CREATING AND SHARING MATERIALS FOR ITAS

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CREATING AND SHARING MATERIALS FOR ITAS

- Who is ITA-IS and what do we do?

- What are "core competencies" we work on with ITAs?

- Useful strategies for creating materials

- Techniques to share ITA materials

ITA INTEREST SECTION

ITA professionals train, prepare, and assess nonnative English speaking students who will hold a TA role.

ITA PROGRAMS
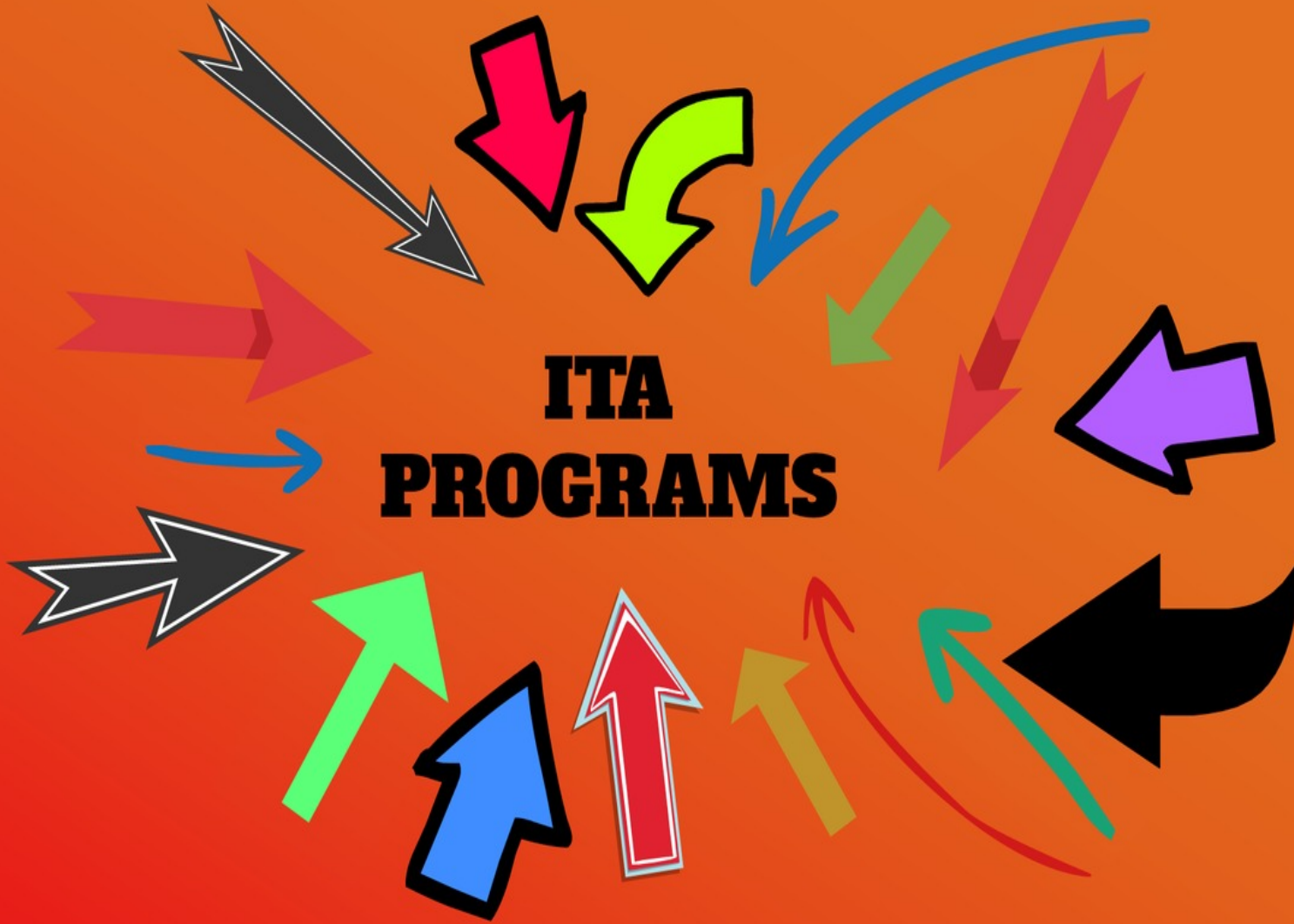
ITAS NEED FLUENCY TO:

- Accomplish advanced communicative tasks

- Develop cross-cultural understanding of education

- Build compensation strategies for communicative weaknesses

- Incorporate instructional language to make content easy to follow

- Apply pragmatic competence

ITAS

- **Often function as experts / need advanced discourse language**

- **Ability to function as TA but also give presentations**

  - conferences

  - Qualifiers or oral exams

  - group meetings

- **Pressure to improve language quickly**

 - degree requirements
  - funding concerns

CORE COMPETENCIES

I. Presentation / Discussion-leading Skills

II. Intercultural Communication Skills

III. Pragmatic Skills

CORE COMPETENCIES

How each competency is broken down or assessed can hinge on the assessment or ITA test used at an institution.

Creating and sharing are closely connected to each other.

Creating

Sharing
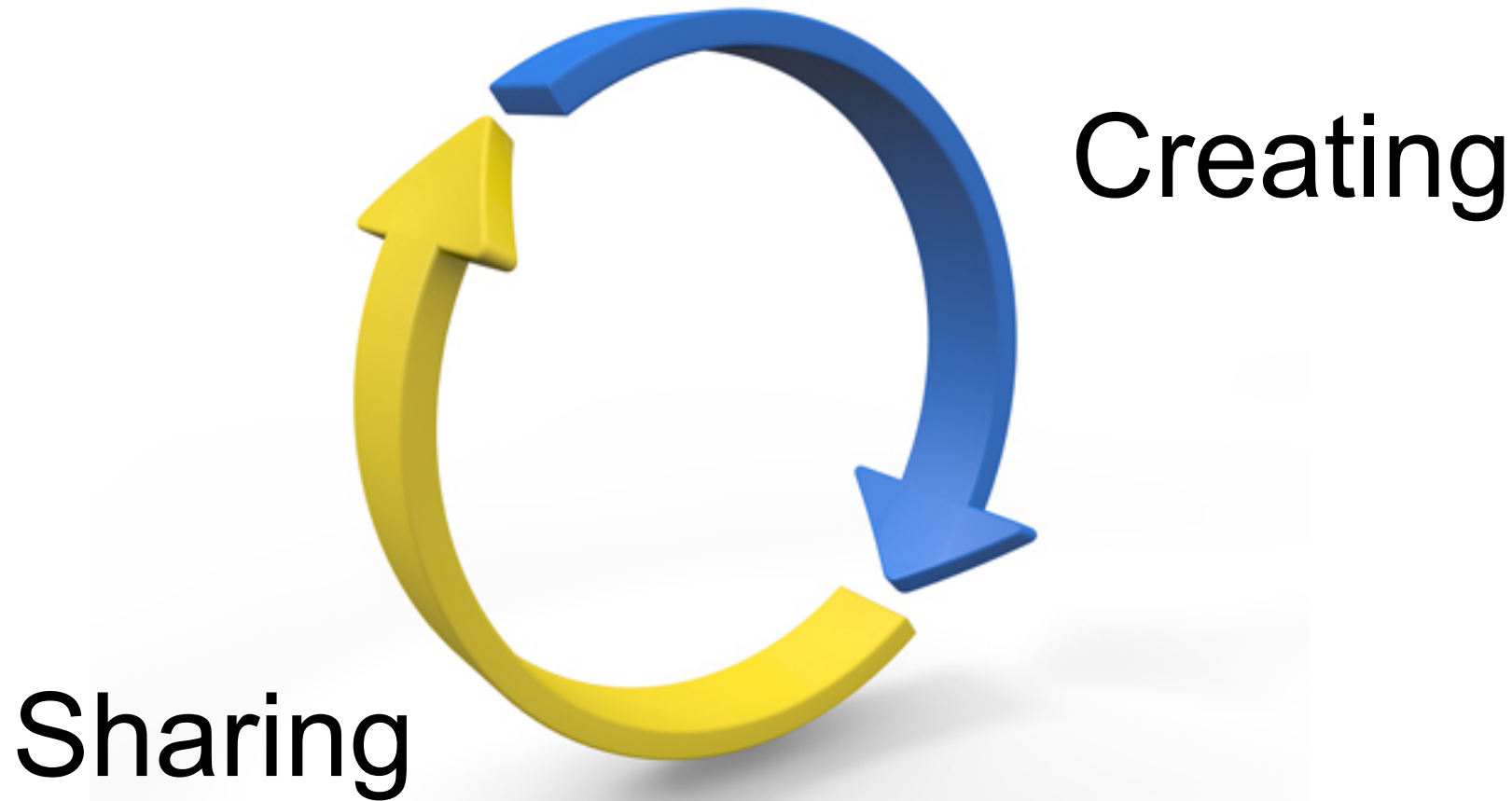
CREATING MATERIALS

What are characteristics of effective, tested materials?

I. Scaffolded

II. Culturally explicit

III. Targeting and connected to real-life use

IV. Authentic models

WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO CREATE THESE MATERIALS?

1. Be inspired at conferences or meetings

2. Discuss needs with ITAs, post-docs, faculty

3. Notice consistent gaps during ITA tests, feedback, or required sessions

4. Adapt materials designed for alternative populations by

   1. Simplifying *or* finding more complex examples
   2. Incorporating stronger spoken component
   3. Modifying materials to improve engagement

5. Collaborate with other ITA or Communication professionals (CGC, Writing Centers, Teaching Centers, Career Centers, Professional Development Services)

6. Participate in staff retreats, online courses, and professional development

EXAMPLE OF CREATING

I attended a regional ITA conference about using Improv activities in a semester long class for NNES but not explicitly ITA students. We tried activities and instructor, Dan Montour (OSU), explained how he built on them over several weeks.

Same instructor submitted improv activities in an article for the ITA-IS newsletter.

Adapted material into a two-hour seminar targeting fluency and active listening skills.

ADAPTING TO BE: SCAFFOLDED, CULTURALLY EXPLICIT, TARGETING AND CONNECTED TO REAL-LIFE USE

List specific objectives so ITAs understand the value of material or lesson (targeting):

- Give ITAs a set of tools to help access fluency more readily when in unexpected situations
- Help ITAs develop strategies to reduce anxiety caused by worrying about making mistakes in front of other professionals
- Improve active listening skills to better prepare ITAs for responding

Scaffolded warm-up: Explain activity, show video model, explain why ("This activity will help warm-up our voices, remove tension, and get us in sync as a group")**, and then perform activity:**

SHARING MATERIALS

1. **Present lessons, activities, and ideas at conferences or meetings**

2. *Inform other ITA Professionals* **by sharing an activity via**

   - ITAIS newsletter
   - journals or books
   - email lists

3. **Share materials through a website**

   - Organization's site (www.cmu.edu/icc)
   - Personal or professional site
   - Open Courseware Sites (MIT)

4. **When people seek guidance, via email or conversation, reach out!**

SHARING AND CREATING

- Establish expertise and reputation.

- Demonstrate tested-materials.

- Open the door to future collaborations on materials.

MOVING TOWARDS NEW MATERIALS

Online or digital sharing:

Justin Shewell, Dawn Bikowski, and Edna Lima from CALL will talk about digital material design and platforms.

Publishing materials:

Sarah Worthington will discuss strategies for techniques for making sure materials are publishable.