paper. If you rethink issues during the process of drafting, use the comment feature to note changes and ask questions. This draft should be sufficiently focused to be ready for serious revision.

10.3 REVIEWING AND REVISING THE DRAFT

1. Reread the draft, using the questions and strategies in the Focus Points: Strategies for Reviewing the Argument (p. 193) in this chapter as a guide. Take notes or mark on the paper where changes seem necessary.
2. Reread the draft, using Focus Points: Revising for Coherence (Chapter 7, p. 130). Revising for coherence often helps you see other problems with argumentation, evidence, and language.
3. Working with another student or a group, review your argument, first using Exercise 6.6: Listening for Voice in a Synthesis (Chapter 6, p. 127) and then using Focus Points: Questions for Peer Review in this chapter (p. 194).
4. Write a short but specific description of how you plan to revise the paper, drawing from your notes on your readings of the draft, your answers to the self-review questions, and responses from your reviewers. This description need not be more than a paragraph or a bulleted list, but it should address the major changes you expect to make, any recurring problems you have found, any additional sources you need to consult, and any questions you have yet to resolve about your argument.
5. Produce a second draft of the paper, incorporating the revisions you have decided on.

10.4 EDITING THE DRAFT

1. Start editing this draft using strategies described in Focus Points: Revising to Improve Transitions (Chapter 7, p. 131) and Focus Points: Editing for Wordiness and Choppiness (Chapter 7, p. 133).
2. Check your use of sources, using Focus Points: Editing Citations and References (Chapter 9, p. 168).
3. Produce the other apparatus (title pages, acknowledgements, table of contents, etc.) that are assigned. See the Quick Guide to Documentation in this book for differences among these conventions in different professional styles. Produce a clean, revised draft that incorporates your changes.
4. Proofread your paper, following the strategies in Focus Points: Final Editing Strategies (Chapter 7, p. 137) and Focus Points: Effective Proofreading (Chapter 7, p. 137) before you submit your final draft.

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10.5 PRESENTING RESEARCH BY OTHER MEANS

1. Present your research to your class as an oral presentation with visuals. Consider carefully the information about oral presentations in Appendix A and the use of visuals in Appendix B. As you adapt your written work to a speaking performance, consider how this kind of presentation changes the arrangement of your research. If you are asked to present your research orally before or while you are producing the written report, this presentation can be a useful way to clarify your ideas and give them a hearing before working them into a written form. It is very common for researchers to present a project orally before producing a written version.
2. Create a Web site that records your research and offers links to appropriate sources and visuals.

10.6 REFLECTING ON YOUR INQUIRY

1. This paper and the other projects you have carried out required a considerable amount of work from you. Think about this work in terms of the intellectual property issues raised in Chapter 3 and elsewhere in the book. How would you feel if someone submitted the paper as their own without your permission? Would you be willing to give it to someone else? To sell it? To make it available for other students to consult? Why or why not?
2. Reflect on how well the various collaborations involved in this extended inquiry worked. What could be done to make them more useful?
3. Reflect on how recursive your writing process was as you worked on this paper, that is, how often you seemed to move to an earlier part of the process as you neared your finished product.
4. What more would you like to do to pursue this inquiry, perhaps in another class? Or, if you think it is finished, why do you think so?