Teaching Writing to High Intermediate and Advanced ESL Students
Today’s Agenda

1. Consider writing/composing and beginner/advanced distinctions and activities
2. Examine Reading/Writing Link
3. Consider curriculum models
4. EAP: teaching models, rubrics
5. Essay Rating
6. Feedback
7. What Works: Writing, Hina and Sally
Writers make the best writing teachers
Differences between beginner/low intermediate and high intermediate/advanced ESL writers

• Sentence/paragraph vs. composition, paper
• Little control of grammar vs. basic control
• Little vs. significant use of metalanguage
• Little vs. significant grasp of writing conventions
• Greater vs. less need for guided writing
• Little vs. greater ability for discussions/process
• Little vs. greater reading facility
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<th>vs.</th>
<th>Composing</th>
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Activities for Writing vs. Composing

**Writing:**
- Copying
- Dicto comps
- Change, manipulate words within sentences
- Guided Writing
- Sentence Combining (handout)

**Composing**
- Free writing
- Brainstorming
- Elbow: writing as therapy
- Clustering, word webs
- Journals, logs
- Burke: heuristics
- Shaughnessy: writing laboratories
Structural vs. Communicative: Finding the Middle Ground

• Shaughnessy: *Errors & Expectations*
  Cannot ignore conventions, readers’ expectations

• Be Level Appropriate: More control, guidance at lower levels; more process in later levels

• Limits of free writing. Research: academic writing seldom expressive, more controlled in topic, rhetorical choices
Finding the Middle Ground
(continued)

• Learning styles necessitate blended approach:
  (independent: want linear, rule-governed;
   dependent: want cooperative, experiential)

• Don’t make your approach your religion
  “The good teacher is not so much one who
  adheres strictly to a ‘method,’ but one who is
  cautiously eclectic” (D. Brown), “who recognizes
  that teachers, rather than methods make a
  difference” (J. Reid).
Be eclectic but principled in your eclecticism (Stevens)

Your class is not a variety show.

• Reading, Listening: Top Down and Bottom Up
• O.I.: Segmental and Suprasegmental
• Feedback Philosophy: Correct important errors but in a creative, supportive, nurturing classroom environment
• Writing: Blend communicative, structured approaches
The Reading and Writing Link

According to the latest research, the most reliable predictor of a child’s future academic and professional achievement is:
The number of books in the house.
The Reading and Writing Link

I. Both writers and readers construct and interpret meaning from text (Johnson, Polman)

   Transactional link between writer/reader (Rosenblatt)
   Writer: constructs meaning; Reader: rediscovers meaning via schema

II. Both are complex processes requiring many subskills and are based on past experience (Harowitz)

   Subskills: pre-reading, inference, rhetorical organization, argumentation, persuasion, diction, organization, syntax. . .
The Reading and Writing Link

• III. Both are **interactive, nonlinear, recursive** processes involving schemata in a critical role. The reader and writer each have drafts of meaning that can be “revised” based on new, emerging text (Straw)

  Jimmy Carter: *The Hornet’s Nest*
  David McCollough: *Adams*
  Tolkien vs. Elijah Woods: *The Lord of the Rings*
The Reading and Writing Link

• IV. ESL students may have inaccurate “drafts” they apply to English text
  1. NNS use enculturated patterns of L1 to predict and comprehend (Carroll, Kaplan)
  2. Informing NNS of English discourse patterns increases reading comprehension

  Rhetorical approaches still relevant, Reid;
  New work on genre study, Caplan
The Reading and Writing Link

• V. Direct correlation between reading proficiency and writing skill levels

• VI. Conversely, direct instruction in sentence, discourse, paragraphs improves reading (Belanger)
The Reading and Writing Link: Implications for TESL:

A. Extensive reading for pleasure provides abundant comprehensible input (Krashen)
   vocabulary, style, structure, organization, rhetorical forms, tone

B. Literature cultivates language awareness, cultural schema at language, content, rhetorical levels (Carrell, Carter, Long)

Ex: Literature showcases American values: individualism, autonomy, inventiveness, action, freedom, personal expression, optimism. . .
The Reading and Writing Link: Implications for TESL:

• C. Essays from diverse fields cultivate critical thinking (Spack)
  1. Reading showcases critical thought
  2. Models rhetorical strategies for expressing critical thought
     Swift: A Modest Proposal;
     MLK: I Have a Dream
• D. Include nonfiction and fiction: Mill, Carlyle, HO
Brainstorming Writing Activities
Curriculum Design Approaches

A. Language Based Curriculum
   1. Writing used to consolidate oral/written command of grammar
   2. Accuracy and correctness are paramount

B. Pattern-Model-Base Curriculum
   1. Focus on function and situational writing, audience expectation
   2. Rhetorical modes and formats are key
Curriculum Design Approaches

• C. Process-Based Curriculum
  1. Emphasizes fluency, discovery, student needs
  2. Focus on negotiation of meaning
  3. Uses thematic units to provide engaging content to stimulate reading and writing

• D. Combined Curriculum
  1. Sees teaching of structure key to avoiding stigmatization
  2. Emphasizes teaching of rhetorical modes as critical to meet university or professional expectations for prescribed forms
  3. Views writing as recursive process--involving many interactive phases of pre-writing, planning, composing, revising, editing

Handout
Teaching EAP Writing

A. Required for most ESL instructional settings: IEP, high school, middle school, Sixth grade ESL

B. Expectations to be taught
   1. Student responsibility for their own learning
   2. Critical thinking--challenging status quo
   3. Rhetorical modes/forms
   4. Problem solving
   5. Participation in class, group tasks
   6. Original thinking
   7. Attributing non-original ideas/Plagiarism
Collins Writing Program

• Academic Honesty Compact
Informed Process Writing

A. PreWriting
   1. Brainstorming
   2. Free Writing
   3. Webs/clustering/mapping
   4. Journaling
   5. Outlining
   6. Cubing

B. Drafting
   1. Group discussions
   2. Journaling
   3. Teacher Conferencing

C. Final Drafting
   1. Peer feedback
   2. Instructor feedback
   3. Revision
   4. Editing
"Most consistently effective tool for developing [written] fluency" (Kirby)

- A. Repository of pre-writing activities
  1. Brainstorming
  2. Free writing
  3. Log for ideas, notes
  4. Outline
  5. Early drafts

- B. Student/teacher dialogues, re: assignment/ideas
  1. Written or electronic dialogues
  2. Important that it's two way
     a. ask teacher questions about class material
     b. raise problem areas in their writing
     c. express concerns, anxieties
Journals

• C. With other students—even around the world

• D. Metacognitive entries
  1. about the ways they think, write, & learn
  2. Reflect on decision making
  3. Grow to be more reflective writers

• E. Learning log application
  1. Students can summarize ideas of class
  2. Interpret and analyze material
  3. Explore ideas
Group response--making it work

A. Most group work fails
   1. Failure to convince students of its value
   2. Failure to prepare students for group work
      a. Poor assumptions, re: group readiness
      b. Not considering L1 cultural interference
      c. Lack of scaffolding and modeling
      d. Lack of planning
      e. Asking groups to do too much
   3. Failure to match students
      a. similar writing goals
      b. good fit in temperaments
      c. language strengths
**Group response--making it work**

- B. Creating writing community imperative for successful groups
  1. Unified purpose
  2. Develop mentors:
     a. interview/introduce each other
     b. journal about each other
     c. group with other mentor pairs
Group response--making it work

- C. Building effective groups is process in itself
  1. Model with sample essay
  2. Begin with controlled activities
  3. Move to guided, never open
  4. Begin with very narrow, simple tasks
  5. Use groups as audience, not as grammar tutors
  6. Work to create a community of writers
  7. Give ground rules--comments acceptable/not
  8. Balance groups with teacher-centered work
  9. Best preceded by group collaborative projects
Feedback as Response to Student Writing

• A. Group, Peer Response
  1. As reader, not rater
  2. Responding to writer's specific questions
  3. Responding with reader’s perspective
  4. Group reviews not panacea

• B. Conferencing and tutoring (teacher)
  1. Outside of class, Socratic method
  2. Within class, more global
  3. Positive, encouraging

• C. Formative teacher responses
  1. As audience: addressing purpose, cohesion
  2. As audience: responding to content
  3. As consultant
  4. As describer
Feedback/Evaluation on Second or Final Draft

A. Errors--what research tells us (Scovel, Reid)
   1. Not deviant or random
   2. Systematic, developmental, rule-governed
   3. Result from L1 transfer, overgeneralization, and difficulty

B. Goal of feedback is revision, not recopying
Feedback/Evaluation

• D. Research on Evaluation/Feedback
  1. Content faculty look for content/rhetorical
  2. ESL students, more than NES, want feedback
  3. Correction + encouragement = results
  4. Underlining errors = significant improvement
  5. Content + grammar feedback won't overwhelm
  6. Feedback without follow up less effective
Feedback/Evaluation

• Rating/analysis sheets (see Collins handout, Reid p. 237)
• TWE --holistic ratings, criterion referenced