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Foreign

(Continued from page 1)

accommodate them," Burke said. "But they need to realize that many cultures and languages exist other than their own. I wish there weren't so many 'foreign-phobic' people."

Burke said some students have less trouble with foreign lecturers' accents than with their extensive vocabularies.

"Some American students have problems with the professors from India, not because of their accent, but because the professor has such an extensive handle on the English language that the student can't understand what some of the words mean," she said.

Mathematics Department Head Dr. H. Elton Lacey said he is not aware of any communication problems between students and foreign-born lecturers in his department.

However, four years ago the math department had problems when 60 percent of the teaching assistants were foreign-born.

"Most of the complaints came early in the semester and had to do with the teacher's accent and lack of skill in the English language," Lacey said. "But gradually they were replaced. Currently, there are less than 25 percent foreign-born t.a.'s in the department."

If a teaching assistant does have a problem with the English language, it usually can be picked up early.

"Teacher's assistants have to pass an English proficiency exam in addition to standard tests," Lacey said. "And based on their scores they take three, six, or however many hours of English we think they need."

"If it's apparent that a t.a. has poor English speaking capabilities, he is assigned non-teaching duties, such as tutorial work, until we feel confident of his or her English."

Lacey said teaching assistants in

his department are not the primary instructors.

Dr. Jane Schielack, a mathematics professor, said the mathematics department is one of the few departments that has a training program assisting new graduate students in their teaching responsibilities during their first semester.

Schielack wrote in a report to Dr. William Perry, the program's creator, that the program has been helpful so far.

"The program is aimed at relieving anxieties and promoting effective strategies," she said.

Some of the activities the assistants attend are: lectures, an orientation overview of the teaching assistants' teaching responsibilities, and a videotaped presentation of sample recitation sections conducted by previous teaching assistants who received Outstanding Awards at the departmental and university levels.

"On the second day of the orientation the new t.a.'s are organized into groups of four or five in which they each demonstrate their presentation skills," Schielack said. "The presentations and quizzes are critiqued by their peers in the group and by faculty members and experienced t.a.'s assigned to each group."

"The critiques focus mainly on aspects of the presentation, such as organization, board presentation, and body language," she said. "However, effective teaching strategies are acknowledged or suggested, and problems with language or content are noticed."

It is in these practice labs that the professors can identify a teaching assistant who lacks skill in the English language, or in the mathematics content, Schielack said.

"This way developmental work can be given to the student (teaching assistant) before he is assigned to a recitation section," she said.

Mays said solutions can be provided if a problem does exist.

"It should be brought to the attention of those who can do something about it," he said.

Jobs

(Continued from page 4)

could be as simple as the type of stationary you use.

Besides being brief, also remember to put only the basics in the resumé, Williams said.

"I looked at a resumé not too long ago from a man who had been in business for quite a while," she said. "He had just moved to Houston from Little Rock, and he was looking for a job. He wrote in his resumé that he transferred because he divorced his wife."

"I don't think that's anybody's business. Him putting that in his resumé made me start wondering other things about his personal life. And those things are none of my, or any other interviewer's, business at the point of (reviewing a) resumé."

Forgetting basic grammar and spelling rules is another mistake made on resúmes, Williams said.

"Remember that a resumé is a representation of yourself," she said. "When I get a resumé that has a typo in it, that says to me that either this person is in too big of a hurry, or this person doesn't take pride in himself." "In either instance, you're not making a favorable impression. In that case, your first impression is: here's someone who rushes through their work and doesn't take the time for work to be done right."

Writing dull and unimaginative cover letters also hinders a good applicant, Williams said.

"Do something in your letter to make you stick out from the rest of the crowd," she said. "I had a letter once that I got from someone — and while I don't recommend this for everyone — it worked for this person."

"On the first line of the letter, it said in bold type, 'I'm the person for your job!' I thought that the person was gutsy, and I gave him the interview because he was gutsy enough to write that. You've got to do something to set you apart, but you can't have mistakes."

Preparing more than one resumé is a useful technique, Williams said. She said having more than one resumé is important especially to liberal arts students.

"Depending on what job you're applying for, adjust your resumé to fit that job description," she said. "If you're trying to get a technical job, and you're a liberal arts major, change some things on your resumé to bring out the technical skills you have."

"There is nothing wrong with changing the career objective for different jobs you're applying for either. Nobody says your professional objective has to be the same on every resumé. Put the objective at the top that's going to get you the interview."

Besides providing resumé information, Williams also explained interviewing guidelines used by companies. Williams said these guidelines are what most interviewers use to conduct interviews.

"Most interviewers will follow some basic guidelines," she said. "And if you know these guidelines, you will be better prepared for the interview."

"First, interviewers will ask one question at a time and allow a several second pause to encourage the applicant to talk further. Remember that just because the interviewer isn't talking, you don't have to fill the void. Don't babble and make no

sense just because the interviewer has stopped talking.

"They're also instructed to ask clear questions without indicating a preferred answer or without asking a 'yes-or-no' question. When we ask you a question, we are trying to get you to answer in a way that you don't know what we are trying to get you to say."

"Also, be prepared for interviewers to repeat parts of your key sentences in a questioning tone to try and get you to elaborate on your answer."

Williams said dressing for the interview and practicing for the interview also are important.

"People are going to make a judgment on you according to how you look," she said. "Whether it's fair or not, whether it's right or not, it's going to happen. And you can be prepared."

"If you get to an interview, and you realize you have a spot on your tie or a run in your hose, it's better to call and reschedule the appointment than to show up and give that first impression that says you are messy and unconcerned with your appearance."

Practicing for an interview also is important, she said. Taking advantage of business friends and past interviews is a good way to improve interviewing skills.

"It doesn't hurt to pretend interview," she said. "If you have a friend in the business field, call and ask him to let you come in and practice your skills."

"Also, if you attend an interview and do not get the job, call the person you interviewed with and ask for a critique. They usually don't mind, and it does you a world of good."

Williams said the final stage of impression-making comes from remembering simple etiquette.

"After someone has taken the time out of his schedule to interview you, send a thank-you note," she said. "If you want to make an impression as someone who follows things through until the end, and as someone who understands etiquette — do it."

After taking questions from the audience, Williams provided several alternatives for asking important questions in an appropriate manner.

"It's very appropriate to ask questions of the interviewer about the company," she said. "But it's also important to structure those questions in an appropriate way."

"For example, if you want to know how much overtime is involved in the job, don't ask, 'Is there much overtime?' Ask what the average work day includes."

"Of course the dominant question in most applicant's minds concerns pay scales. It's OK to ask for a feel for the salary range. If you don't like the salary range, it's OK to ask what the chances for upward mobility are."

Williams said it's important to be yourself when interviewing for a job.

"If you pretend to be someone you aren't or pretend to like jobs that you don't, and you get hired, you will not be happy and neither will the company," she said. "Be yourself and don't play a role. You're interviewing the company as much as they're interviewing you."

Students who missed the seminar can attend another Wednesday from 5:15 to 6:45 p.m. in 401 Rudder.

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