ESL Students and College / University Writing Centres

Literature Search

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Research Parameters:
To locate resources pertaining to use of college / university writing centres by ESL students, as well as best practices implemented by these writing centres to accommodate second language learners

Databases Searched:
ERIC, CBCA Education, Education Research Complete, Educators eCollection, Teachers Reference Center, ProQuest Dissertation Abstracts, Education Index

Seneca Libraries, Seneca College of Applied Arts & Technology
Articles

In order to better understand the complex dynamic that often occurs during writing center sessions between native English speaking (L1) tutors and English language learners (ELL), this study investigates linguistic dominance through time-at-talk, turn-taking, agenda-setting, and content analysis. We conclude that, in keeping with theory and practice of tutor training in inquiry-based pedagogy, ELL students and peer tutors vacillate between the linguistic dominant position, indicating that participants establish a collaborative and egalitarian environment. However, L1 tutors may experience dissonance because the agenda set by ELL students often focuses on surface features such as grammar and diction rather than on global revisions.

The article focuses on the important elements of a writing center conference including politeness and praise. A writing center is a place where both consultants and the students can discuss writing, and politeness is a vital element used by consultants with their non-English speaking students to bridge the communication gap. On the other hand, praise factor is used to nurture and promote good communication between consultants and students, and also as a teaching technique when inquiring into and criticizing the work of a student.

Structured reflection on practical teaching experiences may help pre-service teachers to integrate their learning and analyze their actions to become more effective learners and teachers. This study reports on 12 pre-service English as a second language (ESL) teachers' individual tutoring of learners of English language writing. The data of the study are the writing journal entries that the pre-service ESL teachers maintained during their tutoring experience. These journals had common elements: all were used by the pre-service teachers to consider what funds of knowledge they bring to their teaching of ESL learners, to evaluate their roles as writers, learners and teachers and to reflect on the educational, social and cultural implications of teaching writing in English to speakers of other languages. This article describes ways in which both native and non-native English speaking pre-service teachers adapted their instruction to meet the particular needs of individual ESL writers and what they learned in the process. It provides insight regarding the value of using tutoring and reflection generally in teacher education and specifically in the preparation of teachers of ESL.

The article focuses on the involvement of foreign students who acquired English As a Second Language (ESL) in a writing center session on ESL in the U.S. A group of scholars headed by Conrad and Goldstein stressed on the need of every ESL student to participate in every session for them to enhance their English vocabulary. Furthermore, student must be involved completely to the writing center session to learn the English language. Lastly, students need to communicate with the teacher for them to broaden their knowledge.

Tuzi, F. (2004). The impact of e-feedback on the revisions of L2 writers in an academic writing course. *Computers & Composition, 21*(2), 217-235. This study explored the relationship between electronic feedback (e-feedback) and its impact on second-language (L2) writers’ revisions specifically focusing on how L2 students responded to their peers and what kinds of revisions they made as a result of the feedback they received. The 20 L2 writers wrote, responded, and revised on a database-driven web site specifically designed for writing and responding. Other forms of feedback they received included oral feedback from friends and peers and from face-to-face meetings with university writing center tutors. Results suggest students preferred oral feedback. However, e-feedback had a greater impact on revision than oral feedback, implying that e-feedback might be more useful. Additionally, e-feedback helped L2 writers focus on larger writing blocks. Thus, L2 writers may use e-feedback to create macro revisions. This exploratory study highlights a new form of revising and responding and offers insights into joining oral response to online collaboration.

Williams, J. (2004). Tutoring and revision: Second language writers in the writing center. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13*(3), 173-201. There is little research to link what happens during writing center (WC) sessions to how student writers revise their subsequent drafts. This gap in the literature is particularly evident concerning second language (L2) writers who come to the WC for assistance. This study is an effort to fill this gap, exploring the connection between WC interaction and revision by L2 writers. Findings suggest a clear connection between the two, especially as regards small-scale revision of sentence-level problems. They also point to the higher level of uptake of all tutor advice when suggestions are direct, when learners actively participate in the conversation, and when they write down their plans during the session. Also effective in stimulating revision are scaffolding moves by the tutor, including marking of critical features in the text, simplification of the task, goal-orientation, and modeling. In spite of the considerable revision done by all of the writers in this study, second drafts did not receive consistently higher holistic evaluations.

Thonus, T. (2004). What are the differences?: Tutor interactions with first- and second-language writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13*(3), 227-242. This paper reports on a decade of research into the nature of interactions between writing center tutors and native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) tutees. It explores and describes the structure of this interaction and the
behaviors of NNS tutees, and of tutors when interacting with both NS and NNS tutees. It characterizes writing center tutorials with NNSs as a balancing act among potentially conflicting forces. Finally, it suggests applications of these insights to tutor preparation and practice.

Williams, J., & Severino, C. (2004). The writing center and second language writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13*(3), 165-172. Writing centers (or writing labs) have been part of the higher education landscape since the 1930s (Murphy & Law, 1995). They have been regarded as separate from the classroom, a unique space for writers working on their writing. Originally, they were primarily identified with remediation, an impression that unfortunately lingers even today (Carino, 1992 and North, 1984a). In the late 1970s and 1980s, writing centers (WCs) saw a shift that paralleled the shift in composition studies more generally, with greater emphasis on facilitating the writing process, on liberatory practice, writer ownership of text, and collaborative approaches to instruction (Brooks, 1991 and Lunsford, 1991). Many WCs embraced the peer tutoring model, pioneered by Bruffee (1984), who maintained that tutoring is best seen as an interaction between peers who share similar backgrounds, experience, and status, one that creates a different and powerful context for learning. WC pedagogy as inquiry dates perhaps to the publication of Muriel Harris’s *Writing One-on-One* (1986) and to Stephen North’s call for serious writing center research (North, 1984b). There are now numerous guides to WC practice (Capossela, 1998; Gillespie & Lerner, 2004; Rafoth, 2000), a lively research community, and two dedicated journals (*Writing Center Journal, Writing Lab Newsletter*). It was not until ten years ago, however, that attention turned to the second language (L2) writers who were beginning to use—often in large numbers—college and university WCs, with a flurry of publication on the topic (i.e., Harris & Silva, 1993; Kennedy, 1993; Powers, 1993; Severino, 1993 and Thonus, 1993). These articles emphasized various aspects of WC practice regarding L2 writers. They offered advice and guidance to tutors and WC directors on L2 writing and working with L2 writers, including (1) cross-cultural differences in interaction and how to manage them, (2) typical L2 error profiles in terms of syntax, morphology, and lexis, and how tutors should address these, (3) strategies for assisting L2 readers, and (4) the insights of contrastive rhetoric, including how such differences might affect students’ approaches to texts. The first reference to WCs in this journal was Powers and J. Nelson’s (1995) survey of graduate students in the WC. Although limited in scope to students in graduate programs, it pointed to the potential value of collaboration between L2 professionals and WC staff more generally.

Thonus, T. (2003). Serving generation 1.5 learners in the university writing center. *TESOL Journal, 12*(1), 17-24. Explains how a key academic support service—the university writing center, can assist Generation 1.5 students (long-term U.S. residents and English language learners fluent in spoken English) as they develop their writing skills.
Notes that the number of second language writers in composition classes and seeking assistance at university writing centers is growing every year. Explores some insights offered by second language acquisition research. Argues that writing centers may be an ideal place for second language writers to work on their writing.

Proposes that there is a need for a specially trained group of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) literacy tutors for college and university tutoring and writing centers. Argues that literacy tutors with a sufficient background in linguistics and second language acquisition would be better equipped to handle non-native speakers' requests for assistance.

Focuses on how teaching experience at a newly implemented second language writing center contributed towards personal theory development of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) writing for three teachers. Combined the literature on teacher knowledge with ESL writing to study teachers' changing beliefs about ESL writers, readers, texts, and contexts. Found all three teachers critically examined and revised their content and pedagogic content knowledge of ESL writing.

Discusses general issues related to attitudes towards writing, which may be of interest to those working with English-as-a-second-language students, especially students coming from educational settings where writing is not traditionally taught. Presents the practice of the Writing Center at Central European University, one of the few centers in Eastern Europe, in dealing with students’ attitudes.

Claims writing centers of the future will be more reliant on technology, need more second-language acquisition specialists, expand beyond the physical boundaries of a single center, and assume a more prominent role in research towards writing.

Describes how one writing center with many English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students has integrated the "cultural informant" role of tutors with their role.
of teaching self-editing strategies. Reviews the process of introducing ESL students to use of a learner's dictionary, minimal marking, and error logs. Offers examples of using these techniques in the writing center and classrooms.

This article presents a summary and analysis of a year-long project to develop an English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) tutoring lab at California State Dominguez Hills. The project had as its main goal the establishment of a lab specifically targeting the rapidly growing population of non-native speakers of English on campus, and was developed with limited resources. The laboratory set-up, recruitment of tutors and students, tutor training, the systematic approach to academic essay writing used with students, and hours and procedures of lab operation are described. The second part looks at major problems encountered during the project and how they were overcome. These included issues in recruitment of immigrant students for tutoring, evaluation of tutors and learners, tutor training, and lab operations. Program-related forms and tutor guidelines are appended.

Describes the dynamics of problem solving through spoken discourse in one-to-one tutoring of second-language writing in order to determine whether these processes vary with either instructional approach or language used. Tutors' and students' cooperative efforts to solve problems in the students' draft compositions focused primarily on local levels of the compositions.

Discusses how English-as-a-Second-Language students are seeking help at U.S. college and university writing centers. This trend emphasizes the complementary role of the writing center and ESL writing instruction in improving ESL writing skills. Writing center and ESL writing pedagogy share process and collaborative approaches, which emphasize the writing process using revision and written feedback.

Proposes that writing centers form relationships with Applied Linguistics/ESL to research cross-cultural and cross-linguistic questions, thus fostering research grounded in the everyday work of the center, but with large cultural and theoretical implications.

The percentage of students who speak and write English as a Second Language (ESL) is steadily increasing on all college campuses. Although only 8% of the student body at the Pennsylvania State University are ESL students, 15% of the Penn State Writing Center clientele are ESL students. In the past, the Penn State peer tutor training program has only marginally addressed cross-cultural communication and has offered only general strategies for tutoring limited English proficient students. This research project explores the institutional history of serving ESL students at Penn State, surveys both tutors and ESL students, and develops materials for use in the Penn State Writing Center. The resulting materials include a unit for training new tutors and a series of staff development exercises for use with current tutors. In order to disseminate this information to a wider audience, a presentation of the research findings was given at the Ninth Annual National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing on October 23, 1992, at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and an essay has been prepared for publication on the advancements made in the Penn State Writing Center to better serve the ESL population.


Powers, J.K. (1993). Rethinking writing center conferencing strategies for the ESL writer. *Writing Center Journal*, 13(2), 39-47. Presents typical problems encountered by tutors at writing centers when they conference with ESL writers. Discusses processes and ways of adapting collaborative conferencing strategies for second-language writers at the University of Wyoming Writing Center, including a need for intervention, that have proven effective in alleviating these problems.

Kennedy, B.L. (1993). Non-native speakers as students in first-year composition classes with native speakers: How can writing tutors help? *Writing Center Journal*, 13(2), 27-38. Describes the five major problems faced by foreign students in traditional composition classes. Presents types of tutorial activities which may prove beneficial when dealing with the major problems that ESL students have in both
reading and writing in English. Discusses the effect of such tutorial activities at the University of Kentucky.


Compares native and nonnative speakers of English and the possible ramifications of these differences for the operations of writing centers. Reviews two recent books and their attempts to fill a need for helpful materials on linguistic diversity and the teaching of writing.


Integrating English-as-a-Second-Language tutors into the classroom (curriculum-based tutoring), rather than writing center tutoring is advocated, based on observations.


Describes the development and use of a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) laboratory in the English-language teaching unit at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Undergraduate students in a writing skills course were trained to use word processors which were available for the students' writing assignments.


The author describes a program in guided writing instruction designed to help beginning students of English prepare for enrollment in American universities. The lessons were planned to develop the students' mechanics (the ability to spell, punctuate, and follow grammatical conventions), and some degree of competency (what to say, how to organize it, and how to say it). Topics chosen were within the students' personal experience or knowledge; model compositions and outlines provided guides and necessary repertory of terms used in composition writing. Classes, held twice weekly on successive days, began with the teacher's reading the model orally while students listened and looked at the written model. The students' compositions were presented orally and discussed before being written. A sample of a model composition lesson and its accompanying worksheets is included in this report.

Reports


This paper describes attempts to bring writing center planning for a global,
multicultural world to Rivier College, New Hampshire, a small, predominantly white, Catholic college. It explains how the writing center has been instrumental in leading this planning process. The process began with education on four broad issues regarding diversity and multiculturalism (expanding Rivier's reach as a community resource; reconceptualizing the way people thought about time, space, and people in the context of Rivier College's values; responding to demographic and market demands through student-centered initiatives; and evaluating the fiscal viability of meeting these goals). Ultimately, Rivier was directed to examine the creative tension between its vision and its current reality. Rivier's Writing Center director helped design a proposal for an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Writing Advisor pilot program, hired writing advisors, and invited ESL students to participate in weekly tutorial sessions. Although the program provided services for some students, it met with limited success. For example, it is a non-credit-bearing, non-integrated pilot tutorial program and does not always adequately serve students' needs. The college has since revised and institutionalized the director's position and reiterated the recommendation to continue a revised Writing Advisor Program as a supplement to other ESL offerings.


One of the University of Minnesota's two writing tutorial programs, Composition 1013, constitutes the second quarter of freshman composition and is designed as an option for students with specialized writing needs, such as students of English as a Second Language (ESL). The course is perceived by students as remedial, and instructors do not feel the approach is successful. Student and teacher roles are ill-defined, students do not have adequate writing models, and the one-to-one structure can create over-dependence on the instructor. Changes were undertaken to make the course more dynamic, to give students confidence, and to take pressure off students and instructors. The resulting alternative course design includes weekly conference group meetings made up of three students and weekly individual student-instructor sessions. A class for ESL students only was piloted first. Unit topics included ideal careers, career-related communication needs, and narratives based on students' home cultures. The course improved student confidence, productivity, and skills. However, class homogeneity made peer modeling difficult. A similar class for native speakers focused on writing about movies, including expression of personal reactions to films, critical reading and analysis, and research and analysis. The new format has been found generally successful, and the course is being re-offered with some modifications.

Conference Papers

This paper presents findings based on interviews with three employees of a university writing center about their experience tutoring foreign students. International students who are not native speakers of English but want to enroll in American universities must demonstrate a basic level of competence in English before they can participate in a degree program. This is especially difficult for some students, as writing is sometimes not valued in some countries as much as it is in the United States. Teaching students to write at a level required in U.S. higher education is often doubly difficult because they struggle not only with English, but they also try to learn the conventions of writing at the same time. Even when the student has researched the topic, they have great difficulty putting a paper together properly. One source of the problem for foreign students is that it is common for the staff at a university's writing center to be students from that institution's English department. They may indeed be skilled writers but often have few skills in teaching a non-native speaker of English to write well in English. Policies that "treat all students the same," while well-intentioned, result in the needs of foreign students often being overlooked. Little research has been done in this area, and more needs to be done. In the meantime, writing center employees need to become more aware of the special needs of non-native speakers of English. (Contains 26 references.) (KFT)


A discussion of communication between native English-speaking (NS) tutors and their non-native-speaker (NNS) students draws on a study conducted in the Indiana University writing center and focuses on conflicts between effectiveness in communication and effectiveness in instruction technique. Examples of tutor-student (NS-NNS) interaction are drawn from a corpus of 34 writing tutorials, with students of varied language backgrounds, between 1992 and 1996. Tutors were six male and five female graduate students from various departments. Analysis of the tutorial sessions looks at questioning strategies, balance of interlocutor participation, comprehensibility of the interactions, coherence, and politeness. It is concluded that conflicts between effectiveness, comprehensibility, and politeness are common, and writing tutors find themselves involved in trade-offs between communicative and social goals in order to perform their tasks effectively. Tutors face a triple-bind: what they believe to be effective tutoring may not be comprehensible, but what they believe to be comprehensible may be neither polite nor good tutorial practice, and what they believe to be polite and effective practice with native speakers may miss the mark entirely with non-native speakers. Necessary compromises place the tutor-student contract of collaboration in jeopardy.

Conference on College Composition and Communication, Phoenix, AZ.

Activating a community-based and university-based support system for non-anglophonic speakers falls naturally to the writing center. Writing centers employ consultants and help students across the disciplines, and they have historically specialized in collaborative, non-graded teaching. In addition, teachers untrained in English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching have sent their non-anglophonic students or students with serious English speaking and writing problems to writing centers as a last resort. Records show a dramatic increase in usage and a far greater return rate among non-anglophonic speakers than of native speakers when the center has trained, enthusiastic personnel. The writing center at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks has long courted both foreign ESL students and Alaska Native students. In 1995 the Literacy Council of Alaska asked the university to offer services to the foreign graduate students because they and their dependents were overloading the volunteers at the Literacy Council. Thus, the university gained a teaching assistant paid for outside the center and the English Department. A comparison of the number of writing center tutoring sessions conducted prior to the community liaison and the number after shows an astounding increase. To "unlock the locks" the writing center must be viewed as "central" regardless of where the site is in the university system. The initiative must start from inside the university and move to the outside. (NKA)


Personal writing is not only valid in such places as the academy, it is vital--even though Daniel Horowitz, in his essay "Process, Not Product: Less Than Meets the Eye," said that "teaching students to write intelligently on topics they do not care about seems to be a more useful goal than having them pick topics which interest them." But English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students say they changed their negative attitudes about writing when they were given writing assignments they cared about--a personal connection to the writing assignment. The process approach is many approaches, involving many facets of being: cognition, emotion, sense of self, sense of others, situation, background, experience, and development. The recognition of students' voices, hearing what they consider to be their writing needs, is central to a process approach to writing. Three foreign students in a writing lab at the University of Iowa using personal writing experienced some positive results: one student's prose became more vigorous and her aim in writing more precise; another found it helpful to relate work experience as a teacher to her present studies of education; and another used photographs as a key to write a thesis, resulting in prose combining her personal, political, and artistic voices.

A University of Wyoming program designed to help faculty work on writing skills with students, primarily graduate students, for whom English is a second language (ESL) is described. The workshop was developed in response to increasing requests for writing center help with ESL graduate students. The report describes several different early approaches and the workshop that grew out of those experiences, which was intended to: (1) promote exchange of ideas among faculty; (2) help content-area faculty understand the rhetorical and cultural differences between first and second language writing, and their implications for teaching and supervision of research; (3) provide useful background materials on ESL writing and suggestions for working effectively and efficiently with ESL writers; and (4) suggest how faculty might use the writing center's individualized or small-group conferencing to assist them. One highlight of the workshop was a panel of five foreign students who spoke about the most difficult issues facing them as second-language writers. Ten suggestions for making the classroom more accessible to ESL writers, 5 ways to help students use the writing center, and 5 ways to help thesis and dissertation writers use the writing center are then offered. (MSE)


Despite educators' efforts to understand the process of composition, writing remains a mercurial process difficult to see or describe, even partially. Writing is a process even more difficult to grasp when the writer is possessed of a language--Chinese, for example--and must rely on that language to take possession of and write in a second language, English. Writing teachers have found that attention to invention, organization, development, and other more global aspects of the writing process helps writers better express themselves in their own voices--whereas a narrow focus on editing and sentence revision often constrains or stifles writers. Jun Shan Zhang came from China to the University of Iowa's writing center highly motivated to write better English, because he hoped to pursue an international career researching and publishing articles on Paleolithc hunters in Asia, America, and Europe. As an anthropologist developing his professional style, Jun Shan offers important insight into the question of the relative value of voice versus specific purpose. After study at the writing center, Jun Shan exhibited increased mastery of subordination and coordination as well as a remarkable ease with participial phrases, a stylistic device somewhat difficult for Asian language students to master.


An intensive immersion program in English-as-a-Second-Language instruction developed at Pepperdine University (California), a small liberal arts college, is described. The program was designed for limited-English-speaking foreign students who are at risk for academic failure without additional English language skills. Focus of this discussion is the importance of informal learning situations
outside the classroom, in addition to classroom interaction, in the effectiveness of language learning. The program was initiated by the college's writing center and a task force that considered academic, social, and philosophical and pedagogical issues related to international students' progress. A comparison is made between the problem-solving process of the task force and the process of coping with the nearby firestorms of November 1993. The pilot program in summer 1989 is described, highlighting lessons learned about the value of informal learning situations. Efforts to enhance this aspect of the program, often by taking advantage of community events not previously scheduled, are illustrated through anecdotes and examined with reference to current language-learning theory. Measures of program success are found in an intercultural festival hosted by international students, increased retention and graduation rates, improved interoffice communication, decreased academic failure rate, and greater interest in study abroad. Contains six references. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)


A discussion of what functional linguistic research can offer teachers of composition and English is presented in this paper, which provides examples of different levels of analysis (phonology, morphology, and syntax) for the language of a variety of populations (including traditional freshmen, basic writers, English as a second language (ESL) students, and nontraditional, re-entering adult students). The paper presents the aims and theoretical orientation of functional linguistics, discusses how functional linguistics can provide insight into the processes used by ESL students acquiring English phonology, and shows how functional analysis can be used to correct the problem of overusing and misusing nonrestrictive relative clauses. It then shows how functional analysis can inform advanced and adult composition students of the uses and value of various stylistic language patterns, using the functions of the passive voice as an example, and recommends increasing students' awareness of derivational morphology and its role in word formation in English.


Four techniques are suggested for tutoring students of English as a second language in writing: taking a "writing history" of the student's experiences, failures, and successes at writing by asking open-ended questions in a non-judgmental way during an informal interview; brainstorming about a given writing topic, with the tutor taking close notes of the student's comments and making no evaluation; timed writing assignments, five to ten minutes long, on broad topics from which the student makes a selection; and oral proofreading, in which a student reads a paper, an unmarked paper or a timed writing composition, paying
attention to grammatical and surface error. The exercises can be used for
diagnosis, illustration, or practice, but all have the common objective of
developing a solid tutor-student relationship. Moreover, with effective
demonstration and encouragement, the students begin to adopt and internalize
the techniques for themselves.

Lipp, E. (1983, October). Bridging the culture gap: The first phase of training
writing lab tutors to work with ESL students. Paper presented at the
Midwest Writing Centers Conference, Iowa City, IA.

Inservice training programs on the needs of English as a second language (ESL)
students may help writing lab staffs work more effectively. The training program
could be a series of sessions devoted to six areas of concern: bridging the
culture gap; profiling students' strengths and weaknesses; identifying error
patterns on which to work in the writing lab; presenting the materials that will be
used in the tutorials; describing two sequences of activities, one for remediating
and another for teaching certain features of grammar or writing; and "putting it all
together" in tutorial sessions. The session on cultural differences should focus on
ethnocentrism, the use of personal space, sex roles, the roles of tutors and
teachers, and the uniqueness of each ESL student. It is important not only that
the lab staff respect foreign students' customs, but also that foreign students
learn to respect and cope with some of ours. For example, ESL students need to
know that teaching methodologies vary from culture to culture. Since students'
reactions to touching vary depending on their culture, tutors should learn to avoid
it unless they know it is culturally acceptable. Tutors should also be aware of
both students' motivations for studying in the United States and how they are
adapting to U.S. culture. Adjustment problems may result in a lack of
concentration, poor attendance, or tardiness. Through empathy and respect for
cultural variation, tutors can achieve a better learning environment. (Attached is
an overview of the session on cultural differences.)

Dissertations

language writing center tutorials. Doctoral dissertation, Purdue
University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Second language (L2) writers have historically challenged the writing center
tutorial model, which privileges higher order concerns over lower order concerns.
This model separates the provision of rhetorical and linguistic feedback into
different stages of the writing process, with the rhetorical concerns of content
and organization addressed in the early stages and the linguistic concerns of
grammar and punctuation addressed in the later stages. Although this
separation has been appropriate for native English speakers, it has proven to be
problematic for L2 writers, who often require linguistic feedback throughout all
stages of the writing process. Their requests for this feedback and their need for
greater linguistic intervention has led to the perception that linguistic feedback is
the primary concern of L2 writers, even at the expense of rhetorical feedback. This study examines the type of feedback requested by eight undergraduate L2 writers in writing center tutorials. It also examines the balance of rhetorical and linguistic feedback in the tutorial session, the extent of overlap between the two categories, how the agenda is negotiated with regard to these categories, and the perceptions of both tutors and L2 writers. Data include pre- and post-tutorial surveys, tutor focus group, and tape-recorded tutorials. Findings that emerge from this study include: (1) L2 writers express initial interest in linguistic feedback but seek and receive slightly more rhetorical feedback; (2) substantial overlap exists between categories, primarily related to discussions of content; (3) L2 writers and tutors use opposite strategies for initiating topics in the same feedback category; and (4) L2 writers' and tutors' perceptions of what type of feedback has been provided are most likely to conflict when there has been substantial overlap between categories. These findings indicate the need for a reassessment of the tutorial model for L2 writers and tutor training that includes the study of second language acquisition and the development of second language writing ability.


This qualitative research study investigated ESL writing center tutoring dynamics. More specifically, it described the tutoring approaches and/or strategies embedded in ESL tutoring sessions as well as the impact of such approaches and/or strategies on the writing process. The research site was the writing center at a large, Midwestern institution of higher education in the United States of America. The participating tutees were six (6) nonnative speakers of English from different nationalities who volunteered to engage in writing center conferencing for a whole semester. The sources and methods of data collection included interviews, document analysis, and participant observation along with note-taking. The analysis of data consisted of coding, thematic organization, and thick description. The findings indicated that the tutors used a combination of approaches or variety of tutoring strategies during the conferencing sessions. However, such approaches or strategies turned out to be inefficient to engage in ESL writing center conferencing activities. This study proposes a culturally-based alternative to tutoring, an approach referred to as "the integrationist approach" to ESL writing center tutoring. This approach aims at helping ESL students by creating conditions for understanding the rhetorical conventions of the English language and adjusting to process models of writing instruction in the United States of America.


As student populations in colleges and universities continue to diversify, composition programs do not always meet students' varying needs. English as a
Second Language (ESL) students appear to fail mainstream writing courses at higher rates than their traditional counterparts, yet mainstreaming continues to be mandated, often due to budgetary constraints. Many programs offer multicultural writing courses, but these, too, are often ineffective for many students. Meanwhile, as Paul Kei Matsuda shows, there is a decided split between the disciplines of composition and ESL. Since ESL scholars have a much stronger history of working with diverse student populations than composition scholars do, this study aims to look to ESL scholarship, specifically to contrastive rhetoric, to explore more effective methods of teaching writing to students with varying needs. This case study takes an in-depth look at one student’s journey writing across cultures. Ming, a Chinese immigrant who has been in the United States for approximately ten years, is a junior at the University of Rhode Island who struggles with writing. Over the course of one semester, three of her projects were studied in depth. Data include transcripts of audiotaped tutorial sessions in the URI Writing Center, Ming’s assignments and papers, and the researcher’s notes from interviews with Ming following the tutorial sessions. The new contrastive rhetoric (Connor, Kaplan, Purves) insists that external factors such as culture, education, and media influence the rhetorical patterns writers use. Through a lens of contrastive rhetoric, it becomes clear that most of Ming’s difficulties when writing stem from a lack of familiarity with the conventions of U.S. academic discourse or of what her reader expects from her text. The source of much of this is cultural. While Ming’s experiences are not generalizable, an in-depth look at her experiences foregrounds some of the issues that contrastive rhetoric addresses, making them more tangible. Instructors informed by contrastive rhetoric are more attentive to the cultural difficulties many of our students face and are therefore better prepared to assist these students as they learn to write in an unfamiliar context for an unfamiliar audience.


As a literacy event, writing center tutorials are a support service for university students needing assistance producing and comprehending college writing assignments. English as a Second Language (ESL) students rely on writing center tutorials (WCT) for assistance in both language and writing aspects. Since tutors are the dominant speakers in the tutorial interaction, they sometimes inadvertently restrict the opportunities ESL students have for both writing and language acquisition. This study examines the interaction between ESL students and native-English speaking (NES) tutors to reveal patterns of WCT interaction and its correlation with learning opportunities. This study also examines the role of social process and practice in the WCTs. The methodological techniques include conversation analysis (CA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) as parallel operations as a means to interpret both the immediate and broad social and organizational reality of the WCTs. The findings that emerged from the 24 WCTs recorded and transcribed for this study include: (1) WCT interaction
between ESL learners and NES tutors is systematic and asymmetrical. (2) The learner and tutor orient to the participant identities, tasks, and goals of the WCT. (3) WCT interaction restricts the learner's participation which blocks their opportunity to learn. (4) There were more opportunities for language learning than revision in WCTs. (5) The tutor's range of tutoring, teaching, writing, and ESL experiences affect the tutoring practices. (6) ESL students pose a problem for some tutors because of the language, level and/or subject area of their writing assignments. Because CA provided a detailed description of WCTs and CDA allowed for alternative interpretations of the practices within them, linking CA and CDA was a more effective research method than either CA or CDA alone. The implications of this study include: (a) writing centers should reconceptualize ESL WCTs with the consideration of tutor authority and experience; (b) CA research contributes to second language acquisition (SLA) research by defining the distinct nature of SLA processes within WCT interaction; and (c) a mutual relationship between writing centers and SLA is not only possible, but necessary.


Nancy Wilson's 1998 article, "Writing Center Counselor Training and the ESL Student," suggests an approach to tutor training that could help universities without an ESL program. Her five areas of training include establishing rapport, prewriting, diagnosing student writing, establishing priorities, and assisting in student learning. The intent here is to examine and extend each of her five areas in light of current scholarship. Wilson's ideas are challenged and tested to determine the practicality of using her program in a university without an ESL program.


Writing centers are gradually becoming more and more visible on college campuses. This greater visibility is often seen, administratively, as a solution to the language problems posed by a growing population of students for whom English is a second or other language (L2). L2 students are increasing in numbers on college campuses, bringing with them a host of language challenges, not always met in traditional classroom settings. For many L2 students, the writing center provides the individualized instruction that facilitates their success with college writing. In the past three to five years, writing centers all over the United States have experienced an increase in L2 student visits. This increased L2 use of the writing center has made writing center tutors and staff, who are usually not trained or prepared to deal with writing difficulties unique to L2 students, confused and frustrated. This frustration is furthered by the lack of research and information that looks at the theory and practices of second language writing and writing centers, to help inform writing center practices and procedures. There are no studies which investigate writing centers in light of their
role in the writing practices of L2 students. This study began the process of creating a body of knowledge that looks at the role of the writing center in the writing practices of L2 students. This study is comprised of five case studies which were conducted with four L2 students and the tutors with whom they worked during the semester when the study was conducted. The case study participants were all from a small private women's college located in Southwestern Virginia. In addition to the case studies, a pre-study survey was conducted to ascertain the writing center perceptions and practices of a larger population of L2 students. The survey was administered at one college and two universities, all located in Southwestern Virginia. Both the case studies and the pre-study survey data yielded descriptions that suggested that L2 students see writing centers as centers of remediation--centers to "fix" their language problems. However, the type of fixing that is needed is very dependent on the writing experience and personality of the L2 student, the tutor's approach and style, and the type of writing assignment brought to the writing center for assistance. This study describes and analyzes five case studies. It also problematizes and suggests possible solutions for further areas of research.

Books


This book's focus on the different types of ESL learners, such as students from different countries, students of various academic levels, and Generation 1.5 Learners, is remarkable. It is a very useful book, and we frequently refer to it in our Writing Center. - Franziska Liebetanz Writing Center Director, European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder); Do you have second language students in your writing center? Do you have peer writing tutors? If so, here is the very book you and your tutors have been hoping for! - Harvey Kail Writing Center Coordinator, University of Maine; The second edition of ESL Writers continues to be the single most useful resource for tutor education on ESL matters; Writing center professionals will find the text to be an invaluable addition to their staff education program. Writing center tutors and consultants will benefit from the comprehensive review of L2 tutoring practice. - Clint Gardner Former president, International Writing Centers Association; Writing centers are seeing more and more kinds of ESL students. That's why the much-loved ESL Writers (winner of the International Writing Centers Association's Outstanding Scholarship Award for Best Book) has changed with the times to reflect the expanding diversity of writing center students. The Second Edition features five totally new essays and has been thoroughly revised to be more useful than ever. ESL Writers, Second Edition: expands the definition of students and tutors with respect to their linguistic backgrounds, describing specifically the characteristics of a variety of English learners, including bilingual writers, Generation 1.5ers, recent immigrants, and foreign students who need support with academic English in a
new first chapter focuses greater attention on the diversity of cultural and literacy identities among students and tutors addresses tutors' most frequently asked questions about helping ESL writers with English grammar outlines methods for succeeding with tutoring ESL writers online as well as tips for common pitfalls. Filled with suggestions and strategies based on a rigorous combination of experience, research, and theory, ESL Writers, Second Edition, remains a tutor's top resource for working with English learners.