FEMINIST AND OTHER INTERTWINING PEDAGOGIES OF WRITING INSTRUCTION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY’S INTENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

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Feminist pedagogy is a rich and current teaching method in the field of composition and rhetoric. However, it is virtually unexplored in ESL writing pedagogy. Perhaps too engrained in applied linguistics, ESL teachers and researchers have been slow to embrace scholarship in other fields such as composition and feminist pedagogy. A pilot research study was designed to determine the extent to which English as a second language (ESL) instructors at The University of Findlay (UF) draw on feminist pedagogy or practices associated with the approach to decide how the pedagogy could best be implemented into ESL composition instruction.

Classroom observations and instructor interviews were conducted to determine the extent to which instructors used feminist teaching practices in their writing courses. From the data collected, it was evident that ESL instructors would benefit from further training in other teaching practices in addition to feminist pedagogy. The findings from the study were used to create a teacher training for UF ESL writing instructors that will be conducted during the 2009-2010 academic year. From the data collection, it was clear that while some faculty unconsciously applied traits of feminist pedagogy in their teaching, they would benefit from training in other types of teaching methodologies. Three conclusions were made. 1) UF ESL writing instructors would benefit from additional training in student-centered pedagogy. 2) Instructors would benefit from additional training in composition pedagogy. 3) Instructors would benefit from a very basic training in feminist pedagogy.

Because instructors would benefit from a teacher training that focuses on teaching methodologies other than feminist pedagogy, the training will focus on how good teaching practices such as student-centered, composition, and feminist pedagogies intertwine. Thus, through the training sessions, instructors will discuss how good teaching practices are
interconnected instead of viewing them in isolation. The in-services were designed for instructors to reflect not only on their current teaching practices but also to grow as educators where in which they apply student-centered, composition, and feminist pedagogies in order to best prepare ESL students for academic success in their undergraduate and graduate programs at UF.
For Vince, Luci, and Baby
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Chapter 1: (But is this) Feminist Pedagogy

A Need for Feminist Pedagogy in ESL Teaching

My academic career paved way for this study. While I never identified as a feminist pedagogue until recently, I have always applied bits and pieces of the approach in my teaching. I was first introduced to feminist pedagogy as an undergraduate literature student at The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay when a professor asked me to serve as her teaching assistant for a women’s literature course. I vividly recall a meeting in which we discussed the importance for every student having a voice in class and for all students to feel comfortable collaborating with their peers and instructors. We also discussed never silencing a student or looking down on him/her for an opinion expressed. My professor wanted every student to be heard and respected. Class time was filled with small group discussion, journaling, and exploratory writing in which students connected their lives to the women’s literature read in class. Although I did not realize it at the time, my mentor was a feminist pedagogue. I took this philosophy with me to graduate school where I taught composition to native speakers of English (NS) and a variety of English as a second language (ESL) courses. Still unaware of a feminist application, I simply saw it as good teaching. Respecting students and allowing them to socially and individually construct knowledge and their voices seemed like “the right thing to do.”

Finally, I was formally introduced to feminist pedagogy in a course entitled Introduction to Composing Processes when working on my Master’s degree in English at Illinois State University. I learned a working definition of feminist pedagogy -one that challenged the relationship between professor and student and traditional methods of instruction. I discovered that in feminist pedagogy, instructors empower students through collaboration, value students’ voices, and celebrate diversity. I was struck by feminist pedagogy and wished to explore it
further. For class, I wrote a seminar paper in which I explored the potential implementation of composition classes for women only. Such classes would allow women to collaborate in a safe learning environment and construct their voices without hesitation or inhibition. In writing this paper, I became more conscious of my female students, especially those who struggled to construct their voices and openly dialogue with their classmates and instructors. I wanted their voices to be heard and wanted to ensure that their classmates honestly listened to them. However, I rarely applied this approach when working with male students. At this point in my academic career, I saw feminist pedagogy as an approach to be used only when working with female students.

It was not until I began my doctoral work at Bowling Green State University that I came to truly understand the principles of feminist pedagogy. In courses such as Advanced Pedagogy and Women's Rhetoric, we studied feminist pedagogues such as bell hooks and Susan Jarratt. I learned that feminist pedagogy encompasses all students, regardless of race, gender, religion, social class, and so forth. Indeed, it is important for all students to construct and share their knowledge in a feminist classroom. Finally, after more than a decade of higher education, I understood how feminist pedagogy includes both male and female students. However, my ultimate challenge was yet to come.

In January 2006, sixty-one Saudi Arabian students enrolled in the Intensive English Language Program (IELP) at The University of Findlay (UF). It was at this time that I truly realized the significance and power of feminist pedagogy. My classes, once enrolled with respectful, quiet Asian students, suddenly were filled with Saudi Arabian male students. They dominated class discussions and unintentionally silenced their classmates from other countries, especially the women. Frustrations were voiced by all the students, and as an instructor, I was
not sure how to create a learning environment to support all of them. My classes were in flux for several weeks, and each night I left campus frustrated and upset. As the semester progressed, I was struck by the importance for the Saudi Arabian students to construct their voices through writing. Journals, narratives, and other personal texts became a safe haven for the students and eventually enabled them to openly dialogue with their instructors and peers through the written and spoken word.

Thus, I decided to implement more feminist teaching practices into my courses. At first there was resistance. The Saudi Arabian men, who never had a young female instructor, viewed me as a threat. They questioned me endlessly and tried to dominate their peers. The Saudi Arabian women were timid, passively existing in the back row of the class. They were unaccustomed to small group work, and the writing process—an important component of feminist pedagogy—was not valued. Students missed days reserved for peer review and failed to show up for instructor conferences, complaining when they received low grades. They did not value my opinion or their peers’ suggestions. Their classmates from other countries claimed that they felt alienated and at times resented the Saudi Arabian students.

Eventually—very slowly—the students began to accept my feminist teaching practices. For the Saudi Arabian women, it was the first time they felt comfortable voicing their opinions, the first time they were heard, the first time they were empowered. The men slowly began to listen to and respect me. They began to attend their conferences, work in small groups, and respect their classmates. At the end of the semester, I believe the students were better prepared for their undergraduate and graduate courses, because feminist teaching practices helped me create a safe learning environment that encouraged students to participate and respect their peers’ ideas and opinions.
I learned a great deal from my students in the spring of 2006. The experience forced me to apply what I learned in my coursework. It forced me to rethink my teaching philosophy. And it forced me to further research feminist pedagogy. With my success, I became curious whether feminist pedagogy is applied in other IELP composition courses. Specifically, feminist pedagogy is not heavily researched in the field of ESL, but based on my experiences, it is very effective. To best understand whether feminist pedagogy is or could be applied, I observed five IELP writing classes and conducted post-observation interviews with the instructors. Using the data gathered from the observations and interviews, a teacher training program was designed to introduce IELP instructors to feminist pedagogy. Because I did not draw detailed data from IELP students, I resisted tendencies to draw conclusions about learners from different cultures. Therefore, this study focused primarily on IELP writing instructors.

In this chapter, I explain how the teacher training for ESL writing instructors at UF was developed. I then put forth a literature review in which I define feminist pedagogy and explain how it is different from critical pedagogy. After defining the teaching approach, I introduce feminist activities and assignments common in many ESL and composition writing classrooms. Finally, I introduce the proposed pilot study and explain how it was executed through the IELP at UF.

The Intensive English Language Program

The IELP at UF services approximately 200 students each semester. IELP students lack the English proficiency necessary to be successful in UF undergraduate and graduate programs and therefore require English enrichment courses. The program offers five levels of instruction; level one is for true beginners, while level five is for the most advanced students entering graduate programs. Some students enter the IELP as true beginners and study English for over
two years, while the more advanced students require only a semester of instruction. Undergraduate students must successfully complete level four with grades of “C” or better in composition, communication, grammar, reading, and listening before they begin their undergraduate classes. Once they begin their studies, they are required to take two additional IELP composition courses before enrolling in *College Writing II* - the University’s first-year writing course. Most undergraduates keep their IELP academic advisors throughout their entire undergraduate career and work closely with them to ensure they are in-status with the U.S. government and making good academic progress. Overall, they are determined and very successful both academically and socially.

While the undergraduate students remain connected to the IELP, graduate students are assigned new academic advisors upon completion of the IELP. To advance to their graduate programs, students must successfully complete level five with grades of “B” or better in composition, communication, grammar, reading, and listening. Unlike the undergraduate students, they are not required to take additional IELP writing courses once they enroll in their graduate programs. Because many graduate students often place directly into level five, and do not have a great amount of time to learn about U.S. academic expectations, they often experience difficulty adjusting to U.S. culture and academic life. For example, many graduate students have failed graduate-level assignments and classes for plagiarism. Plagiarism, a component of both U.S. academics and culture, is endlessly addressed in the IELP. However, because most graduate students do not require extensive English coursework, and transition to their graduate programs rather quickly, they do not always transfer the skills learned in the IELP to their graduate coursework.
Thus, it is important for students to make the most of their time in the IELP. I have found that feminist pedagogy is instrumental for students improving their writing skills, because it helps them construct their voices, better understand the importance of group work, and realize how knowledge is socially constructed—all skills they require for their future academic endeavors. For this pilot study, I explored whether IELP instructors used or could potentially apply feminist pedagogy in their teaching to better prepare students for their academic endeavors. The intention was to develop a teacher training that would encourage faculty to continue or begin to implement feminist pedagogy in their teaching.

**A Brief Definition of Feminist Pedagogy**

Feminist pedagogy derives from feminist theory. Unfortunately, there often seems to be a negative connotation with the word feminism. Over the past years, many definitions—some problematic and some beneficial—have been constructed to understand the nature of feminist thought. Most definitions focus on women and their struggles for equality. Paula Treichler and Cheris Kramarae cite Rebecca West: “I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat” (9). In this humorous definition, West comments on a common stereotype of feminism; women are considered “feminist” when they speak their minds. Delmar writes that feminists are often viewed as narrow-minded, angry women (33). She sees these women as feminism’s greatest problem, because they exclude others from participating (34). Definitions of feminism, and even the political act itself, alienate others from participating, leaving all feminist things with a negative connotation. This connotation is especially troubling when studying teaching practices, as definitions alienate male learners, thus contradicting feminists’ intent for equality. However, hooks provides a definition of feminism that is much
more productive. She believes feminism is a form of socialized oppression that also includes males. hooks writes:

Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.…It [the definition] makes it clear that the problem is sexism. And that clarity helps us remember that all of us, female and male, have been socialized from birth on to accept sexist thought and action. As a consequence, females can be just as sexist as men. (*Feminism* viii)

hooks’s definition is effective in truly understanding feminism, as it does not attack men or portray women as angry men haters. Instead, it focuses on socialized oppression. Feminism is then not only for women; it also includes men and their fight to end oppression. Most importantly, there are many forms of oppression, such as race, religion, and social class, which can also be addressed in a feminist classroom.

To openly address oppression, a safe learning environment is important. Such a space allows students to openly dialogue, sharing and creating knowledge. Jeanne Brady writes about feminist pedagogy with a focus on multi-cultural education.

…A feminist pedagogy of multi-culturalism needs for the creation of new forms of knowledge by breaking down old boundaries and allowing for new spaces and connections that both legitimate and produce democratic social relations free of sexism, bigotry, and domination. By creating new boundaries/spaces educators can explore both the old and the new knowledge and generate forms of social practice informed by the democratic principles of liberty, justice, and equality. (91)
Feminist pedagogues strive to empower their students. Through collaboration and writing, students collectively produce a classroom free of oppression. Teachers who subscribe to the approach create a supportive environment for all learners and create a platform for students to practice constructing their voices. Indeed, such an approach is perfect in ESL composition classes with students from around the world who may have differing notions about women, other religions, political beliefs, and the like. Through collaborating in a safe space, students learn from others, negotiate their spaces within the classroom, and strive to end oppression.

In order for such student-centered learning to take place, teachers must facilitate dialogue. Unlike critical pedagogy, in which the teacher’s voice is authoritative, feminist teachers help students construct their voices and critique society and oppression. hooks believes students must first understand oppression in the classroom before it can be confronted in society. Foss, Foss, and Griffin comment on hooks’s teaching philosophy: “The potential of education to serve as a site at which the ideology of domination can be disrupted, then, is realized only if education is practiced in nondominating (sic) ways” (91). In a safe learning environment, students learn about oppression and begin to confront it outside of the class. Such facilitation contrasts abruptly with critical pedagogy, because critical pedagogues teach in a style that as hooks states “reinforces bourgeois models of decorum” (Teaching 180). In other words, there is still a professional awareness of instructor as authority, and students look to their instructor for the right answers. However, a feminist classroom provides students with a space where they engage collaboratively (hooks, Teaching 181). Students collaborate to produce knowledge in which an instructor facilitates discussions -not dominates them.

Another difference between feminist and critical pedagogy is that the latter focuses on multiculturalism rather than students’ gender. According to Tisdell, critical pedagogy deals
primarily with “structural factors that have traditionally foregrounded class, (following Freire), but attend to race and ethnicity to some degree; more recent writers give passing attention to gender” (141). Luke and Gore also make a distinction between feminist and critical pedagogy, claiming that only feminist educators explore how relations of domination affect gender, race, class, and sexuality (1). Specifically, while critical pedagogy empowers students by doing away with banking education, little attention is placed on the students’ individual backgrounds, especially their gender, class, ethnicity, and religion. However, feminist pedagogy addresses the inter-relationships of gender and other types of oppression; a perfect focus for ESL writing classrooms where some students struggle to value the opposite sex as well as different religions, cultures, and political and/or socio-economic backgrounds.

While scholars pinpoint gender and equality as an important component of feminist pedagogy, it is difficult to offer a perfect definition for the teaching practice. Fisher questions whether feminist pedagogy is simply a phrase used to describe “good teaching” (23). She too focuses on gender and cites five criteria to help educators better understand feminist teaching principles.

1). [In a feminist classroom] discussion is a collective, collaborative, and ongoing process that pays special attention to women’s experiences, feelings, ideas, and actions.

2). It [feminist pedagogy] seeks to understand and challenge oppressive power relations.

3). It supports and generates women’s political agency by addressing women's “personal” concerns and taking them seriously.

4). It questions the meaning for differently situated women of oppression and liberation.
5). It proceeds nonjudgmentally but cultivates the political judgment needed to act in response to gender and interwoven forms of justice. (44)

Fisher focuses on gender oppression and the importance of challenging such power relations. Specifically, her definition breaks down power relations between students and teacher. The definition also cultivates conversation through the written and spoken word and challenges students’ understanding of different cultures and women’s roles within these cultures. Such practices have great potential in IELP composition classes, because perceptions of power relations often differ among the students as well as between students and teachers.

While Fisher provides a thorough overview of feminist pedagogy, Tisdell identifies three specific types of feminist pedagogy: psychological, structural, and post-structural models. Each model focuses on the construction of knowledge, voice, authority, and position. Tisdell’s theory is not aligned with composition nor ESL pedagogy; however, it can be applied to both. A post-structural feminist pedagogy seems most applicable for ESL writing courses, because it allows for more flexibility through shifting identities and calls for the construction of voice. It also allows an instructor to assume the role of authority if necessary. Below are the four components of the post-structural model of feminist pedagogy.

1). Foregrounds positionality, especially of the instructor. Difference is due to gender, race, and class factors and the “constantly shifting” identities of participants, and is dealt with to facilitate individual and social transformation

2). Connections between social constructions of identity (by race, gender, and class), how knowledge is constructed on an individual level, and the politics of knowledge production

3). Foregrounds the “coming of voice” of those who have been traditionally marginalized in education

4). Instructor’s role as an authority is directive in deconstructing binary
opposites and confronting power relations; considers emancipatory possibilities and limitations of instructor’s positionality (race, gender, etc.) (Tisdell 143)

Tisdell’s post-structural model is extremely applicable in an ESL composition course. As ESL students become acclimated to U.S. academic expectations, their identities shift, and they begin to understand the creation of knowledge is a social and collaborative process. Through the construction of knowledge, they begin to construct their voices. In addition, the post-structural model allows instructors to assume the role of authority in order to break down binaries and create a classroom of more equitable power relations between the students. Indeed, assuming the role of authority is often necessary when students disrupt others, challenge their peers, or are off-task.

In addition, with a focus on constructing voice, there is an overlap between feminist and composition pedagogy. L1 writing instructors have long implemented feminist pedagogy into their courses in which students discuss and write about issues pertinent to women and society. Writing scholars such as Jarratt believe feminist pedagogy in writing classes fosters growth and enables students to voice their opinions through the written word. She writes, “Composition studies speak to feminist inquiry where it investigates gendered differences in language, teaching, and learning -the very places where subjects take shape in writing, reading, and teaching contexts, both academic and ‘real world’” (“Introduction” 3). For Caywood and Overing, these academic and social texts focus on voice, because so many women have been silenced in their lives (31). Such texts help women construct their voices and better understand their positions in society. Because feminist pedagogy and process writing intertwine, Lu believes teaching revision helps students see their lives and those around them in a different
light. This framework can be used to advance feminist pedagogy, as the students are encouraged to write analytically about their personal experiences (239).

**Feminist Composition Activities and Assignments**

Because there are many intertwining threads between feminist and composition pedagogies, several practices common to the teaching of writing are potential vehicles for implementing feminist pedagogy into ESL writing classrooms. Some activities and assignments commonly found in composition courses include journaling, narrative writing, peer review, and collaborative learning. While some are not feminist in nature, they have great potential for feminist application.

*Collaboration*

Collaborative learning has long been an important component of composition instruction (Howard 541). This approach forces students to take responsibility for their learning and moves the instruction from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered environment. Indeed, Bruffee believes writing is a social act, and it is important for students to converse with their peers in order to improve and revise their writing. Such conversations occur when classmates view each other as equals in a community (*A Short 4*). Bruffee also believes social or communal writing prepares students for life outside the university.

…Collaborative learning also provides a particular kind of social context for conversation in a particular kind of community that fosters the kind of conversation college teachers value most, but also in a community that approximates the one most students must eventually write in everyday life, in business, in government, and the professions. (“Collaborative” 423)
Collaboration fosters social awareness and prepares students for life outside the classroom by conversing in a community that resembles society. Such collaborative dialogue produces what Bruffee refers to as “abnormal discourse” (“Collaborative” 420), which is wisdom that is not created nor governed by conventional knowledge. Patricia Dunn points out that collaboration and abnormal discourse, especially with international students, forces both NS and non-native speakers of English (NNS) to rethink and discuss their values (6). Thus, through collaboration, students contribute to class discussions and offer new ideas based on their cultural, religious, and political beliefs.

Collaboration is also common in many feminist classes with students discussing their opinions about gender, race, and other issues pertinent in their lives (Fisher 39). Students work in a space where they are free to discuss and learn from their peers. The knowledge constructed through these dialogues is then brought into society. Siebler provides an example about how feminist pedagogy transcends from the classroom into society. In a composition class, students collaboratively critique a university’s sexual harassment policy in which they write letters to newspapers and campus officials, urging them to change the policy. Through collaborative writing assignments such as this, students learn that through community action, they can become socially responsible (55). Such collaboration is necessary in a feminist class to confront oppression both in and outside the classroom.

Peer Review

Peer review, another collaborative activity, is used in many L1 and L2 composition classes where students revise their writing based on their peers’ suggestions. Howard writes, “Even more common to composition classrooms is the practice of peer response to writing: students each draft an assigned paper, and then classmates respond to and make suggestions for
improving the draft” (54). Specifically, peer review facilitates learning amongst students and removes the teacher from direct instruction (Howard 60). Dunn believes, when taken seriously by students, peer review can provide both the author and reviewer excellent insights into the act of writing (89).

While some ESL scholars debate the effectiveness of peer review, like Dunn, I believe when taken seriously and effectively modeled by the instructor, peer review is a very beneficial activity. *It enables students to collaborate and offer revision suggestions that the author or even instructor may overlook.* Liu and Hansen believe the activity supports the writing process, because it allows ESL students to receive feedback from a variety of audience members (3). Peer review also encourages abnormal discourse (Ferris and Hedgcock 225). Specifically, non-native speakers benefit from the activity on three levels: textual, cognitive, and communicative; they are offered valuable revision suggestions, develop their critical thinking skills, and interact or socialize with their classmates (Liu and Hansen 15-17).

Peer review also has feminist underpinnings. In turning to Fisher’s components of feminist pedagogy, one can understand how peer review is considered a feminist activity. 1) Peer review is a collaborative activity that focuses on students’ ideas and values. 2) It addresses students’ personal concerns, especially women’s. 3) Students’ ideas are seriously regarded in connection to their writing. 4) Depending on the topic, it can lead to the creation of political judgment about gender and sexism. The ultimate objective of peer review is to cultivate a discussion amongst a discourse community. Students voice their opinions about each other’s writing and offer revision suggestions that a writer or even instructor may overlook. In an ESL class, these ideas are often based on students’ native cultures, politics, and religions. Therefore, new perspectives and ideas are offered that a writer may not consider through research and
his/her personal opinions. Students not only discuss revisions but also engage in conversations about social practices and their positions on such topics.

**Narratives**

Another assignment common in many composition classes is narrative writing. Narratives encourage students to construct their voices, in which they share their lives and values with audience members. According to Summerfield:

> Stories arise out of specifically rhetorical situations, cultural contexts, and historical movements: they are relative to time, place, gender, race, ideology.

> They represent ways of knowing, ways of constructing our lives and our values.

> To narrate, according to the word’s Greek mythology, is to know. (180)

Narratives provide students with a platform to discuss their lives within cultural, gendered, and historical lenses. The stories communicate to a greater audience and breathe life into readers. They also help persuade an audience. Indeed, Hesse believes narrative is the forth type of persuasion (19). Andrews believes that narrative and argumentative writing need not be separated; there can be narrative in argument and vice versa (127). With a focus on argument, narratives are an important skill for IELP students to learn before entering an undergraduate program, as argumentative writing is a main objective in UF’s first-year writing course.

Indeed, narratives encourage students to write about personal experiences and communicate their political, social, and religious beliefs. Autobiographical writing also has a long standing tradition in feminist theory. Carolyn Heilbrun writes that narratives are a means for women to exercise their voices: “Women must turn to one another for stories; they must share the stories of their lives and their hopes and their acceptable fantasies” (44). Thus, narratives shape women’s understanding of the world. Through such discourse communities,
they share personal experiences and knowledge with male and female classmates. This is especially important for women who are marginalized in their native countries or who have otherwise experienced oppression. In turning to Fisher’s definition of feminist pedagogy, one can see that narrative writing supports and creates political agency, because the texts address personal concerns of the writer and perhaps even society.

**Journals**

Like narratives, journals promote dialogue and self-reflection. They provide students a safe space to voice their concerns, ask questions, and for NNS to write about homesickness and acculturation. Chiseri-Strater writes that journals indicate what students learn in a writing class (25), serving as a form of assessment. Many instructors also assign dialogue journals in which the instructor responds to students’ writing. Topics do not always focus on composition and instead encompass political or social issues. In responding to the students’ ideas, instructors build a rapport with their students and encourage them to continue exploring, especially in their writing assignments. In addition, Ann Berthoff suggests using double-entry notebooks in which students write notes, quotes, or summaries from texts on one side of a piece of paper and then respond to the notes on the other (48). Such journaling enables students to think about and explore research assignments, readings, and writing topics in general.

Regardless of the type, journals provide a safe space for students to ask questions and voice concerns they may have about class, university life, and even political, religious, and gendered issues. Peyton and Reed believe journals create a non-threatening environment that help NNS learn how to communicate (1). Students are free to create meaning, place their ideas on paper, and write without worrying about grammar, spelling, or mechanics. This promotes the development of fluency and critical thinking skills. It also encourages students to engage with
texts that they read in class (Ferris and Hedgcock 64). Therefore, journals help NNS construct their voices and establish an on-going dialogue with their instructor.

Journals are also commonly used in feminist classes. Because feminist pedagogy focuses on student growth and empowerment, journals are assigned for students to document their awareness of learning and growth in class (Clifford 110). Yet Gore fears issues of authority arise, as students may write what they think their teachers want to hear (151). Clifford also writes that some students find journals to be a waste of time (111). They may not openly converse with their instructor and simply go through the motions to earn good grades. While there are drawbacks to assigning journals, when taken seriously, they provide a safe space for students to construct their voices and develop fluency.

What about Conflict?

Issues of authority in feminist classrooms create a large gray area. Instructors often fear assuming an authoritarian role, because they do not want to lessen their commitment to student-centered learning. While many feminist educators strive to be facilitators, doing so is not always productive. Assuming authority may at times be necessary, especially to ensure that classes are focused and on-task. According to Tisdell, within a post-structural feminist lens, it is appropriate for an instructor to assume authority in order to confront power relations in the class (143). Sielber writes, “Sometimes exerting the power of authority (e.g., in regard to classroom policies) is necessary to create a productive community” (48). Such approach is necessary, for example, when students are off-task while working in small groups. Clearly, writing instructors walk a fine line and need to understand when it is appropriate to facilitate and when it is appropriate to exert their power.
While an instructor may out of necessity assume the role of authority, a nurturing environment helps writers take ownership of their words. It also enables instructors to move away from a teacher-centered approach. Brady writes:

But teachers will need to shift paradigms from “banking education” which reduces learning to the dynamics of transmission and opposition, to the acknowledgment that there are multiple ways of knowing and create a space for constructive confrontation and critical interrogation of that knowledge. In this sense, classrooms need to reflect a democratic setting, one that builds a community of difference that is safe—a zone of equality—which enhances intellectual rigor and intellectual development. (83)

A safe learning environment is an important component of a feminist class. It allows students to construct their voices and share knowledge. Such an environment is also important in an ESL composition classroom, as this may be the first space where students voice their opinions in an open forum. It may also be the first time students are introduced to the writing process.

Therefore, instructors must promote student growth and confidence, nurturing them throughout the writing process. According to Jarratt, an ethic of caring is intimately connected to the writing process.

Indeed, a teacher’s attitude of caring and nurturing seems very compatible with process writing practices, within which the teacher shifts from the older role of making assignments, waiting for a product, and then judging its value, to the position of an encouraging, supportive guide. This compatibility surely constitutes one of the pleasurable foundations of feminist pedagogy. (“Feminist” 118-19)
As previously stated, feminist and process pedagogy intertwine; students are encouraged and offered feedback by the instructor as they draft their papers. Fisher believes this “nonjudgmental space” is essential for writing to occur (31). Indeed, a nurturing approach enables students to adjust to their new surroundings and feel comfortable writing and sharing their work.

**Where is my Voice?**

Voice is another important component of feminist and composition pedagogy. While feminist pedagogy focuses on students voicing their opinions, composition pedagogy centers on students constructing academic voices through writing. Elbow believes voice is an especially important component of academic writing. He encourages students to write with their “real” voices.

> Writing with no voice is dead, mechanical, faceless. It lacks any sound. Writing with no voice may be saying something true, or new; it may be logically organized; it may even be a work of genius. But it is as though the words came through some kind of mixer rather than being uttered by a person. (*Writing* 287-288)

A writer must construct his/her voice in order to successfully communicate with an audience—a necessary skill in any composition class. Many argue voice cannot be taught; however, Woodworth believes it can be taught through a series of activities such as letter writing (145). While such activities may be applicable in L1 classes, ESL scholars question their effectiveness in ESL composition courses.

Many ESL writing teachers worry that the concept of voice is too abstract for L2 learners and that issues of transfer are problematic. Indeed, they question whether a student can transfer his/her voice over to a second language. They also worry whether the transfer communicates
effectively with an English-speaking audience. Because the issue of voice is cultural, Ramanathan and Atkinson argue cross-cultural pedagogy should be applied in ESL writing classrooms. Through this approach, voice is not a concern (46-7). However, Elbow believes cross-cultural writing does not prepare students for their future studies in a university. In his response to Ramanathan and Atkinson, he writes that the authors, “…Imply that these pedagogical techniques [classroom activities that encourage individualism such as peer review] should not be used with any L2 students implying further that ESL students might never seek to study in the mainstream U.S. culture or similar cultures” (“Individualism” 328). Like Elbow, Stapleton believes that for students to become proficient in the language, voice should be a component of L2 writing instruction. However, he cautions teachers to not focus on voice over ideas (qtd. in Ferris and Hedgcock 7). I agree with Stapleton and Elbow and believe the construction of a student’s voice is necessary for academic success. Development of one’s voice enables students to place themselves into their writing and better communicate with an audience of educated adults. Indeed, these are important objectives in UF’s first-year writing course.

As in L1 instruction, an ESL student’s voice can be constructed by following Elbow’s suggestion for freewriting. This activity helps a student put his/her voice on paper (Writing 63). For example, dialogue journals encourage the development of voice, because students write without worries of grammar, spelling, or mechanics. hooks also assigns journals and requires students to read them to one another. “To hear each other (the sound of different voices), to listen to another, is an exercise in recognition. It also ensures that no student remains invisible in the classroom” (Teaching 85). Students must be present and valued in class; voice recognition allows this to happen. It also helps students personalize their writing and clearly voice their opinions. For example, Woodworth gives students hypothetical writing situations (e.g., a student
finds a neighbor’s dead dog on a street). Students must write letters to the neighbor, the neighbor’s young child, and his/her best friend explaining the death. The activity forces students to consider their tone and audience –elements that draw on voice (146). Therefore, while ESL teachers worry about a student’s voice transferring over to his/her second language, through these real-life activities, transfer need not be a concern. Instead, through the activities, students work to construct their voices in a second language.

**Can Feminist Pedagogy be implemented in ESL Writing Classes?**

As indicated in the literature review, feminist pedagogy is a current and rich area of study in L1 composition scholarship. However, it is a very new field in ESL composition research and instruction. Perhaps too engrained in applied linguistics, ESL teachers and researchers have been slow to embrace scholarship in other academic fields such as composition. To be sure process pedagogy –as developed in the 1970s and 1980s –is widely accepted as an important component in L2 writing instruction. Now, the individual writer as creator of his/her own ideas/words is accepted in L2 instruction (Ferris and Hedgcock 5). Yet, ESL teachers seem hesitant to embrace other approaches of teaching writing. Ferris believes this is because most L2 instructors consider themselves language teachers -not writing teachers (*Response* 21). As a result, there is currently a gap in the field of ESL writing pedagogy. Matsuda believes this “disciplinary division of labor” between composition and rhetoric and Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) was born in the 1950s when the National TESOL Organization was established (17). Prior to the birth of TESOL, many ESL instructors and scholars regularly participated in the Conference of College Composition and Communication (4C’s) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Yet with the advent of TESOL, linguistics became the focal point in the field. Because writing is such an important component
of ESL pedagogy, it is imperative that the fields merge. Perhaps this study will bring the two fields closer together.

**Proposed Study**

Because little to no research on this topic exists in the field of ESL, I explored whether there is value in feminist pedagogy for IELP teachers in helping their students learn the English language and improve their writing. Because of the paucity at this point, it seemed best to begin with teachers whom I work with to determine how the pedagogy can best be implemented into IELP composition classrooms, which is in the context where we all teach. I did not draw data from IELP students, other than casual observations, because I did not wish to draw conclusions about individual learners from different countries.

After collecting the data, I looked to answer the research questions that are provided below. Because I wished to research whether feminist pedagogy is applicable in IELP writing classrooms, I crafted the research questions to specifically target feminist teaching practices. For example, questions three, four, five, six, and eight focus on the main components of feminist pedagogy: feminist assignments, instructor as facilitator, learning environment, and voice. Also, because I believe feminist pedagogy prepares students for their future academic endeavors, I crafted questions seven and eight to explore what assignments instructors valued and whether voice was important for them in preparing students for their future studies. As previously stated, several pedagogical qualities, which are necessarily identified as feminist, intertwine with feminist pedagogy such as writing pedagogy and student-centered teaching practices. Thus, in the research, I learned that some instructors associated with some of these traits such as being a facilitator, but did not identify their teaching as feminist. The goal of this study was to determine whether feminist pedagogy is applicable in IELP writing classes, not to determine whether
feminist pedagogy is the best or right teaching practice for the IELP. Good teaching practices intertwine, and perhaps feminist pedagogy can be one of the intertwining threads in IELP composition instruction. Below are the research questions for this study.

1). Do IELP instructors use features associated with feminist pedagogy in their writing classrooms?

2). Do IELP writing teachers consciously align their teaching with a feminist pedagogy?

3). Do IELP writing teachers use types of assignments associated with feminist pedagogy?
   a. dialogue journals  
   b. collaborative discussion  
   c. narratives  
   d. peer review

4). Do IELP writing instructors assume the role of authority or facilitator in their classrooms?

5). Do IELP writing teachers try to foster a safe learning environment?

6). How do IELP writing instructors respond to student writing?

7). What assignments and/or activities do IELP writing instructors implement into their teaching to prepare students for their graduate and undergraduate courses?

8). Do IELP writing instructors believe developing an individual voice is necessary to prepare students for their undergraduate or graduate coursework?

To best answer these research questions, I observed five IELP composition courses and conducted post-observation interviews. In July 2007, fifteen IELP instructors received solicitation letters and consent forms, inviting them to participate in the study. Five instructors agreed to participate. I set up appointments at their convenience to observe their classes and conduct the post-observation interviews. The observations and interviews began in July 2007 and concluded in October 2007.
For each observation, I arrived five minutes prior to the start of class and sketched the classroom. These sketches helped me analyze the teaching methods applied, the learning environment, and the students’ proximity to the teacher and each other. I also designed a checklist (appendix one) that helped me note any components of feminist pedagogy instructors applied in their teaching. On the checklist, I also took meticulous notes during each observation. After observing the classes, I met with each instructor individually and asked them fourteen interview questions (appendix two). The interviews were very informative and helpful for planning the IELP teacher training – more so that the observations, as the observations were such a small sampling of the instructors’ teaching. When I completed the interviews, I began to code the data. I looked for specific themes and common threads, using the notes, sketches, and tape-recorded instructor interviews. From the findings, I designed an IELP teacher training, a series of six, one hour in-services that target student-centered teaching, composition pedagogy, and feminist teaching practices. I hope to offer the in-services during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Ultimately, this pilot study was born from my experiences as an IELP composition instructor and was designed using principles of action research. According to Ray, “It [action research] is a grassroots effort to address the problems of schools and universities from the inside out, starting with individual teachers documenting successes and failures, questions and answers, from their own classrooms” (49). Using my teaching experiences as a stepping-stone, I designed this study to determine whether IELP teachers draw on or could apply feminist pedagogy in their IELP writing courses. Therefore, my teaching experiences were the impetus for a larger research project, specifically an IELP teacher training.

In the in-services, instructors will come together to develop and reflect on their current teaching practices. According to Fischer, “In supportive settings among trusting colleagues,
teachers are able to express the concerns and insights realized through self-examination and reflection on teaching practice and student learning” (30). According to Burnaford, such training is important because it enables teachers to revise curriculum and update or rethink their teaching philosophies (50). I believe the IELP faculty will benefit from this research project. Hopefully, it will lead to a sincere dialogue about how we can best help students learn and prepare them for their future academic endeavors at UF.

What follows is a detailed report of the IELP composition classes I observed. Included in the second chapter are my assumptions before entering the classes, detailed accounts of each observation, and my thoughts or conclusions about each. Through the observations, I gained a better understanding about how the instructors used feminist pedagogy as well as other teaching approaches in their teaching. In Chapter Three, I report the instructor interviews and offer my thoughts and conclusions about each. I then explain how I coded the data collected. After coding and analyzing the data from the interviews and classroom observations, I designed a teacher training—a series of six, one-hour in-services. In Chapter Four, I introduce this teacher training. Specifically, the training targets areas that instructors would benefit from additional training. These include student-centered teaching, composition pedagogy, and feminist teaching practices. It is my intention to offer the in-services during the 2009-2010 academic year. Finally, in Chapter Five, I reflect on the limitations of the study and look toward future research in the subject area.
Chapter 2: Observing IELP Writing Courses

IELP Writing Classroom Observations

Because little to no research about feminist pedagogy in the field of ESL writing instruction exits, I designed an exploratory study to determine whether there is value in feminist pedagogy for IELP teachers in helping their students learn the English language and improve their writing. As part of the study, I observed five IELP writing courses and interviewed each instructor to determine whether feminist pedagogy is used or could potentially be applied in IELP writing instruction.

Fifteen IELP writing instructors received solicitation letters and consent forms in mid-July 2007 and five volunteered. Those who accepted, taught composition for both the summer and fall semesters, while several who declined, taught writing only in the summer, making it difficult for them to participate. Long before I solicited the subjects, I designed a very basic classroom observation form (appendix one). This form helped me document important class information such as the level of instruction and the date I visited the class. I also documented the class lessons, the positioning of the teacher in regard to the students, and the positioning of the students in regard to each other. Overall, the main purpose of the form was to note whether feminist activities and assignments were incorporated into the instructors’ lessons. These included small group discussion, collaborative learning/group assignments, journaling, narrative writing, and peer review. I also included lecture in this category in order to record how many instructors used the teacher-centered approach. Listing these assignments allowed me to quickly check off which activities were used in the classes. I also took detailed notes during each observation. These notes allowed me to document the class lessons and inner-workings of the courses. Finally, I sketched each classroom design, focusing on where the students sat and how
the classroom furniture was arranged. The observation form, notes, and sketches helped me note common threads in the observations and ultimately best analyze the data.

In this chapter, I explain how I structured the observations and list pre-observation assumptions. I then explain how I coded the observations and looked for common themes throughout the research. Later, I summarize and offer my thoughts about each observation and answer several of the research questions put forth in this study.

Assumptions

Before observing the classes, I listed several assumptions about the classes I would observe. Most of the assumptions were based on my understanding of the IELP curriculum, while others stemmed from my own teaching practices and experiences. Below are my assumptions.

1. Many IELP students are accustomed to teacher-centered learning in their native countries. They look to their instructors for the right answers, and when they enter the IELP, they are uncomfortable working in small groups. Therefore, I believed instructors would lead teacher-centered classes and lecture often, because they would want students to feel comfortable in class.

While many students enter the IELP accustomed to teacher-centered methodologies, Dornyei and Murphey point out that group dynamics are important in many countries. This is expressed in several proverbs such as the Kenyan saying, “Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable” (3). The authors fault applied linguistics for the field’s lack of research on group dynamics and collaboration, because it is a topic outside the scope of linguistics. Applied linguists, they argue, do not value teaching practices such as student-centered learning that are not embedded in linguistic theory. However, other fields of language instruction do value collaboration. The authors cite modern language education and communicative teaching practices for bringing small group work and interaction into ESL classrooms (6). More specifically, Ferris and Hedgcock believe in L2 composition classes, group interaction is important for the development of writing
skills (225). Indeed, working in a collaborative atmosphere enables students to revise their work based on their peers’ suggestions (Bruffee, *A Short 4*). Collaboration is also an important component of feminist pedagogy, as through collaboration, students discuss issues of gender, race, religion, and the like (Fisher 39). It allows them to confront oppression and become socially responsible. Therefore, while I believed some IELP instructors would not use student-centered teaching practices, it is a beneficial component of L2 writing instruction.

2). *Process writing would be an important component of IELP writing instruction.*

The IELP curriculum calls for instructors to teach process writing, and therefore, teachers and students alike are accustomed to the approach. Indeed, current ESL writing pedagogy calls for process writing to be taught through the cognitive lens as developed by Flower and Hayes. Through this approach, planning, writing, and reviewing are stressed (Hyland 3). The approach also emphasizes higher order thinking skills and recommends peer review (Ferris and Hedgcock 5). I predicted that IELP writing teachers would assign peer review and follow the writing process, because it is specified in the IELP curriculum. However, I also believed there would be a strong emphasis on grammar rather than global revision throughout the writing process. Many IELP students worry about grammar errors, and ultimately believe that if a draft is grammatically correct, it is a strong text. Thus, they overlook content, development, and organization. Also, with their backgrounds in linguistics, IELP instructors often focus on error correction rather than providing their students with suggestions for global revision. In addition to grammar instruction, I believed IELP composition instructors would overlook the feminist application of process writing. While I believed most instructors would create safe learning environments for their students and bring an ethic of caring to their teaching, I did not believe they would connect such
an approach to feminist pedagogy. Nor would they connect the writing process to feminist teaching practices.

3). Writing instruction would be very formulaic.

Because our students lack academic writing skills, IELP writing instructors teach the basics: thesis statements, topic sentences, and transitions. Most L2 composition instructors favor modeling in which students analyze sample essays to help them better organize and develop their own writing (Freeman and Freeman 38). While modeling is an important teaching method, I believed some instructors would over-model. With overuse, students lack opportunities to create meaning and instead simply insert words into the models instructors provide for them. Specifically, there is no original thought or voice in their writing. As previously noted, voice is an important feature of feminist pedagogy, because it enables students to voice their opinions, beliefs, and values in order to confront oppression. Maher and Tetreault believe voice:

…Is their [students’] ability to speak for themselves, to bring their own questions and perspectives to the material. It seems to promote the connection of one’s education to one’s personal experience, a connection that marginalized groups must often give up when they seek ‘mastery’ through the dominate discourse. (18)

I predicted over-modeling, especially in the advanced levels, would be problematic, because it would mirror a dominate discourse that students are forced to master. While students require guidance and a better understanding of organizational patterns, they also require space to create and develop their own ideas. Therefore, over-modeling can limit students’ abilities to create meaning and construct their voices.

Trying to Make Sense of it all

During the observations, I took meticulous notes and focused on the inner-workings of each class. I focused on the instructors’ lessons, the classroom atmosphere, and how the students
interacted amongst themselves and with their instructor. As previously mentioned, for each
observation, I arrived five minutes prior to start of class and sketched the classroom. These
sketches helped me code the data and better understand the research. According to Bishop,
coding helps a researcher better organize and categorize his/her research by doing the following:
“noting patterns and themes, clustering by conceptual groupings, making metaphors, counting,
speculating, making contrasts and comparisons, establishing linkages and relationships, shuttling
between data and larger categories, and noting relationships” (117). Because I am a visual
learner, I depended on sketching to assist in coding the data. I sketched the layout of each
classroom, the proximity of the students in regard to each other as well as the instructor, and
their seating arrangements when they worked in small groups. Through the sketches, I made
connections between the observations and literature review, which enabled me to better
understand if feminist pedagogy was applied or has potential in IELP writing instruction. This
selective coding also allowed me to relate themes to other ideas presented in my work. For this
study, a theme represents a concept or piece of data that appeared in at least two observations.
To maintain the participants’ confidentiality, their gender is not identified in the following
reports. This strategy is appropriate, as the participants’ gender was not a variable in the study.

The first theme I noted was that several IELP teachers focused on building solid writing
skills such as topic sentences, thesis statements, and transitions. This allowed for good
consistency from level-to-level instruction and for skill transfer to other modes of language
instruction, especially communication and reading skills. In addition, most instructors used
collaboration. Specifically, teachers introduced topics or writing skills, modeled the appropriate
use, and then asked students to practice these skills with classmates. As previously mentioned,
many ESL composition teachers favor modeling as a means for students to analyze sample
essays and help them better organize and develop their own writing (Freeman and Freeman 38). After modeling, instructors required students to practice their writing skills in small groups. Such collaboration, a feature of feminist pedagogy, enabled students to negotiate meaning and work in a non-threatening space.

The third theme noted was that the students were most active and involved when they moved. Movement was as simple as students putting themselves into small groups or getting up from one’s seat to write an answer on the board. Classroom movement kept the students alive and focused. Indeed, Mirtz believes movement of classroom furniture can create a new learning environment. She writes, “Although I don’t recommend moving classroom furniture randomly or chaotically, I do believe that the movement itself causes changes in the perception of authority and in the resistant behavior in both teachers and students” (16). Some instructors required students to move classroom furniture when they worked in small groups. In addition, one instructor even asked his/her students to stand up and stretch in order to get their “blood flowing.” Movement, in essence, became a lifeline for the students and allowed instructors to keep their classes focused. It helped instructors to create a safe learning environment for their students where they felt comfortable taking risks and asking questions. Movement also helped instructors facilitate learning, instead of depending on traditional teacher-centered methodologies.

Finally, I noted that several instructors valued grammar instruction and error correction in their composition classes. While grammar indeed has its place in writing instruction, it should always be connected to the writing process. Also, teachers must be careful not to correct grammar when responding to student writing (Munchie 185). A strict focus on grammar can cause student frustration and disrupt their abilities to organize, develop, and construct their
voices. While grammar instruction and correction are not traits of feminist pedagogy, they are important and controversial features of ESL pedagogy. Because so many pedagogies mentioned in this dissertation intertwine, grammar correction was therefore an important component of this exploratory study in understanding the inner-workings of the IELP instructors’ teaching philosophies. If instructors further focused on global revision, it would provide greater opportunity for feminist application, as instructors would need not worry about grammar and instead attend to students’ ideas and construction of voice.

**IELP Curriculum**

As previously noted, the IELP offers four levels of instruction. Level one is designed for true beginners, while level five is for the most advanced students preparing to enter UF graduate programs. Each level of instruction has specific objectives for the core courses: composition, communication, reading, listening, and grammar. The objectives provide guidelines for instructors and outline the skills students should demonstrate proficiency in before they advance to the next level. For this study, I observed one writing class at level three, three at level four, and one at level five. Level three is considered a low-advanced composition course. In this course, students begin the semester reviewing different types of sentences: simple, compound, and complex. They then advance to writing different types of paragraphs such as narrative and informative, and the culminating project is a non-research based, five-paragraph informative essay. Students apply the writing process for all major paragraph and essay assignments. They also learn strategies for taking essay exams.

Once students complete level three, they advance to level four. This advanced writing course focuses on writing different types of five-paragraph essays, for example, compare/contrast and cause and effect essays, through a process lens. As in level three, students
continue to hone their essay exam taking skills and begin to attend more to style. Undergraduate students must successfully complete this class with a grade of “C” or better in order to advance to their undergraduate programs and enroll in the first IELP undergraduate composition bridge course. The bridge course, which introduces students to MLA documentation and writing informative research papers, is a prerequisite for the first-year composition course offered in the English department.

Graduate students, who successfully complete level four, advance to the level five composition course. This high advanced course is designed specifically for graduate students. The IELP offers two different sections: 1) for future Education and TESOL/Bilingual Education students and 2) for future Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Management students. Separating students by their academic backgrounds allows teachers to use the content of the fields to teach academic English skills. The courses focus on writing graduate-level research papers using APA documentation. Students also learn to summarize and critique academic sources such as professional journal articles.
Observation One

The Classroom

Illustration One

This classroom, which placed students in a round, offered students opportunity for collaboration and discussion.

The Observation

Students arrived to this level four class on time with drafts of a five-paragraph compare/contrast essay. After taking attendance, Instructor A promptly introduced a peer review activity. S/he gave each student a peer review checklist and two blank outlines: one for a compare/contrast essay organized in a point-by-point style, the other for a compare/contrast essay organized in a block style. The checklist called each for each student to determine whether
his/her partner’s essay had a direct thesis, specific details, logical organization, sentence variety, appropriate vocabulary, accurate grammar, an appropriate conclusion, and an appropriate title.

Students also answered several open-ended questions for the peer review activity: “What did you like about this piece of writing?”, “What did you dislike about this piece?”, “What improvements can you suggest, especially to add or to increase reader interest?”, “Other constructive comments?” After a student completed the checklist, he/she outlined his/her partner’s essay to ensure the essay was well-organized.

For this peer review activity, Instructor A assigned each student a partner. Some partners were across the room from each other and did not move to work with their partners. Therefore, students worked silently when reviewing their partners’ papers. When students had questions, Instructor A worked one-on-one with them, answering questions, and guiding them through the peer review and outline exercises. Students also asked classmates sitting next to them questions about their partners’ papers and the peer review assignment, instead of collaborating with their assigned partners.

Conclusions

While it was difficult to determine if Instructor A consciously aligns with a feminist pedagogy, s/he did use features associated with feminist pedagogy such as peer review. Indeed, the peer review activity had great potential for the implementation of feminist pedagogy. It was a nice collaborative activity that focused on students’ ideas and values regarding the essay topics. In addition, the classroom design offered opportunity for collaboration and discussion. Yet students seemed ostracized and did not collaborate in order to improve their writing skills. Instead, they depended on their instructor or the classmate sitting next to them for the right answers. When students turned to Instructor A for help, s/he was more of a facilitator than an
authority. For example, when addressing their questions and concerns, s/he worked individually with the students and did not single anyone out. S/he was very soft-spoken and seemed to put his/her students at ease. Such an approach created a safe learning environment for the students.

Overall, a feminist pedagogy would have been helpful in regard to the positioning of the students. As seen in the sketch, the female students sat at the outside tables. Thus, the women, absent unintentionally, were segregated from the rest of the class. They did not speak with their peers and rarely interacted with the instructor. Specifically, the Bulgarian female was ostracized from the entire class during the peer review session. Her partner, a Korean male, sat on the opposite side of the room and never asked her questions about her paper. A feminist pedagogy would encourage students to collaborate and address personal concerns in their writing. Depending on the topics, it could also lead to the creation of political judgment about gender and sexism (Fisher 44). Indeed, such dialogue would create a very productive peer review session.
Observation Two

The Classroom

This classroom design was very traditional and lent itself to teacher-centered instruction.

The Observation

For the second class, I observed another level four writing course. Instructor B began class with a PowerPoint presentation in which s/he introduced writing unified and coherent paragraphs. S/he then asked a student to read a paragraph from the textbook that outlined directions for an in-class activity. Individually, students read sample paragraphs in the textbook and analyzed which paragraphs had strong transitions or lacked unity. After students completed this activity, Instructor B brought the students together to go over the answers and read their paragraphs aloud to “hear the unity.”

Instructor B then introduced another activity from the textbook. For this activity, students individually read paragraphs in which they underlined the topic sentences and
eliminated any off-topic sentences. After completing this activity, students discussed their answers as a class. For the final activity, students added paragraph breaks and eliminated off-topic sentences in sample paragraphs. Students completed this task individually but compared their answers with a partner. When comparing answers, Instructor B walked around the classroom, keeping students on task and answering their questions. S/he asked leading questions and did not provide students with the right answers. Once students finished the activity, Instructor B brought the class back together to discuss their answers.

Conclusions

Instructor B’s class was very well-structured; students worked well individually and with their partners. Indeed, the small group work showed great potential for feminist application, as students were free to discuss sample paragraphs. Through collaborating in a safe space, students learned from one another instead of depending on their instructor for the right answers. They also learned to negotiate meaning. Although there was only one female student, she worked well with her peers and did not allow her male classmates to dominate the discussion. Also, Instructor B assumed the role of facilitator well and provided each student, especially the female, a platform to voice their ideas and asks questions. I was especially impressed with his/her ability to ask leading questions and guide students to find the correct answers on their own. Indeed, an important component of feminist pedagogy is for the instructor to be a supportive guide throughout the writing process (Jarratt, “Feminist” 115).
Observation Three

The Classroom

Illustration Three

This classroom was also very traditional. Instructor C utilized the rows of desks for the first fifteen minutes of class. Then students rearranged the furniture to create individual learning spaces while working in small groups.

The Observation

Instructor C began his/her level three class reviewing topic sentences through a PowerPoint presentation. For homework, students had analyzed topic sentences, circling the topic and underlining the focus. In class, Instructor C asked students to write the answers to their homework on the board. Together, they analyzed the sentences and corrected any mistakes. After the board work, students read a short passage from the textbook to again review topic sentences. They were then instructed to break into groups and complete an activity in which they determined whether sample topic sentences were “too general, too specific, or just right.”
The students put themselves into groups, rearranging the furniture to create collaborative learning spaces. When they were in their groups, Instructor C moved from group-to-group, ensuring that everyone was on task. S/he guided the groups through the activity by asking leading questions. After students had time to complete the exercise, the instructor again asked students to write their answers on the board. As a class, they went over the answers and analyzed the topic sentences.

Illustration Four

When students put themselves into small groups, they rearranged the classroom furniture. This provided each group its own learning space. Students discussed, negotiated meaning, and completed an in-class assignment in the above self-assigned seating arrangements.

Conclusions

The small group work showed great promise for feminist application. No one dominated the discussions, and the students were very supportive of each other. Everyone was given a platform to voice his/her ideas. Also, the instructor took a back seat and allowed students to work amongst themselves. When I left the class, Instructor C commented on the importance of
small group work in this course. Indeed, it is the teacher’s responsibility in a feminist classroom to create an environment where the students feel comfortable learning and working with each other. Clearly, Instructor C assumed the role of a facilitator in his/her class, and the students seemed very comfortable with the course’s structure. They knew how to put themselves into groups and the proper decorum required when working with their peers. Indeed, this safe learning environment was helpful for students to collaborate and negotiate meaning while working in small groups. Overall, the class showed true feminist application; however, the women were ostracized, as they all worked in one group. However, I am not sure if it was a case of strength in numbers or if the women simply happened to be sitting next to each other that day.

**Observation Four**

*The Classroom*

![Illustration Five](image-url)

Above is a sketch of the IELP computer lab. The teacher’s station is on a platform, thus an instructor stands on a stage when leading class. Each student has his/her own cubicle with a computer.
The Observation

This was a level five composition class for future MBA and Environmental students. Instructor D began with a brief review of sentence structure. First, s/he wrote two phrases on the board: *Now education is having many great influences* and *India is having many new technology*. Instructor D asked the students to analyze the errors and correct the sentences. As students called out their answers, s/he wrote their revision suggestions on the board. Instructor D then reviewed and modeled sentence patterns on the board for students to apply in their writing such as:

- **IC (independent clause), and IC.**
- **IC. Moreover, IC.**
- **IC; however, IC.**
- **DC (dependent clause), IC.**
- **IC DC.**

The instructor’s models for independent and dependent clauses guided students in their sentence writing activities, and s/he encouraged them to use these patterns in their essays. S/he then returned an assignment in which students practiced writing such sentences and asked students to correct their errors for homework.

Instructor D proceeded to review thesis statements and topic sentences. On an overhead projector, s/he shared a sample thesis statement: *Electric cars would be most desirable for urban cities, because they would reduce noise pollution and air pollution while also saving valuable space in city streets, and even more valuable energy.* Instructor D labeled the main points of the thesis statement and discussed how the body of the essay would be organized according to the thesis. S/he then presented a five-paragraph essay about migrant workers in which s/he took out the topic sentences of each body paragraph. Based on the direct thesis of the essay and the content for the body paragraphs, students worked with partners to write a topic sentence for each
body paragraph. About half way through the activity, students began to lose focus, so Instructor D asked students to stand up and stretch to get their “blood flowing.” Once students finished, Instructor D brought his/her class back together to discuss the topic sentences they wrote. S/he reminded them about their homework assignment and dismissed them to their next class.

Conclusions

The classroom space was quite restricting and made it difficult for the students to interact with each other and the instructor. Also, since all but two students were from India, groups were not multi-cultural. The women and men worked together, though this seemed to be less of a personal choice and more due to the constraints imposed by the physical space. As noted in Chapter One, creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for students is of the utmost importance. However, the structure of the lab did not allow the instructor to facilitate in an open space where students were free to move and create individual learning spaces. Overall, Instructor D facilitated dialogue between the students –an important component of feminist pedagogy -regardless of the classroom arrangement.
Observation Five

The Classroom

Illustration Six

Here is another traditional classroom that lent itself to teacher-centered instruction. Students remained in their assigned seats for the entire class, while the instructor lectured.

The Observation

Instructor E began this level four writing class, asking students to sign up for teacher conferences. While students signed up, s/he collected students’ journals that were written in spiral notebooks. S/he then asked students to open up their textbooks to a page about run-on sentences and fragments. S/he explained that s/he would focus on proofreading concepts in the conferences and look for sentence fragments and run-ons in their papers. S/he then proceeded to lecture about different grammatical errors including subject-verb agreement and verb tense. During the lecture, students did not take notes.
After the grammar lecture, Instructor E began another lecture about the writing process. S/he modeled how to brainstorm, freewrite, outline, write essays, and polish or revise for grammatical errors. Class ended with Instructor E reminding students to attend their conferences on time and for each student to bring a draft of his/her essay to the conference. After class, Instructor E commented that students were ready to turn in an essay. However, it is important to review the writing process as much as possible in order for students to truly understand the steps needed to write an acceptable paper.

Conclusions

Instructor E’s teacher-centered approach made it difficult to determine whether s/he uses features associated with feminist pedagogy in her teaching. However, s/he did use assignments associated with feminist pedagogy such as journals and peer review. While I did not observe these assignments, Instructor E mentioned them in his/her lecture. In this class, Instructor E assumed the role of authority rather than facilitator. While the learning environment seemed at least comfortable, it was difficult to determine whether it was a true safe learning space, because students did not collaborate or engage in activity. However, it is important to remember this was a very small sampling of Instructor E’s teaching. The interview provided greater insight into his/her teaching.

Discussion

From the observations, I learned much about IELP teaching practices and methodologies. Specifically, the observations enabled me to create a teacher training that targets the specific needs of the IELP faculty. As highlighted in the conclusions of each observation, I answered four out of the eight research questions through the course observations.

1). Did IELP teachers use features associated with feminist pedagogy in their writing classes?
2). Did IELP teachers use types of assignments associated with feminist pedagogy?
   a. dialogue journals
   b. collaborative discussion
   c. narratives
   d. peer review

3). Did IELP writing instructors assume the role of authority or facilitator in their classrooms?

4). Did IELP writing teachers try to foster a safe learning environment?

   Through the observations, it became apparent that many IELP instructors used features associated with feminist pedagogy; for example, several instructors assumed the role of facilitator and made use of group discussion in which students collaboratively worked to improve their writing skills. They also brought an ethic of caring into their teaching that was evident in observing their rapport with students. This rapport was further strengthened by their ability to create safe learning spaces for their students. Instructors also made use of feminist assignments such as peer review, journals, and collaborative discussion. Although only four of the research questions were answered, the remaining research questions were answered through the instructor interviews. In addition, the above four research questions were also elaborated on and further clarified in the interviews.

Overall Findings

   To best understand and evaluate the overall findings of the observations, I returned to the pre-observation assumptions. As predicted earlier in this chapter, lecture was overly used in one of the classes. One instructor lectured for the duration of a class, and while lecture is necessary when modeling new concepts for students, the students were not called upon to apply what they learned in class. Therefore, two important components of feminist pedagogy -student-centered learning and instructor as facilitator -will be introduced in the IELP teacher-training in which a focus will be placed on setting up a student-centered classroom, facilitating dialogue, and
creating a safe learning environment for students. Such training will enable IELP instructors to call on students to apply their writing skills and use the language more often.

I also predicted that process writing would be an important component of IELP writing instruction. In the observations, students engaged in peer review and signed up for conferences – two important components of process writing. Usually, conferences demonstrate an ethic of caring, as the instructor engages with students individually, helping them improve their writing by focusing on students’ individual strengths and weaknesses. However, some of the instructors’ attention to grammatical errors was problematic, especially for students learning how to globally revise their work. Therefore, the importance of teaching students how to globally revise for content, development, and organization will be addressed in the training. By focusing on global revision rather than grammar correction, feminist pedagogy can more readily be applied into IELP writing courses, as the approach provides space to collaborate and focuses on students’ values and ideas in writing.

The last prediction I made was in regard to modeling. While some instructors modeled writing skills such as topic sentences, thesis statements, and transitions, no one provided students with templates to simply insert words. In these classes, students were given ample time to apply the skills instructors modeled for them. Therefore, there is no need to address over-modeling in the workshops.

**Conclusion**

The five classroom observations provided excellent insight into IELP writing instruction and helped me brainstorm several ideas for the teacher training. Chapter Three focuses on the instructor interviews that were conducted after the classroom observations. I also pinpoint
specific themes that arose from the interviews and then put forth my thoughts and conclusions about each interview, further answering the research questions.
Chapter 3: IELP Instructor Interviews

IELP Instructor Interviews

While the classroom observations were helpful in understanding how instructors organized their courses and made use of classroom space to create safe and productive learning environments, I did not learn much about the instructors’ individual teaching philosophies. Specifically, through the interviews, I learned a great deal more about the instructors’ classroom practices. Whether they valued the decentering of authority and recognized their students as sources of knowledge became quite evident in the interviews. Brady writes:

The [feminist] classroom is not a neutral environment where knowledge is passed down from teacher to student, but a complex social site, a borderland—a domain of crossing—that offers the possibility for mutual negotiation and translation where both teachers and students bring with them subject positions that are informed by their class, gender, and ethnicity. (87)

The interview questions were designed for me to best understand if IELP instructors created the type of learning environment Brady writes about through their assignments, their roles in the classroom, their response to student writing, and the emphasis they placed on students constructing their voices.

When I crafted the interview questions (appendix two), I returned to the research questions (appendix three) to ensure that each interview question specifically targeted the research questions. This ascertained that the research questions would be addressed thoroughly in the report. While I could not answer all the research questions through the observations, the interviews enabled me to do so. As previously stated, I found the interviews more informative and helpful in planning the teacher training, perhaps because the classroom observations were
such a small sampling of the instructors’ teaching practices. Ultimately, the interview questions allowed me to answer the research questions and design a teacher training tailored toward the IELP teachers’ specific needs. I begin this chapter by listing my pre-interview assumptions. I then explain the process taken in coding the interviews. This is followed by a detailed account about each interview and the conclusions I made after each interview. Finally, I return to the research questions and discuss how I used my findings to develop the IELP teacher training.

Assumptions

As with the classroom observations, I listed several assumptions about what the teachers may have discussed before I interviewed them. Some of these assumptions were based on my own teaching experiences and understanding of the IELP curriculum, while others were based on conversations I have had with IELP instructors about language and composition teaching practices.

1). Some IELP writing instructors would unconsciously use features associated with feminist pedagogy.

Specifically, I believed IELP instructors would bring an ethic of caring to their teaching. IELP instructors are always willing to help students improve their language skills and cope with homesickness. This ethic of caring enables students to adjust to their new surroundings and find comfort in their new learning environment. However, I did not believe instructors would connect their nurturing approach to feminist pedagogy and instead would view it as a necessary component of service to the University and our students.

I also believed some IELP instructors would use collaboration or assign group work in their writing classes such as peer review and copyediting activities. Such activities would probably be viewed as essential components of the writing process, and instructors would most likely overlook the feminist application in which students become socially responsible and
confront oppression through their collaboration. In addition, I did not believe instructors would assume the role of facilitator and confront issues of authority if necessary when students work in small groups. Indeed, assuming the role of an authority is a necessary element of a post-structural feminist teaching model (Tisdell 143), because it allows instructors to keep students focused and on-task. Instead, I believed group activities would be prescriptive and dominated by the IELP instructors.

2). *Process writing would be important, but instructors would not understand the pedagogical implications behind the process nor the feminist ties to it.*

I did not believe IELP writing instructors would understand the ties between feminist pedagogy and process writing. Indeed, feminist pedagogy and the writing process are compatible not only because the writing process calls for an ethic of caring in which the teacher guides his/her students through the process but also because assignments such as peer review, journaling, and narrative writing encourage students to construct their voices and participate in on-going conversations of society. While instructors would bring an ethic of caring to their teaching, I believed the writing process would be very mechanical. Students would simply go through the motions to create their final products, without concern for constructing their voices or without attention to personalizing their writing. Finally, I did not believe instructors would focus on how knowledge is created both collaboratively and individually through writing.

3). *Some instructors would not understand classroom space as a safe haven.*

Because most UF classrooms are traditional learning spaces with rows of desks or tables, I predicted IELP teachers would view the classrooms as random spaces and not use the environment to engage learning. As was noted in the observations, one instructor had his/her students move the furniture to create a more effective learning space. A safe learning environment is a feature of feminist pedagogy, as it helps change power relations between
teacher and students by focusing on student-centered learning and individualized instruction. It also encourages students to openly dialogue with each other and their instructors, placing students at ease in the writing classroom. While IELP instructors would most likely bring an ethic of caring to their classrooms and want their students to feel comfortable learning the language, I did not believe they would connect this methodology to feminist pedagogy.

4). Voice in writing would not be valued.

I predicted IELP instructors would not value students’ construction of voice due to the controversy of voice in applied linguistic theory. Also, as noted in Chapter Two, the IELP curriculum calls for instructors to make use of the writing process through a cognitive lens in which planning, writing, and continuous drafting are stressed. While a cognitive approach provides students with useful strategies for composing papers, it overlooks voice. Although rarely used in L2 composition classes, an expressive approach emphasizes voice and may be helpful in allowing students to construct their voices. Hyland writes, “…Despite its influence in L1 writing classrooms, expressivism has been treated cautiously in L2 contexts….It tends to neglect the cultural backgrounds of learners, the social consequences of writing, and the purposes of communication in the real world, where writing matters” (10). Hyland claims that expressive writing overlooks students’ cultural backgrounds and lacks true communication with an audience. However, students’ individual backgrounds are indeed taken into consideration through expressive writing because of its emphasis on voice construction.

Hyland also writes that voice and textual ownership create problems in L2 composition courses, as writing in other cultures is used to pass along knowledge, not express one’s thoughts. The knowledge expressed in writing is therefore already socially shared with the audience (39). While cultural ramifications are inevitable in a L2 composition course, in order for NNS to find
academic success at UF, they must learn to construct their voices and engage in ongoing conversations both in and outside the University. Therefore, it is important for students to begin constructing their voices in the IELP. An expressive approach can help, as the approach values voice. However, because the cognitive approach is valued in many ESL composition classes, I did not believe IELP instructors would use expressivist writing that favors the construction of voice. Nor did I believe they would connect the construction of voice to feminist pedagogy and encourage students who have been marginalized in their native countries to develop their voices.

**Trying to Make Sense of it all**

After listing these assumptions, I interviewed the IELP instructors. Each interview lasted about thirty minutes—enough time for me to grasp the participants’ teaching styles, pedagogical beliefs, and practices without an undue constraint on their time. Initially, I had difficulty deciding on a location to hold the interviews. I preferred an informal open space such as the cafeteria or union; yet this was not possible due to the large number of people and noise. Also, as most IELP instructors share office space, I did not want to intrude on their officemates. I finally decided to hold the interviews in my office. Since I have an open-door policy, most faculty come into my office throughout the day to ask questions and discuss different issues. Thus, I felt my office was a safe environment for the participants to engage in discussion.

Upon completion of the interviews, I coded the data. Coding the interviews was much more time consuming and required greater attention to detail than the coding of the classroom observations. I tape-recorded each interview in order to reflect on and study the participants’ responses. The recordings enabled me to make connections between the interviews, observations, and research questions. They also allowed me to document direct quotations, thus providing a more authentic representation of the participants’ perceptions.
As with the observations, when coding the interviews, I looked for patterns in the instructors’ responses and themes that intertwined throughout. I again categorized a theme if a piece of data or a concept appeared in at least two interviews. When considering themes, I also focused on the ideas presented in Chapter One: feminist assignments and activities, the role of the instructor in a L2 feminist writing class, whether the instructors created a safe learning environment for their students, and whether voice was an important component of ESL composition instruction. I studied each interview individually and then looked at how all five participants responded to each question. This allowed me to best understand the scope of the participants’ answers from different angles. Because only five subjects participated, I drew on general conclusions.

From coding the interviews several themes emerged. 1) All the IELP instructors considered themselves facilitators. 2) Most of the instructors brought an ethic of caring into their classes; however, they were not aware of the feminist implications behind this approach. 3) All instructors used peer review and assigned journals but for very different purposes. 4) Modeling, as indicated in Chapter Two, was an important component of IELP writing instruction. These themes will be discussed in great detail later in this chapter. As in Chapter Two, to maintain the participants’ confidentiality, their gender is not identified in the following reports.

**Interview One**

To begin the interview, I asked Instructor A to describe his/her teaching philosophy. S/he explained that s/he aligns with a whole language approach, because it gives students “the fundamentals of language.” Through this approach, students learn to develop and organize their thoughts without fear of grammar.
Instructor A as Facilitator

Instructor A stated that s/he assumes the role of facilitator in the writing classroom, because “students do not feel comfortable with authority and may not feel comfortable sharing their writing with others.” However, at times s/he must assume the role of authority, especially if students are unproductive or not speaking English. If this happens, s/he must “direct students to use the language.”

Assignments and Activities

Because s/he is a facilitator and subscribes to a whole language approach, Instructor A does not lecture often. When asked why s/he lectures, s/he focused on grammar and communication classes, in which lectures provide students with models to follow before they begin an assignment. S/he also lectures to introduce concepts and prepare students for small group work and other in-class activities. Such collaboration “keeps students comfortable so that they are challenged but not over-challenged in the writing class.” It enables students to help each other in a non-threatening environment.

Instructor A also teaches narrative writing in an undergraduate ESL writing course. S/he teaches the genre through a formulaic approach, focusing on creating scenarios with a conflict and implementing dialogue into a text. When asked whether voice plays a role in this assignment, s/he answered, “It depends. Asian students go through the motions. The cultures are different.”

In addition to narrative writing, Instructor A assigns peer review in his/her writing classes. The activity is usually assigned after students complete second drafts. As demonstrated in the observation, Instructor A “controls who gets to work with whom.” For example, s/he often pairs a weak student with a strong student. This provides models for the weak students and
gives the stronger students greater opportunity to offer revision suggestions. As seen in the observation, Instructor A also designs peer review checklists for students to review elements introduced in class such as topic sentences, direct thesis statements, and transitions when critiquing their partners’ papers.

Finally, Instructor A assigns journals in his/her writing classes. S/he believes journals are “another way to publish.” S/he grades journals for completion—not for grammar and mechanics. This grading practice allows students to “open up when they write and get creative,” because they do not worry about making grammar errors in their writing. S/he also believes journals allow students to voice their opinions, “because they feel more comfortable and do not need to worry about organization patterns and structure.”

Conclusions

While Instructor A did not consciously subscribe to feminist pedagogy, s/he used features associated with the approach. For example, s/he used assignments such as dialogue journals for students to develop fluency and construct their voices. S/he also assumed the role of facilitator in the writing classroom, which allowed him/her to foster a safe learning environment. A safe learning environment also transcended onto the written page with journal writing. S/he stated that she responds to students’ ideas instead of focusing on grammar and mechanics and believed this approach keeps students comfortable in the course so that s/he can best monitor their growth. Indeed, many feminist teachers assign journals in order to better understand their students’ learning processes (Clifford 110). Finally, Instructor A believed assignments that allow students to voice their opinions are of the utmost importance.

After interviewing Instructor A, I recalled Ferris’s comment that many ESL instructors consider themselves language teachers—not writing teachers (Response 21). From Instructor A’s
responses, it was clear s/he considered him/herself a language teacher. S/he answered the majority of the questions in regard to other areas of language instruction, especially grammar and communication. S/he also struggled to answer some questions specific to the field of composition. For example, s/he did not understand the concept of voice and could not answer whether voice plays a role in narrative writing. S/he also generalized student writers, claiming: “Korean students are good writers” and “Saudi students are good at vocabulary.” S/he seemed to have an understanding of contrastive rhetoric that lent itself to generalizing student writing based on their native languages. According to Canagarajah, “In general, it is becoming more and more difficult to essentialize students in ESL –that is to generalize their identity and character according to a rigidly defined set of linguistic or cultural traits” (216). From the perspective of student-centered teaching practices and composition pedagogy, it is also important to see students as individuals and target their particular writing strengths and weaknesses. Such an approach enables instructors to stray from making generalizations that are unwarranted.

**Interview Two**

Instructor B applies an integrationist approach to his/her teaching and sees him/herself as a moderator -meaning that s/he jointly leads class with the students. S/he believes an integrationist approach gives students a purpose and responsibility to learn.

**Instructor B as Facilitator**

Although Instructor B lectures to introduce new concepts through modeling, s/he views him/herself as a “facilitator with authoritative attributes.” S/he is an authority, because students look to him/her for the right answers. However, s/he never provides them the answers; instead, they explore together. As also noted in the classroom observation, when students work in small groups, s/he walks around, ensuring students are on task and assessing students’ learning in an
informal manner. This classroom structure allows Instructor B to create a safe learning environment for students and guide them in their learning.

To create a safe learning environment, Instructor B believes it is important for students to feel comfortable throughout the writing process. S/he stated:

I also like to pull students aside –maybe –after class or in a conference if they are having major problems or if they’re really just not comprehending a certain skill for two reasons. 1) It keeps the whole affair private so that I’m not broadcasting their struggles to the class. 2) I also think -and students have told me -they feel it demonstrates greater care or concern for them.

Through his/her ethic of caring, Instructor B creates a safe learning environment for students in which they are free to create and develop their writing. This is also seen in how s/he responds to students’ writing. S/he values space on the written page as another entity of a safe learning environment.

I always make sure that I balance my critique with positive feedback in terms of criticism. Overall, I just want them to feel comfortable, to feel safe. And I also stress the importance of (and I am strict with them) about being polite and professional to one another. So, when we do peer review, I again, tell them, yes – you should look for areas that need improvement but you also must comment on areas that are done well.

Through creating a safe space on the written page, Instructor B’s comments model proper behavior and decorum for students when they peer review and respond to their classmates’ writing.
Assignments and Activities

As indicated above, Instructor B assigns small group quite work frequently. Specifically, s/he assigns textbook activities and peer review throughout the writing process. Indeed, s/he believes such activities are especially beneficial when students review each other’s papers; it provides them additional models and helps improve their writing and reading skills. S/he firmly believes: “To be a good writer, you must be a good reader.”

Instructor B also assigns journals in his/her composition classes and finds them particularly useful in the undergraduate writing course s/he teaches. In this course, students keep journals while writing research papers. “They have a free platform to voice their concerns and the joys of research writing.” When s/he reads students’ journals, s/he looks for an “honest voice;” s/he does not want students to simply go through the motions. In addition, s/he finds the undergraduate composition course to be most beneficial in preparing students for their undergraduate programs, because “clear, written communication is necessary for their future courses.” S/he wants students “to make it on their own in an academic community.”

Conclusions

While Instructor B did not consciously align his/her teaching with feminist pedagogy, his/her philosophy regarding journals was feminist. S/he looked for students to construct their voices and contribute to ongoing classroom conversations. Another component of feminist pedagogy in his/her teaching approach was that s/he did not want students simply to go through the motions when they journal. As noted in Chapter One, journals in feminist classrooms can be problematic because some students do not take them seriously (Clifford 111). However, Instructor B believed students must take them seriously in order for them to develop their voices. S/he also assumed the role of facilitator in the classroom, and like many feminist pedagogues,
s/he understood that an instructor must tread lightly with this position. Indeed, it is necessary to assume the role of authority if students are off-task or if conflict arises (Sielber 48).

In addition to his/her role as facilitator, Instructor B took great care to create a safe learning environment for his/her students. This was especially noted in how s/he responded to students’ writing, as s/he was careful to balance positive feedback with revision suggestions. Finally, voice played an important role in Instructor B’s classroom. S/he firmly believed students must construct their voices in order to be successful in their future academic endeavors.

Interview Three

Instructor C aligns his/her teaching with a process writing approach. S/he wants students to understand that “it’s all right to have multiple drafts and revise.” With a process approach, s/he seldom lectures –only to model concepts. S/he wants students to “put the lectures into practice,” and finds it more productive to “discuss rather than lecture about writing concepts.”

Instructor C as Facilitator

With a student-centered approach, Instructor C is a facilitator, whose purpose is to equip students with solid writing skills. Yet s/he finds the term facilitator conflicting, as “there does have to be an ultimate authority in the classroom.” S/he is especially torn with his/her role as an authority when grading students’ work. Although assessment poses problems, s/he gladly accepts the role of facilitator when students work in small groups. As demonstrated in the observation, s/he is careful “to model a leadership role when students are in large groups” and hopes this approach carries over into their small group work. When students work with their peers, s/he “float[s] between groups and reinforce[s] the positives of their work.” S/he also encourages shy students to voice their opinions. Through this approach, s/he strives to create a safe learning environment. S/he believes a safe learning environment enables students to “loosen
up” so they feel comfortable asking questions, making mistakes, and sharing their writing with others.

**Assignments and Activities**

Instructor C also assigns dialogue journals in his/her writing classes. This practice allows students to place their ideas down on paper without concerns for spelling or grammar. To develop a rapport with students, s/he responds to their journals weekly. S/he believes her responses help students “see their teacher as human.” Journals are written not to please the teacher but instead to develop fluency.

As previously stated, Instructor C also values small group work. His/her level three writing class meets five hours per week, and s/he implements small group work at least two or three times per week. This regularity allows students to interact and build a rapport with one another. S/he believes it is “a huge part of the writing process” and allows students to learn about different revising strategies they can implement into their writing. Peer review also offers students additional ideas to strengthen their own writing and explain their ideas to their partners. This activity, therefore, not only helps students improve their writing skills but also their communication skills.

Although Instructor C is not required to teach narrative writing in his/her composition classes, s/he often assigns autobiographical writing. S/he believes narratives help students understand and master another approach of writing. S/he also encourages students to include narratives in their journals. Such assignments “can help students connect with their voice[s].” In regard to preparing students for their future undergraduate and graduate classes, Instructor C believes students must have command over basic paragraph structure, so they can build their
essays. S/he also believes: “students must be part of the writing process. It is a strategy for success.”

Conclusions

Although Instructor C did not consciously align his/her teaching with feminist pedagogy, s/he used features associated with the approach. Specifically, s/he assigned journals for students to develop fluency and construct their voices or identities through writing. Collaboration was also an important component of his/her class, as it enables students to produce knowledge in a non-threatening environment. As Jarratt writes, “The feminist pedagogue, like any good teacher, will aim to create contexts for class discussion in which students will have opportunities to express their ideas and learn to listen attentively and respectfully to the ideas of others” (“Feminist” 121). Instructor C took great care to ensure that his/her students engage in their learning and that they respect their peers’ ideas and learning processes as well.

In addition, like many feminist pedagogues, Instructor C questioned his/her role as facilitator, as s/he must assume the role of authority when assessing students’ work. Clifford agrees that assessment in regard to feminist pedagogy can be problematic because an instructor must ultimately assess individual student knowledge and the process taken to learn the course material (110). This may pose a greater contradiction in a content-based course. Yet assessment is a necessary component of language instruction, as it is required to measure students’ English language proficiency and determine whether a student is proficient to advance to an undergraduate or graduate program. I believe instructors will benefit from learning about a post-structural feminist teaching approach, as this may help them reflect on and better negotiate issues of authority in a feminist classroom.
Interview Four

When asked to describe his/her teaching philosophy, Instructor D responded that s/he is student-centered and that s/he cares a great deal about his/her students. S/he wants to connect with them and for them to be successful in the IELP and in their undergraduate and graduate coursework.

Instructor D as Facilitator

When asked whether s/he considers himself a facilitator, Instructor D laughed and responded, “I guess it’s very trendy to be a facilitator.” Ultimately, s/he sees him/herself as both facilitator and authority. The students see him/her as an expert, because s/he is a native speaker. “I know the [grammar] rules.” However, s/he does not teach in an authoritative manner, because s/he does not want “students to be afraid or feel inferior.”

Assignments and Activities

Instructor D requires students to collaborate, but s/he raised several pedagogical concerns with such activities. “Whose work is it? Does a stronger student carry the load? How do we assess group work?” S/he also expressed concerns regarding peer review. S/he believes the activity can be troublesome, because it is “unproductive if students aren’t engaged.” Therefore, s/he only uses a portion of a fifty-minute class for peer review and always has a checklist for students to follow. The checklist keeps students on task and focused when responding to their peers’ writing.

Instructor D also assigns journals and responds to them weekly in order to build a rapport with his/her students by responding to grammar errors. S/he believes journaling allows students “to express themselves without being judged.” S/he also stated that journals are a means for students to write narratives. In addition to journaling, Instructor D believes the ability to locate
academic sources and avoid plagiarism is of the utmost importance for students who intend to enter an undergraduate or graduate program at UF. S/he believes voice, “surely should play a role in their preparation for these classes. They need to make their work their own – not just report.”

Conclusions

Instructor D did not align his/her teaching with a feminist approach; however, s/he brought an ethic of caring into his/her teaching. S/he genuinely cared for his/her students and wanted them to succeed. Indeed, a teacher’s caring or even nurturing approach is a component of feminist pedagogy (Jarratt, “Feminist” 118). However, s/he seemed hesitant to use assignments common in many feminist composition classes such as peer review and small group work. S/he also favored grammar correction over global feedback when responding to student writing and journals. As previously stated, such practice can cause student frustration and slow the development of their fluency (Leki 140). I hope to address these concerns in the teacher training in order to show the theory behind the application of peer review, small group work, and instructor response to writing. The relationship between theory and practice is crucial when applying such methodologies in one’s teaching.

Interview Five

Instructor E is a student-centered teacher who puts the needs of his/her students first. S/he lectures every class except for the one hour his/her class meets in the computer lab each week. As seen in the class observation, lecturing allows him/her to constantly review and introduce new concepts.
Instructor E as Facilitator

Instructor E also stated that s/he is a facilitator. S/he “helps students apply what they learn” and keeps students on track. With this role, s/he believes it is important for students to be comfortable in class, because “writing puts students on the defensive.” As seen in the classroom observation, to keep students comfortable, Instructor E often reviews the writing process. S/he also allows the students to sit next to their friends in class. Self-assigned seating arrangements keep the students comfortable, as they may sit with peers who speak their native languages. Instructor E was quick to point out that students are not allowed to collaborate on assignments with friends from their native countries: “this work must be multicultural.”

Assignments and Activities

Instructor E assigns small group work once a week and assigns peer review often so students can “constructively criticize” their classmates’ writing. In peer review sessions, s/he requires students to look at the prescriptive elements of a paper and check grammar. While the course objectives do not require him/her to do so, Instructor E assigns autobiographical writing. S/he believes such assignments “get students comfortable with writing.” S/he provides models of his/her own autobiographical writing for students as well. When asked whether narratives help students develop their voices, s/he responded, “students can write in first person.”

In addition to narratives, Instructor E assigns journals every week. S/he corrects students’ grammar mistakes and believes journaling allows students to write in their own styles. In addition, s/he believes researching and reading academic journals are of the utmost importance for students preparing to enter their undergraduate or graduate programs. S/he “somewhat” believes that voice is important for preparing students for their future academic endeavors, because “it helps them express their opinions. It allows them to express themselves.”
Conclusions

When coding the interviews and observations, I noticed some gaps in Instructor E’s comments. For example, s/he favored lecturing but stated she valued student-centered learning. S/he also valued a multi-cultural learning environment but allowed students to sit with friends who speak their native languages. These gaps made it difficult to truly understand Instructor E’s teaching practices. However, it was clear that s/he did not consciously align with a feminist pedagogy. While s/he used feminist assignments such as journals and peer review, the approaches behind such activities were not feminist in nature and instead were more teacher-centered.

I also noted a seeming contradiction when s/he explained that s/he corrects students’ grammatical mistakes in their journals. As previously stated, grammar correction does not help students develop fluency. Rather according to research in composition, doing so only causes frustration and keeps students from writing freely (Leki 140). Therefore, the IELP teacher training, will address some of these contradictions and help instructors lead student-centered classes in which students are free to construct their voices and socially create knowledge.

Discussion

Upon completion of the instructor interviews and classroom observations, I returned to the research questions. Below are detailed answers to each question.

1) Did IELP instructors use features associated with feminist pedagogy in their writing classrooms?

As was clearly indicated in the classroom observations and interviews, IELP instructors brought an ethic of caring to their teaching. In the interviews, each instructor commented about how they care for their students and want them to feel comfortable writing in English. They also viewed themselves as facilitators. Some instructors admitted they have authoritative attributes,

especially when students are off-task or speaking in their native languages. Like many feminist
teachers, they struggled with issues of authority, especially assessing student work. Several
instructors found value in students learning to construct their voices, especially in preparation for
their undergraduate and graduate work. Indeed, students must learn how to voice their opinions
in writing in order to be successful at UF. Finally, all participants assigned journals in their
classes, and like many feminist pedagogues, some IELP instructors used journals as a means for
students to construct their voices.

2). Did IELP writing teachers consciously align themselves with a feminist pedagogy?

None of the participants mentioned the word feminist in their interviews, and they did not
connect their ethic of caring, their roles as facilitators, or their in-class assignments and activities
to feminist pedagogy. Thus, the teacher training will introduce feminist pedagogy and help them
connect their current teaching practices to feminist pedagogy. This will also enable us to discuss
the role of teacher as authority and the construction of students’ voices -ideas that instructors
touched on in their interviews, but did not completely understand.

3). Did IELP writing teachers use types of assignments associated with feminist pedagogy?
   a. dialogue journals
   b. collaborative discussion
   c. narratives
   d. peer review

IELP instructors certainly used types of assignments associated with feminist pedagogy
such as peer review, narrative writing, journal writing, and small group work. However, they
were not cognizant of the feminist application of these assignments. In addition, some
instructors struggled with the composition and ESL applications. For example, peer review
sessions did not involve collaboration and focused on grammar rather than organization,
development, and ideas. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the IELP teacher training was designed
to not only focus on feminist pedagogy but also encompass ESL and composition pedagogy so
that IELP instructors can stay current in these fields. This breadth will enable teachers to
develop pedagogically sound activities and assignments for their writing classes. While I am an
advocate for feminist pedagogy, after completing the study, I realized the approach is not
necessarily more viable than other teaching approaches. There are blocks of pedagogy that build
off of each other and intertwine, and I believe IELP instructors would benefit from learning
about student-centered instruction and composition pedagogy before I introduce feminist
pedagogy and explain how these approaches intertwine.

4). Did IELP writing instructors assume the role of authority or facilitator in their classrooms?

In the interviews, all the IELP instructors claimed to be facilitators. Some instructors
openly stated they have authoritative attributes and struggled with issues of authority regarding
assessment. Their classroom experiences will provide a sounding board for the teacher training,
as many feminist pedagogues struggle with this concept. It will also help instructors construct
student-centered classrooms in which students are free to explore through their own learning
without looking to the instructor for the right answers. Such an environment will also enable to
students to socially construct knowledge.

5). Did IELP writing teachers try to foster a safe learning environment?

Indeed, IELP instructors tried to foster a safe learning environment in their composition
classes. In the interviews, the participants often used the word “comfort.” They wanted students
to be comfortable writing and working with their peers and instructor. Clearly, this is a positive
attribute of IELP teaching. As stated in Chapter One, a safe learning environment is of the
utmost importance for NNS; students must feel comfortable in their classes in order to take risks
in their language learning and construct their voices.
6). *How did IELP writing instructors respond to student writing?*

Each participant had his/her own style for responding to student writing. For example, one instructor responded to student writing by including comments about students’ strengths and weaknesses. S/he believed pointing out their strengths and weaknesses helped students revise and kept them from becoming frustrated. Other instructors took a similar approach. When they responded to the strengths and weaknesses, they were careful to focus on content, organization, and development. However, other instructors corrected grammar mistakes, even in students’ journals. This approach is problematic for several reasons.

The first being that students do not learn how to revise globally when feedback is focused on sentence-level errors; the second reason is that students can become frustrated when many grammar errors are pointed out by an instructor. Leki writes about the frustration that L2 students experience when stressing about the grammatical errors in their writing. “In Hyland’s (1998) case study of two L2 writers in New Zealand, we meet Samorn, who requested of her writing teacher a particular focus on grammatical errors, but (unrecognized by the teacher) became increasingly discouraged when her teacher in fact did as she asked” (104). A strict focus on grammar errors is especially problematic during the prewriting stage of the writing process, as attention to grammatical errors disrupts students from placing their ideas down on paper and producing early rough drafts (Calderonello et al. 399-400).

While I did not intend to focus on grammar correction, from the interviews, it became an important component of the training. Thus, in the training, IELP teachers will apply strategies to help students globally revise their work in the beginning stages of the writing process. Then once students have solid drafts, teachers may begin helping students attend to style and error in their writing.
7). What assignments and/or activities did IELP writing instructors implement into their teaching to prepare students for their graduate and undergraduate courses?

Most instructors focused on academic assignments when they answered this question. They believed students must understand how to avoid plagiarizing and write proper research papers. Avoiding plagiarism is of utmost importance, because many international graduate students have failed courses and have even been suspended for plagiarizing at UF. Students must understand the serious consequences involved with plagiarism, for our goal is to help them learn how to write well-crafted research papers that balance their own words and ideas with those of their sources, using U.S. conventions for documentation.

8). Did IELP writing instructors believe developing an individual voice is necessary to prepare students for their undergraduate or graduate coursework?

Some instructors found value in voice, because it enables students to place themselves into their writing and express themselves fluently. However, other instructors could not answer this question and offered vague answers about writing in the first person or contrastive rhetoric. Based on their responses, I will introduce the concept of voice in the teacher in-services so that instructors become aware of the concept and perhaps even implement voice construction into their teaching. This does not need to be done through a feminist lens. Rather a focus on expressive process writing may be more beneficial, as the instructors already understand the basic components of the process pedagogy.

Where do we go from here?

As previously stated, in coding the data, I noted several themes that helped me design the teacher training. The first theme is that all participants considered themselves facilitators. Some instructors certainly had traits of a facilitator. They engaged their students, asking leading questions when students were in small groups. Yet other instructors required additional training
in this area. Specifically, they would benefit from learning how to structure a student-centered classroom. Because this was a large sampling of my data, I included a session on student-centered teaching in the teacher training.

Another theme noted was that all five participants brought an ethic of caring to their teaching. In their interviews, the participants mentioned they want students to feel comfortable in order to improve their writing skills and learn the English language. While the instructors brought an ethic of caring to their teaching, they did not connect the approach to feminist pedagogy. Thus, in the training, instructors will begin to connect this component of feminist pedagogy to their teaching. They will, in other words, begin to understand the theory behind their teaching practices.

From the interviews, it also became evident that the instructors assigned peer review and journals for very different purposes. Some instructors used peer review in a very prescriptive method. They controlled the activity, assigning partners and providing students’ with a checklist to follow. This differs from other classrooms in which students were allowed greater flexibility in how they approach the activity and the feedback they offer their partners.

Journals were also used for different purposes. Some instructors assigned journals for students to write freely and express themselves without fear of grammar, spelling, or mechanics. This allowed students to develop their voices and put themselves into their writing. In contrast, other teachers checked journals for grammar and spelling. They did so, because they believed students expect their teachers to correct grammar. As previously stated, responding to student errors will also be introduced in the training. Instructors will identify the differences between local and global errors and practice responding to student writing through a global lens.
From the observations and interviews, I concluded that the IELP instructors require three types of professional development. While my original intent was to focus on feminist pedagogy, based on the study, it is important to also include student-centered teaching and composition pedagogy in the training. Because several pedagogies intertwine with feminist pedagogy, it is appropriate to focus on these other approaches. Indeed, all these approaches emphasize “good teaching” practices. The training will culminate in a final session about feminist pedagogy in which student-centered instruction and composition pedagogy will be tied to the pedagogy. To review, below are the areas incorporated into the teacher training.

1). Student-centered learning will be introduced as well as collaboration, small group work, and doing away with banking education. In these sessions, I will introduce taking students’ gender and race into consideration when putting students into small groups. I will also introduce how small group work allows students to voice their opinions freely and how it effects the positioning of the teacher or even the classroom furniture. Individualized instruction will be focused on as opposed to making generalizations of student writing based on contrastive rhetoric.

2). Several areas of current writing pedagogy will be introduced: contrastive rhetoric, local vs. global concerns, responding to student writing, expressive process writing, and peer review.

3). Basic components of feminist pedagogy will also be introduced: definitions, similarities to process writing, issues of authority, space, and voice.

While feminist pedagogy was the original focus on this study, through analyzing the data, I learned that, while feminist pedagogy is indeed a viable approach, other pedagogies in IELP instruction are just as important. It will be beneficial for IELP instructors to learn about student-centered practices and composition pedagogy in addition to feminist pedagogy. Indeed, a well-rounded teacher training will benefit the faculty and help improve overall IELP writing instruction.

In the next chapter, I introduce the teacher training - a series of six, one-hour workshops to be offered during the 2009-2010 academic year. Each in-service is filled with activities such as small group work, journaling, sketching, and discussion that focus on student-centered
learning, composition pedagogy, and feminist teaching approaches. After each in-service, learning outcomes are listed and space is provided for instructors to evaluate the sessions and offer suggestions for future IELP in-services.
Chapter 4: Putting it all Together

Introduction

This chapter explains how the data collected in the research study helped me select topics for the IELP teacher training. It then outlines each in-service, explaining the assignments, activities, and learning outcomes. Also provided is space for the IELP instructors to critique the workshops and offer suggestions for improvement.

After observing the IELP writing classes, interviewing the instructors, and coding the data, I came to three conclusions. 1) IELP teachers would benefit from developing a greater understanding and application of student-centered teaching practices. 2) IELP teachers would benefit from developing a greater understanding and application of L1 composition pedagogy. 3) Since some instructors already applied traits of feminist pedagogy in their teaching, they would benefit from an introduction to feminist pedagogy to help them connect their teaching practices to theory. This introduction would allow them to reflect on the inner-workings of these applications and begin to consciously apply the approach in their teaching.

Designing an IELP Teacher Training

IELP instructors understood the theory behind student-centered teaching. In their interviews, the participants clearly articulated the importance for a teacher to assume the role of facilitator and target students’ individual learning styles. However, student-centered pedagogy was not observed in their actual teaching practices. Thus, some instructors would benefit from a training in which they learn how to apply this theory into their teaching. For example, one instructor designed a peer review session in which students worked independently and asked the teacher questions regarding their partners’ papers rather than dialoguing with their peers. The women were also unintentionally segregated from the class and did not actively participate. Another instructor lectured for the duration of the class and unintentionally disengaged his/her
students, alienating those who learn best though other learning styles. Taking these findings into consideration, I designed a portion of the teacher training to focus on student-centered teaching practices in which IELP instructors will learn to help students improve their writing by targeting their individual strengths and weaknesses. Such training will also help instructors strengthen their roles as facilitators, as students should no longer look exclusively to their teachers for the right answers and instead begin to explore and engage in learning with their instructor and peers.

In addition to student-centered learning, IELP instructors would benefit from training in L1 composition pedagogy. From the interviews and observations, I learned several participants valued an applied linguistics approach in which grammar instruction and correction was a focus. For example, some instructors corrected students’ grammar but did not globally respond to their writing. Thus, higher order concerns such as thesis development and organization were ignored. Also, one instructor lectured for several minutes in his/her class about run-on sentences and sentence fragments. The lecture was not linked to the writing process nor did it focus specifically on students’ individual writing skills or common errors they make in their writing. Thus, developing an understanding of L1 composition is also important, especially how to globally respond to papers in which an instructor’s comments should focus on content, development, and organization. While grammar correction and self-editing are important components of L2 composition instruction, it should not be a focus in the early stages of the writing process when students invent and revise.

Activities such as peer review can also help students learn how to globally revise and collaborate. Because one instructor’s session lacked true collaboration and another struggled to understand the value of peer review, the teacher training will also focus on developing pedagogically sound peer review sessions. In the session, instructors will share peer review
activities they currently use or have used in their classes and explain how peer review can be implemented into the writing process so that students are thoroughly engaged and learn to collaborate with their peers in order to revise their writing.

Although my original intention was to focus solely on feminist pedagogy, upon completion of the research study, I learned that it is necessary to engage instructors in more foundational teaching methods before introducing feminist pedagogy. Thus, only one portion of the training session will focus on feminist teaching practices. In this session, I will address issues instructors questioned as part of their teaching practices such as assessment and their roles as authorities. Some instructors stated they have authoritative attributes; they may assume an authoritative role at times to keep students on track and direct them to use the language. Thus, the in-service will target how teachers can assume an authoritative position when students begin to lose focus. Another instructor openly questioned his/her role as a facilitator when assessing student work. As a group, we will discuss a feminist pedagogue’s role as authority when assessing work and how this position can be renegotiated.

The concept of voice will also be introduced in the teacher training. Because many participants did not understand the concept, it will be best to introduce voice through a composition and feminist lens. Indeed, the overlap between the areas of study will be helpful in best understanding the true concept of voice. Such an introduction will help instructors reflect on the inner-workings of their teaching in relation to feminist and writing pedagogy.

Because full-time IELP instructors teach approximately eighteen hours per week, hold office hours, advise nearly fifty students, and have other University of Findlay obligations, I do not want to exhaust them with countless seminars. Tuesdays at 2:00-3:00 pm are currently reserved for IELP faculty meetings, and it will be beneficial to hold the in-services during this
time throughout the fall and spring semesters of the 2009-2010 academic year (three sessions per semester). The fall semester will begin with series one, *Student-Centered Teaching* and introduce series two, *Composition Pedagogy*. The second series will then carry over into the spring semester and lead to the third series, *Feminist Pedagogy*.

When designing the teacher training, I wanted to ensure the in-services were assessable. Therefore, I created learning outcomes for each in-service. Learning outcomes specify what a person will know or demonstrate after a learning activity. According to Phillips:

Learning outcomes should flow out of a needs assessment. The needs assessment should determine the gap between an existing condition and a desired condition. Learning outcomes are statements which describe the *desired condition*—that is, the knowledge, skills, or attitudes needed to fulfill the need. They represent the *solution* to the identified need or issue. (21)

Ultimately, the outcomes, which focus on the knowledge and experiences of IELP instructors, allowed me to best target the teachers’ needs and plan the in-services accordingly.

Because learning outcomes are a type of assessment, they must be measurable. Specifically, it is important to create outcomes that are observable and measurable using action verbs such as *compile, create, analyze, prepare, use, discuss,* and *explain*. According to Phillips: “The element of action describes the kinds of behavior the learner is expected to demonstrate as a result of the learning experience. The action must be observable and measurable in some way for the instructor to verify each individual has achieved the learning outcome” (25). Designing measurable learning outcomes ensured the IELP in-services were pedagogically sound and assessable. The learning outcomes will allow me to assess their abilities and ensure that they master the concepts that will be presented, explored, and discussed in the in-services.
It seems my research has come full-circle, as I have made connections that I struggled with at the beginning of this project. In the preliminary stages of my research, I struggled to truly understand how feminist pedagogy differs from “good teaching” practices. While some researchers believe feminist pedagogy is simply a phrase that means good teaching, I now believe good teaching, especially the teaching of ESL writing, encompasses traits from several methodologies. Feminist pedagogy is one such method. Indeed, feminist teaching is a component of student-centered teaching and the writing process. Therefore, for me to say that IELP instructors did not use feminist pedagogy or they were not at a point in their teaching careers to apply feminist pedagogy, is not accurate, as they already used bits and pieces of the teaching approach. However, they seemed to unconsciously use the approach. My role in the in-services is to make instructors conscious of feminist pedagogy and understand how it is connected to student-centered teaching and the writing process. I want them to understand how these “good teaching” practices intertwine and for them to apply the approaches in their teaching. What follows is a detailed explanation of each in-service supported by research in the appropriate field and the learning outcomes.

**Series One: Student-Centered Teaching**

In the interviews, the instructors all stated they are facilitators in the writing classroom. However, I noted a gap in the interviews and classroom observations. In the observations, lecture-based instruction, for example, was favored by one instructor. S/he did not facilitate student learning and instead led a teacher-centered class. Also, another instructor’s peer review session was not student-centered, as students remained silent, did not collaborate with their peers, and looked to their instructor for the right answers. Thus, while some instructors stated they strive to be facilitators, there was a gap between theory and application. Through a feminist
lens, individual or student-centered learning is necessary for students to learn about themselves through writing and discovering (Tisdell 143). Kroll believes ESL composition instructors must create student-centered classrooms where students actively participate in their learning (13). Through both a feminist and ESL lens, the importance of student-centered instruction is clear; such methodology allows students to participate in their education and grow as learners.

Students’ growth is evident, because higher-order skills such as critical thinking and self-discovery are valued over the lower-order skills of mastering information. Nuckles believes instruction must be individualized in order for learners to be successful. He writes:

There are many instances where the ability to model skills effectively is crucial to learner success. Proficiency in such situations means a great deal more than being able to cover material in a lecture. This is especially so in programs where learners are expected to practice new skills by participating in role-playing or other simulated activities. (6)

Nuckles’s ideas are applicable in any ESL course, especially writing classes. As previously noted, ESL writing instructors often model new skills such as organization patterns, documentation, and error analysis. Once a concept is introduced and modeled, students must practice the new skill(s). This teaching approach leaves very little time for lecture. Writing instructors must help students practice and apply these skills often, so they can master them and reach native-like proficiency. For students to learn the language, instructors must use approaches that make sense to learners. Dunn believes multiple literacies help student writers improve, because teachers target their individual learning styles. She believes activities that include talking, sketching, and moving can aid in accomplishing this objective (1).
Student-centered or individualized instruction is also becoming more prominent in ESL scholarship. Nelson cautions that teachers must take students’ native cultures into consideration when planning activities such as small group work and peer conferences because such activities are not common in countries such as Japan and China. She goes on to claim that it is, therefore, easier to target students’ learning styles when teaching homogenous groups of students (16-17). While it may be more difficult to target students’ individual needs in a multicultural classroom, it is important to be student-centered as much as possible. Ferris and Hedgcock created a Writing Styles Questionnaire to be proctored the first week of class to help writing teachers learn more about their students’ learning styles (appendix four). Students complete the questionnaire about their classroom habits and their individual writing processes. There is also a section for self-assessment in which students reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as writers. The authors recommend that instructors use the questionnaire to better understand their students and create in-class activities, homework assignments, tests, and other assessment pieces that specifically target their students’ learning preferences (84).

Gray also requires her ESL students to complete a survey to help her learn about their personalities and learning preferences - the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS). Common in many fields of study, the KTS divides personalities into eight sections: extrovert, introvert, sensation, intuition, thinking, feeling, judging, and perception. The survey allows Gray to individualize instruction and makes students aware of their own learning styles. For example, a student from Germany writes: “I learn best by movement, action, and talk. Group discussions help me understand some things better and give sureness of ideas” (qtd. in Gray 132). Students’ awareness of their learning styles helps the instructor create a student-centered class in which activities and assignments are developed based on the students’ individual learning styles.
Pre-session Activity

Before attending the first in-service, IELP instructors will read Charles Nuckles’s article “Student-Centered Teaching: Making it Work.” In this short article, Nuckles provides a concise definition of student-centered teaching and explains the importance of individualized instruction. As already noted in this chapter, Nuckles also introduces the importance of modeling new skills and providing students time to practice the skills instead of lecturing (6). After the instructors read Nuckles’s article, they will write in their journals about how they already are and could be more student-centered in their writing courses. All pre-session assignments and activities will include journal writing. These assignments will model how journaling can successfully be implemented into a writing class without a focus on grammar and sentence structure. Instead their ideas and opinions will be valued in the journal assignments.

In-service One: Breaking the Ice

Since I am the Assistant Director of the IELP, I do not want instructors to be intimidated by the in-services. Through a feminist lens, we know that an instructor as an authority is a dangerous dichotomy, as learners may feel intimidated and look to the instructor for the right answers. Thus, it is important for me to create a space for my colleagues where they feel comfortable collaborating and discussing their ideas. I want the first session to be informal and stress-free. Instructors will be encouraged to voice their ideas and opinions freely; this atmosphere will also model the importance of feminist and student-centered teaching practices.

For the first activity, IELP instructors will share their journal entries in small groups. Each group will designate a member to record the main points of the discussion on a large poster board. Instructors will also be encouraged to sketch their ideas on the poster board. Dunn believes sketching allows visual students to use their talents in writing classes, and it forces their
peers to understand concepts through different lenses (66). This activity will, therefore, model the importance of targeting individual learning styles, especially through sketching, and demonstrate how such activities can be implemented into ESL writing courses. After each group records its ideas on the poster board, one instructor will share the main points of his/her group’s discussion with the entire group. This activity will also serve as an ice breaker for the faculty and allow them to work in a safe, collaborative environment.

Once the discussion is finished, instructors will complete the Writing Styles Questionnaire (appendix four) in which they will reflect on their own learning styles and strengths and weaknesses as writers. This activity will benefit instructors, because they will utilize authentic classroom material that can easily be adapted into their own writing courses. After completing the questionnaire, we will discuss how to use this survey in IELP writing classes to help individualize teaching practices.

*Learning Outcomes: Session One*

By the end of this session, IELP instructors will be able to:

1). Define student-centered learning and individualized instruction
2). Explain how they will and/or currently create a student-centered classroom
3). Use the Writing Styles Questionnaire to target individual student writers

*Homework*

To prepare for the second in-service, instructors will read Kenneth Bruffee’s “Collaborative Learning and the ‘Conversation of Mankind.’” In this article, Bruffee calls for collaboration in the writing classroom to help students reflect on and synthesize what they learn, ultimately applying it to the world (96). This application produces what Bruffee refers to as “abnormal discourse” – wisdom that is ungoverned by conventional knowledge.
After reading Bruffee’s text, IELP instructors will answer the following questions in their journals. 1) Does small group work play a role in IELP writing instruction? Why or why not? 2) After reading Bruffee’s article, how can collaborative activities be further implemented into IELP composition classes? 3) Are there any specific activities that can be implemented? These questions will help instructors reflect on Bruffee’s article and also prepare for the second in-service about collaborative learning in IELP writing classrooms.

**In-service Two: Collaboration in the IELP Writing Classrooms**

The second in-service will focus on collaboration in IELP writing classes. Collaborative learning can facilitate a student-centered classroom, because it provides instructors greater opportunity to individualize students’ learning. For students who learn best working with others or through dialogue, it is a means to target their individual learning styles. Collaboration is also an important component of both feminist and ESL pedagogy. Indeed, collaborative dialogue in which students discuss issues of gender, race, and other issues in their lives is pivotal in feminist pedagogy (Fisher 39). Also, Dornyei and Murphy believe group dynamics or small group work is important for L2 learners, because it creates a pleasant learning environment (3). Because a sampling of the participants in the study relied on lecture, I will introduce the concept of collaborative learning and help instructors implement group work into their courses.

The session will begin with a group activity in which IELP instructors share their journal entries, focusing on collaboration in IELP composition classes. After discussing, one member from each group will summarize the main points of the group’s discussion. This activity will again model how small group work can be implemented into IELP writing courses. Once the teachers are warmed up, I will introduce another sketching activity. Each group will sketch its ideal collaborative learning environment. They will consider the following when sketching their
learning spaces. 1) Where should the teacher be located? 2) Where should the students be located? 3) How should the furniture be arranged? 4) Should race and gender be taken into consideration when students work in groups? After the groups complete their sketches, we will come together and discuss the drawings. This sketching activity will help instructors consider some trends I noted in the classroom observations, especially use of classroom furniture and the unintentional segregation of women. We will also discuss the physical challenges posed in group work, for example the furniture arrangement of the IELP computer lab, and how we can make better use of these classroom spaces.

After discussing the sketches, I will introduce some findings from my research about collaborative learning in IELP writing classes. I feel it is appropriate to share my findings at the end of the training, as I do not want to sway the instructors’ work during the in-services.

1). In the study, some teachers relied too heavily on lecture to instruct students. While lecture is important, especially when introducing and modeling new concepts, overreliance of lecture leads to using only one mode of teaching instead of using varied modes that appeal to a variety of learning styles.

2). Some teachers also made use of classroom space by moving furniture and allowing students to move within the class. This not only creates a safe learning environment for students but also targets students’ individual learning styles, especially those who learn best through collaboration and movement.

3). Some students, especially shy females, were unintentionally segregated during in-class activities. When engaging in small-group work, it is important for teachers to be facilitators and ensure that all the students are engaged and included in the learning process.

Learning Outcomes: Session Two

By the end of this session, IELP instructors will be able to:

1). Use small group work in their classes to engage students throughout the writing process

2). Design safe, collaborative learning spaces
Evaluation

At the end of each series, instructors will be given the opportunity to provide me feedback. An important component of feminist pedagogy is to renegotiate my role as facilitator through open dialogue. The feedback from the surveys will enable me to do so and help me design future IELP in-services. The first questionnaire (appendix five) asks instructors to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the student-centered workshops and provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. The questionnaire also asks instructors whether they will apply the methods introduced in the sessions in their own teaching. Finally, I included a question about whether the instructors feel the workshops were conducted in a safe learning environment. An important component of feminist pedagogy, I want to ensure my colleagues feel safe and at ease during the in-services.

Series Two: Composition Pedagogy

In the interviews, several instructors stated they focus on grammar when teaching writing. For the past decade, ESL instructors have debated the effect of error correction and grammar instruction in the composition classroom. Scholars such as Truscott believe error correction should be abolished (111), while others such as Ferris feel it merits further investigation before such brash claims are made (“The Grammar” 57). Muncie believes grammar instruction is appropriate but not in the early stages of the writing process when students are inventing and putting their ideas on paper. He also cautions that grammar correction should not overwhelm students (181). With such a strong focus on grammar, IELP instructors overlooked global revisions regarding organization, development, and content. A large sampling of the participants valued error correction throughout the writing process, because they believed students want their grammatical errors corrected. Thus, they corrected grammar to please their
students. For the teacher training, global revision will be introduced, so that instructors can begin to respond to student writing through a global lens, instead of correcting students’ grammar mistakes throughout the writing process.

Another trend I noted was that instructors valued a mechanical approach to the writing process and thus will benefit from an in-service about developing pedagogically sound peer review sessions. For example, one instructor did not find value in the activity, while another instructor did not promote collaboration when students peer reviewed. Also, many did not consider students finding their voices through the writing process. As previously noted, in ESL pedagogy, voice is a very controversial topic. Ramanathan and Atkinson claim the Elbow-approach to teaching writing in which voice is a means of putting one’s self in a text is “unintelligible” for NNS (45). However, as noted in Chapter One, it is important for ESL students to place themselves into their writing, if they are to find academic success in the U.S. This can be accomplished through several activities such as journaling and peer review. Therefore, the second series of in-services will focus on composition pedagogy, especially how to respond to student errors, different theories of the writing process, and peer review.

Pre-session Activity

Before attending the first composition in-service, IELP instructors will read “Responding to Student Writing” by Nancy Sommers and write a short journal entry about how they respond to student writing. Sommer’s article is process-based, as she believes it is important for an instructor to respond to student writing throughout the entire writing process rather than the end (123). To explain why it is counterproductive to respond to grammatical errors in the early stages of the writing process, she provides samples of student writing that she responds to.
The [grammar] comments encourage students to believe that their first drafts are finished drafts, not invention drafts, and that all they need to do is patch and polish their writing. That is, teachers’ comments do not provide students with an inherent reason for revising the structure and meaning of their texts… (125)

Through a process lens, it can be detrimental to respond to student writing with a focus on grammar. As previously stated, the practice can disrupt fluency and cause student frustration. The practice also leads students to believe their papers are complete and require only grammar editing. After reading Sommer’s article, IELP instructors will write in their journals and explain their practices for responding to student writing.

In-service One: Global vs. Local Errors

The first composition in-service will begin with instructors sharing their journal entries about how they respond to student writing in small groups. Once this activity is complete, I will show selections from the video Writing Across Borders, a short film created by Oregon State University designed to train professors and peer tutors who work with NNS. Deborah Healy and Tony Silva, both authorities in the field of ESL composition, discuss the importance of responding to global rather than grammatical errors in the video. In addition, Oregon State University international students explain how frustrating it is to receive papers back from professors with numerous grammatical errors marked rather than receiving feedback regarding their ideas, organization, and development. As noted several times in this study, an objective of a feminist classroom is to apply teaching practices that enable teachers to listen to students. The students in the video believe their teachers do not listen to them and do not pay close attention to the content of their papers when they focus on grammatical mistakes. Hopefully, IELP
instructors will listen to these students’ voices and begin to value their students’ writing styles and the content of their papers over grammar errors.

After watching the video and discussing how it relates to Sommer’s article, instructors will practice responding to a sample ESL student’s paper (appendix six). This activity will require instructors to apply the ideas discussed in Sommer’s article and the *Writing Across Borders* video. After responding to the paper, the instructors will share their comments with the group and explain how they responded to the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s essay.

*Learning Outcomes: Session One*

At the end of this session, IELP instructors will be able to:

1). Distinguish between global and local errors in student writing

2). Respond to a student’s essay, focusing on global concerns

*Homework*

Instructors will read Lester Faigley’s “Competing Theories of Process: A Critique and a Proposal.” In this article, Faigley explores the three theories of teaching process writing: expressive, cognitive, and social. An expressive teaching theory is a Neo-Romantic view of writing that stresses the importance of “integrity, spontaneity, and originality” (151). Another theory engrained in process pedagogy is the cognitive theory. In 1964, when Emig rejected teaching a linear writing process, the cognitive theory was born (Faigley 154). Through this approach, an instructor helps students individualize their writing processes and better understand how taking ideas from one’s long-term memory, planning, reviewing, monitoring, etc. can occur during the entire process. The last philosophy that Faigley writes about is the social theory. It involves four types of research: post-structuralism, sociology, ethnography, and Marxism. Using the social theory, teachers help students move away from the expressive and cognitive theories in
order to best “construct reality through language” (158). After reading the article, instructors will reflect in their journals about which writing process(es) they subscribe to and also consider how they could use other modes in their writing classes. They will also reflect on how these approaches can facilitate individual instruction.

IELP Instructors will also read “The Effects of Peer Response” from Jun Liu and Jette Hansen’s book *Peer Response in Second Language Classrooms*. This book chapter provides instructors with information regarding students’ perceptions about peer review as well as the long and short term effects of the activity. It concludes with a list of suggestions for teachers, including the instructor’s role during peer review. This text will be an excellent introduction to peer review, and for some instructors, serve as a review. Instructors will also be required to bring a peer review assignment they currently or have used in a composition class.

*In-service Two: Process Pedagogy*

At the beginning of the in-service, instructors will share their journals and discuss which lens they teach process writing through: cognitive, expressive, or social. This discussion will serve as an important stepping-stone for discussing voice as a component of feminist pedagogy. After the discussion, I will ask instructors if and how peer review plays a role in the writing process. The in-service will then continue with a round-robin, with each instructor sharing his/her peer review activity. Once everyone has shared his/her peer review activity, instructors will work in small groups and discuss the following questions:

1). How can we ensure that peer review sessions are pedagogically sound and incorporate collaboration that is effective for multiple styles of learning?

2). How can we ensure that students are not intimidated by peer review and feel comfortable with the process?

Instructors will be given ample time to discuss these questions and then report back to the entire
group. Hopefully, instructors will connect these questions back to the first two in-services when we will discuss creating safe learning environments for students when working in small groups.

**Learning Outcomes**

After this session, IELP instructors will be able to:

1). Define and compare the three different approaches (cognitive, expressive, and social) of process writing

2). Design a pedagogically sound peer review session

**Evaluations**

Instructors will again be given the opportunity to reflect and offer feedback on the in-services (appendix seven). Similar to the first questionnaire about student-centered teaching practices, instructors will explain the strengths and weakness of the writing in-services. They will also explain whether they will apply the methods introduced into their teaching. Finally, they will be provided space to offer suggestions for improvement.

**Series Three: Feminist Pedagogy**

The third series will introduce feminist pedagogy in IELP writing courses. Since none of the participants identified feminist pedagogy as a component of their teaching practices, I will build on some of the feminist notions participants mentioned or hinted at in the interviews and classroom observations. Some concepts that will be discussed include an ethic of caring, teacher as authority, and voice. All instructors mentioned they bring an ethic of caring to their teaching. However, they did not connect it to feminist pedagogy. In the workshops, instructors will begin to make this connection and understand the theory behind bringing an ethic of caring to their teaching.

In addition, some instructors mentioned they struggle with their roles as facilitators and questioned whether this role is possible when they are the ultimate authorities in a classroom.
Also, some instructors believed their authoritative attributes are necessary for keeping students on task and directing them to use the language. Finally, voice was a gray area for instructors. Some valued voice, while others did not consider the concept as a component of L2 composition instruction. Voice will be introduced through a process and feminist lens, so instructors can best apply the concept in their teaching. Once instructors understand the principles behind feminist pedagogy, we will discuss possible applications in IELP writing classes.

Pre-session Activity

IELP instructors will read a handout (appendix eight) that introduces feminist pedagogy. This short handout defines the teaching approach and provides examples about how it can be implemented in an ESL writing course. It also introduces feminist activities and assignments. Instead of using a published article for the in-services, I decided to create my own handout, because I did not find a text that focuses solely on feminist pedagogy in ESL writing instruction. After reading the handout, instructors will write in their journals and answer the following questions: 1) What components of feminist pedagogy do they already implement into their teaching? Why? How? 2) If they do not use components of feminist pedagogy, how could they apply this methodology into their teaching?

In-service One: What exactly is feminist pedagogy?

The first in-service will begin with IELP instructors sharing their journals in groups. Afterward, I will share some findings from my research about feminist pedagogy in IELP composition classes. These include: 1) an ethic of caring and a safe learning environment, 2) concerns with authority, and 3) the value of voice. All participants stated they want their students to feel comfortable in class and succeed in their language learning. Their ethic of caring
and desire to create a safe learning environment for students was evident. However, instructors did not connect this methodology to feminist pedagogy.

Another notion of feminist pedagogy hinted at in the instructor interviews was authority. Some instructors understood that it is unwise for a teacher to consider him/herself the sole authority in the classroom; however, because the teacher assesses students’ work, s/he is the ultimate authority in the classroom. This is a notion that many feminist pedagogues struggle with. While many feminist educators believe they are facilitators who help students construct their voices, it is difficult to always assume this role. According to Tisdell, within a post-structural feminist lens, it is appropriate for an instructor to assume the role of an authority in order to confront power relations within the class (143). After sharing this theory, I will ask IELP faculty to offer light on the topic and explain when they assume the role of authority, and when they relinquish at least some aspects of that role.

The last component of feminist pedagogy that will be addressed is the issue of voice. The handout (appendix eight) defines voice and notes the controversy in ESL composition pedagogy, but I would like instructors to discuss the role of voice in regard to specific IELP course objectives. As previously discussed, some scholars believe it is difficult for a student’s voice to transfer over from his/her native language to a second language. Yet voice is an important convention of style. Stapleton believes for students to become proficient in the language, voice needs to be a component of instruction (qtd. in Ferris and Hedgcock 7). Feminist teachers help students construct their voices and critique society. Doing so provides students a space to speak about their lives (hooks, Teaching 181). They, therefore, work collaboratively to discover themselves and construct their voices. It is the instructor’s role is to facilitate such discussions, not dominate them through a gendered lens. In the first in-service, I
want instructors to openly dialogue and ask questions. It is my hope that by now they feel comfortable engaging in discussions and are willing to learn about the role voice plays in the IELP writing curriculum.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, IELP instructors will be able to:

1). Define feminist pedagogy

2). Begin to apply feminist pedagogy in their writing courses

**Homework**

Instructors will review the handout (appendix eight) from the first in-service about feminist pedagogy. After reviewing the handout, instructors will write in their journals, answering the following questions: 1) What components of feminist pedagogy are already implemented into their teaching? 2) What new components would they like to implement? Why? How? 3) What components do they disagree with? Why?

**In-service Two: Feminist Pedagogy and Voice**

Instructors will begin this session in small groups and share their journals. Once everyone has the opportunity to discuss, we will come together and revisit the concept of voice. At this point, instructors should understand the composition, ESL, and feminist pedagogy behind this concept. Teachers will discuss the following in their groups: 1) Whether or not voice should be valued in preparing students for undergraduate and graduate courses? 2) Could expressive writing help students construct their voices? Why or why not? After discussing, instructors will design an activity based on the principles of feminist pedagogy to help their students construct their voices. Each group will present their activity to the entire group.
board, markers, magazines, and other craft materials will be available for their use when designing the activity.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, IELP instructors will be able to:

1). Discuss the value and/or lack of value for students constructing their voices

2). Create an in-class activity to help IELP students construct their voices

**Evaluation**

At the conclusion of the workshops, instructors will be given time to evaluate the sessions about feminist pedagogy and offer feedback (appendix nine). Faculty will reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the workshops and explain whether they will use the concepts introduced in the sessions. They will also be asked to provide any additional comments that may assist me in planning future IELP in-services.

**Conclusion**

IELP teachers clearly understood a variety of teaching methods and theories. The teacher training will help them best apply these theories so they can help their students learn how to write. Through journaling, discussing, sketching, and reading, the IELP faculty will become familiar with different teaching applications and understand that good teaching is circular; indeed, feminist pedagogy, composition pedagogy, and language teaching all intertwine. It is important in any field to stay current, but especially in ESL, since it is a new and evolving field. Hopefully, after attending the workshops, IELP faculty will bring some new ideas, activities, and theories into their classrooms.

In the final chapter, I reflect on the IELP pilot research study and discuss the limitations of my work. These limitations include the exclusion of IELP students from the study and my
administrative position at UF. I also discuss revision strategies as a means to improve this text and discuss the possibilities of future research in regard to the teacher training that was designed for this project. Future research includes conducting the IELP teacher training and following up with the instructors after they participate in the in-services to determine whether they implement any of the concepts or methodologies introduced in the teacher training.
Chapter Five: Where have we been; where are we going?

Introduction

For this chapter, I reflect on the research study that explored whether feminist pedagogy is applicable in IELP composition classrooms. Based on the findings, I learned that while feminist pedagogy is indeed a valuable teaching approach, IELP instructors would also benefit from additional training in other types of pedagogy. Thus, a teacher training was designed to focus on student-centered teaching, composition pedagogy, and feminist teaching practices. In this chapter, I discuss future implications for research that include the implementation of the teacher training, bringing IELP students into the research, and a call for Master’s TESOL programs to include composition pedagogy and training in their programs. To conclude the chapter, I acknowledge the limitations of the study.

Reflection

As with most pilot studies, I began the study open and ready to learn more about IELP teaching practices. As noted in Chapters Two and Three, I made assumptions about the participants and potential findings. Some of these assumptions were correct. For example, I predicted IELP instructors would use traits of feminist pedagogy in their teaching. From the data collection, I discovered some instructors assumed the role of facilitator and guided students through language learning and the writing process. Also, one instructor struggled with issues of authority in regard to assessing student writing. S/he questioned his/her role as facilitator when s/he is the ultimate authority who assigns grades. Indeed, negotiating one’s role as facilitator and authority is common for many feminist pedagogues and will be addressed in the IELP teacher training. Most instructors also brought an ethic of caring to their teaching; they stated in their interviews that they wanted their students to feel comfortable learning the English language.
Indeed, these are all important components of feminist pedagogy that instructors applied in their teaching but did not connect to feminist teaching practices.

I also assumed instructors would value the writing process but not understand the pedagogical implications behind process writing. Through my research I discovered that most instructors took their students through the writing process but were unaware of the different types of process pedagogy: for example, expressive, social, or cognitive process theories; nor were they aware of the feminist implications behind teaching process writing.

While these assumptions were accurate, others were very wrong. For example, I assumed IELP writing instruction would be very formulaic. This assumption was incorrect, as instructors did not over-model organizational patterns, and students were free to experiment with the language and create meaning through the written word. I also assumed that instructors would not value voice when teaching writing. While some instructors were unaware of the concept, others valued students learning how to construct their voices and express themselves. Developing a voice through writing, therefore, prepares students for their future academic work.

The above assumptions were based on my initial intent to focus on feminist pedagogy. When I designed the study, I focused the research questions (appendix three) on feminist pedagogy and its potential application in IELP writing classes. Reflecting on the project, I now believe most of these questions also target good teaching practices in general. As mentioned earlier, the writing process and avoiding an authoritarian teaching style are components of feminist pedagogy, writing pedagogy, and student-centered teaching practices. Specifically, my research questions enabled me to explore feminist pedagogy and other methods of instruction that are often applied in ESL composition classes such as student-centered learning and grammar correction.
To begin the research study, I applied Richard and Lockhart’s research plan that entails planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The authors encourage researchers to first plan their intended action – what they wish to discover (28). My initial intent was to discover whether feminist pedagogy is applicable in IELP composition classes. I designed a research study with eight research questions (appendix three) to be answered through classroom observations and instructor interviews. I then crafted fourteen interview questions (appendix two) and designed an observation form (appendix one) that enabled me to take notes during each class and highlight important themes noted in the observations and interviews. Ultimately, after observing each class and interviewing each instructor, I noted several gaps between practice and theory.

The classroom practices I observed did not match the teaching philosophies some participants discussed in their interviews. Also, some participants were unaware of the theories behind some practices; for example, peer review was either executed poorly or abandoned because instructors did not understand the philosophy or theory behind the activity. Some instructors also depended on grammar correction instead of providing students with suggestions for global revision. Based on these findings, I deviated from my original intent to solely focus on feminist pedagogy in the teacher training. Richards and Lockhart write: “Do not be afraid to make minor deviations from your plan in light of experience and feedback. Make sure that you record any deviations from your plan, and the reason you made them” (28). Such changes in this study were based on the classroom observations and instructor interviews that enabled me to effectively analyze the findings and make the necessary changes to the teacher training. If I would have focused solely on feminist pedagogy, I would have ignored areas that were necessary for building a stronger IELP. Indeed, composition pedagogy and student-centered teaching practices are important components of ESL pedagogy that could not be ignored in the training.
In addition to Richards and Lockhart’s research model, I looked toward research in the field to support my experiences and interactions with the participants. Specifically, Paul Kei Matsuda in “Second Language Writing in the Twentieth Century: A Situated Historical Perspective” writes about the “interdisciplinary division of labor” between the fields of ESL and composition and rhetoric (17). Because the fields are often viewed as separate areas of study, ESL pedagogues do not always embrace composition teaching methods. Language instruction is a growing field of study, and it is necessary for the field to embrace other teaching practices. Composition pedagogy is especially important in higher education, because English language programs in universities across the country are expected to prepare students for their future academic endeavors. At UF, the international students, who enter undergraduate programs, are expected to complete a first-year writing course in which they are required to apply the writing skills they learn in their ESL courses. Indeed, such a “division of labor” seems unnecessary, even foolish, when both fields have the same goal: to prepare students for academic success at the undergraduate level through the development of writing skills.

Thus, to best prepare our students, IELP instructors should be educated in composition pedagogy. Ferris comments that many ESL instructors see themselves as language instructors—not writing teachers (Response 21). Because instructors view themselves in this way, they may overlook writing pedagogy. Dornyei and Murphey also support this claim and believe student-centered learning is an important component of L2 instruction. However, it is often overlooked by applied linguistic theory (3) and is thus misapplied in many ESL classes. It seems with such a focus on applied linguistics, other types of pedagogy such as feminist and composition are often overlooked. This may explain why there was a gap between practice and theory in this study. To lessen the gap, hands-on training is of the utmost importance. The IELP teacher training will
help instructors begin to put these theories into practice. They will begin to create student-centered classes, applying composition and feminist pedagogy into their lessons.

As the Conference of College Composition and Communication (4C’s) states in its Position Statement regarding Teacher Preparation: “To provide effective instruction for learners at any age and at all academic levels, teachers need, first of all, experience in writing, and also some theoretical knowledge to guide classroom practice.” The statement encourages future writing teachers to engage in the act of writing themselves and practice reading and responding to student work by making supportive comments that encourage growth. Thus, an ethic of caring becomes an important component of writing instruction. Instructors must offer support and guidance through their feedback, instead of solely focusing on the students’ weaknesses and grammar errors. The space on the written page in essence should become a safe space for students. The 4C’s statement also suggests that students collaborate in composition classes. Through a collaborative environment, feminist pedagogy can also be applied, as students are encouraged to develop their voices and socially construct knowledge.

The 4C’s statement applies specifically to the IELP teacher training, as the latter targets these suggestions. As previously stated, the IELP teacher training focuses on three types of teaching methods. The first is student-centered teaching. The participants whom I interviewed clearly understood the purpose of student-centered pedagogy. In the interviews, most instructors stated they strive to be facilitators who promote student growth. However, such approach was not always put into practice. For example, one instructor favored lecture as a teaching method, which alienated students who favor other learning styles. In addition, another instructor unintentionally segregated the women in his/her class and designed a peer review session that required students to look to him/her for the right answers. Taking these findings into
consideration, I have designed a training that will help teachers begin to put theory into practice. The in-services will target students’ individual learning styles through sketching, dialoguing, moving, collaborating, and journaling. Instructors will also consider how to create a safe learning environment for students so that no one is unintentionally segregated. The teacher training will, therefore, encourage IELP instructors to reflect on the inner-workings of their teaching practices.

The second part of the teacher training focuses on composition pedagogy. Because some participants did not value peer review nor consider voice as a component of process writing, these workshops will help instructors recognize the value of such assignments and activities. The training will also focus on responding to student errors. When designing the research study, I did not believe grammar correction or instruction would be a necessary component of the teacher training, especially since the IELP offers separate grammar classes. I assumed grammar instruction would be reserved for grammar classes, and feedback regarding content, development, and organization would be stressed in the composition classes. However, in the interviews, I learned that many IELP instructors focus on correcting students’ grammatical mistakes instead of offering students feedback to help them globally revise their work. Therefore, the training will help instructors identify such errors and respond to them appropriately.

Finally, the teacher training will introduce instructors to feminist pedagogy. Some instructors unconsciously applied components of feminist pedagogy in their teaching; for example, they brought an ethic of caring into their classrooms and facilitated learning through open dialogue. I will bring these notions to the faculty’s attention and introduce feminist pedagogy as a possible application to IELP writing classes. Faculty will also develop activities
and assignments that require them to apply feminist pedagogy. These in-services will help instructors not only reflect on their current teaching practices but also grow as educators and continue to apply the approaches and methods introduced in the student-centered and composition pedagogy in-services. Thus, they will begin to understand how good teaching practices intertwine.

**Future Implications**

The next step in my research is to conduct the in-services. As previously noted, I intend to offer the in-services during the 2009-2010 academic year. Before offering the in-services, I must go through Human Subject Review Board (HSRB) again, as I would like to use the instructors’ journals, sketches, and other materials produced in the in-services for data collection. This would allow me to showcase the work produced in the training and assess the instructors’ work to determine whether the learning outcomes designed for each in-service were met. Also, the surveys will enable me to best understand the instructors’ attitudes toward the in-services and whether the workshops were applicable in their teaching. I would also like to observe the five participants’ writing classes after they attend the in-services to determine if they apply the methods introduced in their teaching.

**Limitations**

Like any study, this research has its limitations. The first limitation is that in the university administrative structure, I am a superior to the participants. Because I hold an authoritative position, participants may have been more guarded in their responses. They may have tried to please me during the interviews and planned their class lessons to meet my needs. However, I also believe that my position in the IELP probably forced them to focus more during the interviews and put forth their best effort in the classroom observations. Thus, I still received
valuable data to help me design a teacher training that will benefit the IELP and help us grow as educators.

The other limitation is that I did not include IELP students in the study and did not draw data from students other than causal observations. Therefore, I did not draw conclusions about individuals from different cultures in this study. As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, contrastive rhetoric is problematic because it creates stereotypes about learners from different cultures. Thus, I did not wish to generalize students’ learning habits or styles based on their cultures in this study.

After reflecting on the study, I now realize students should have been included in some capacity. Because I stress student-centered pedagogy in the teacher training, it would have been best to also research what methodologies students’ value to suit their needs and learning styles. Instead of taking the approach of “researcher knows best,” it would have been appropriate to listen to the students’ classroom preferences and design a teacher training based on their responses as well. This would in turn make my research more feminist in nature, as the voices of everyone in the teaching context would be accounted for.

Additionally, this study highlighted certain aspects of feminist pedagogy that broadly focus on developing individual voice and creating a safe learning environment, aspects that are linked to IELP writing pedagogy and expressivist writing. A limitation of the study, then, is the issue of identifying and countering systems of oppression that are also a key component of feminist theory and feminist pedagogy. Indeed, many scholars cited in this research such as Fisher and hooks, focus on oppression in their feminist teaching practices. Similarly, there are approaches in writing pedagogy developed from the influence of critical pedagogy and cultural studies that address the role of writing instruction in regard to oppression and power relations.
For example, Freire, a critical pedagogue, writes about oppression claiming, “The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adapted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom” (47). Marginalized by traditional teaching methods, students begin to accept their roles within the education system and society. Thus, through critical pedagogy, much like feminist pedagogy, students learn to question traditional learning processes and oppression both in and outside the classroom. Indeed, the intersection of these bodies of work within ESL writing pedagogy, while not the focus of this study, hold great potential for the field.

Conclusion

From my research, I learned that IELP composition instructors require greater training and support in composition and rhetoric. While English language teachers must be trained to teach all modes of language – speaking, listening, reading, and composition – writing is especially important because students are expected to write well-crafted research papers and reports when they enter their undergraduate and graduate programs. Zamel writes that many professors in the academy believe many NNS are not prepared for their coursework and lack composition skills (509). Like many first-year writing programs across the county, ESL programs at the university level are gateways for students. Students must leave their ESL programs with the necessary skills to be successful in their undergraduate and graduate coursework. Therefore, it is important for ESL instructors to be trained in composition and rhetoric.

This training can be implemented into Master’s TESOL programs in which students learn about L1 composition pedagogy and how to adapt it to meet the needs of NNS. In addition, feminist pedagogy, another important component of composition and student-centered instruction, should also be introduced to help future ESL instructors in their teaching endeavors. This approach can help instructors create safe learning environments for students and help them
construct their voices. Feminist pedagogy can also help create collaborative discussions that focus on students’ experiences, creating a learning space where students are not judged or oppressed by other students. If used correctly, students will leave their ESL programs confident and improved writers. They will enter their undergraduate and graduate programs with open minds and advanced writing skills. Indeed, this is the ultimate goal of any ESL program on a university campus.
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Appendix One

Observation Form for IELP Composition Classes

Date ____________________
Time _________________
Instructor’s Letter _______
Level of Instruction ______

Summary of Lesson:

Classroom Design:
1). Positioning of teacher in regard to the students

2). Positioning of students in regard to each other

Teaching Methods Applied:
_____ lecture
_____ small group discussion
_____ collaborative learning/group assignments
_____ journaling
_____ narrative writing
_____ peer review
Appendix Two

Interview Questions for IELP Instructors

1). There are many teaching approaches and methodologies applied in ESL classrooms today. What methodology or approach do you align yourself most with? Why?

2). Do you use lecture as a teaching method? Why? How often?

3). Is your role that of an authority or a facilitator in the writing classroom? Please explain.

4). The phrase “safe learning environment” is often used when discussing classroom learning spaces. Do you strive to create a safe learning environment for your students? Why? If so, how?

5). Do believe writing fosters a safe learning environment? Why? If so, how do you respond to student writing?

6). Do you implement small group work into your courses? Why? If so, how? And how often?

7). When students are in small groups, what is your role, that of a facilitator or an authority? Please explain.

8). Do the course objectives require you to teach narratives (either paragraphs or essays)? If not, do you do so yourself? Why? How?

9). Does a student’s individual voice play a role in these assignments? Explain.

10). Do you use peer review in your classes? Why? How?

11). Do you use journals in your writing classes? Why? How?

12). Does a student’s individual voice play a role in journaling? Explain.

13). What course activities or assignments best prepare students for their future undergraduate and graduate coursework? Please explain.

14). Do you believe developing a voice in writing prepares a student to succeed in his/her undergraduate or graduate program? Please explain.
Appendix Three

Research Questions

1). Do ESL instructors use features associated with feminist pedagogy in their writing classrooms?

2). Do ESL writing teachers consciously align their teaching with a feminist pedagogy?

3). Do ESL writing teachers use types of assignments associated with feminist pedagogy?
   a. dialogue journals
   b. collaborative discussion
   c. narratives
   d. peer review

4). Do ESL writing instructors assume the role of authority or facilitator in their classrooms?

5). Do ESL writing teachers try to foster a safe learning environment?

6). How do ESL writing instructors respond to student writing?

7). What assignments and/or activities do ESL writing instructors implement into their teaching to prepare students for their graduate and undergraduate courses?

8). Do ESL writing instructors believe finding an individual voice is necessary to prepare students for their undergraduate or graduate coursework?
ES 325 - Rhetoric and Composing

**A. Student background information**

Name:  
Native country:  
Native language(s):  

**B. Classroom work styles**

**DIRECTIONS:** This portion of the survey will help your instructor understand the ways in which you prefer to complete class assignments. Think about your most recent experiences in college or university classes. For each statement below, place a check mark (✓) in the cell that best describes your habits and preferences. Please be honest! Candid responses will give your instructor valuable information.

1 = Strongly agree  
2 = Agree  
3 = Somewhat agree  
4 = Somewhat disagree  
5 = Disagree  
6 = Strongly disagree

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<td>1. In my native country, I had many opportunities to work with fellow classmates on projects and assignments.</td>
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<td>2. Outside my native country, I have had opportunities to work with fellow classmates on projects and assignments.</td>
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<td>3. In general, I enjoy working with other students in planning and completing academic assignments.</td>
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<td>4. When I work with a partner or a small group, I usually produce better work than I do when working alone.</td>
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<td>5. When I work with a partner or a small group, I usually concentrate better and learn more.</td>
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<td>6. I am comfortable working with partners who are also native speakers of English.</td>
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<td>7. I prefer working with a partner or with a group when the teacher assigns specific roles to group members.</td>
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<td>8. I hope we will do a lot of pair and group work in this course.</td>
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**C. Strengths, styles, and preferences**

**DIRECTIONS:** This portion of the survey is designed to help you and your instructor understand the ways in which you prefer to plan and complete writing assignments in English. Think about your most recent experiences in classes where you wrote academic papers. For each statement below, place a check mark (✓) in the cell that best describes your habits and preferences. Again, be honest! Candid responses will give your instructor valuable insight.

1 = Strongly agree  
2 = Agree  
3 = Somewhat agree  
4 = Somewhat disagree  
5 = Disagree  
6 = Strongly disagree

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<tr>
<td>1. I think I am a good academic writer in my native language.</td>
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<td>2. I think I am a good writer of academic English.</td>
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<td>3. I know how to use source material (e.g., textbooks, scholarly books, journal articles, news accounts, Web-based resources) effectively in my writing assignments.</td>
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<td>4. One of my major strengths as a writer of English is producing interesting ideas.</td>
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<td>5. I am skilled at organizing my ideas and expressing them logically.</td>
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FIG. 3.2. Writing styles questionnaire for classroom use (Continued).
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<td>6.</td>
<td>I have learned about academic writing mostly through reading.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>When I write academic assignments, I am a good typist and an efficient computer user.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>I rearrange my ideas a lot when I am planning a text.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>When I revise a paper or draft, I often make a lot of changes.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>As I revise a paper, I like to add new material.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>When I write and revise a paper, I think carefully about what my reader wants to know from me.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Before I revise a paper, I ask a classmate or friend to give me comments on it.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>My papers usually state a purpose explicitly.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>I use clear and succinct transitions between paragraphs.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>The paragraphs of my papers usually contain plenty of examples, explanations, and other evidence.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>I try hard to connect each of my paragraphs to my main purposes for writing.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>My concluding statements synthesize my main points and the evidence I have presented in my text.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>When I turn in papers, they contain mostly minor grammatical errors.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>My papers show that I have a strong command of English vocabulary.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>When I turn in papers, they have few spelling and punctuation errors.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>When I write an academic paper, I know how to use references, quotations, footnotes, bibliographic sources, and so on effectively.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Generally, I learn a lot from the comments I get back from my instructor.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>I enjoy sharing my writing with other students and learn from reading the writing of my classmates.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>After getting an assignment back from my instructor, I usually learn things that I can apply to future writing assignments.</td>
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D. Self-assessment and goals
DIRECTIONS: Please complete the statements below with at least three points. Be as specific as you can.

1. My greatest strengths as a writer of English include ...
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

2. Aspects of my writing that I would like most to improve in this course include ...
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

FIG. 3.2. Writing styles questionnaire for classroom use.
Student-Centered Learning Workshop Questionnaire

Name (optional) ___________________________________________________

Directions: Please answer the following questions about the student-centered learning workshops. Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

The workshops helped me better understand student-centered teaching practices.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

I will apply the methods and techniques I learned in the workshops in my teaching.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

The collaborative environment of the in-services helped me dialogue with colleagues and better understand other teaching methods and approaches.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

Please take a few moments to reflect on the strengths of the student-centered teaching workshops.

Please take a few moments to reflect on the weaknesses of the workshops and offer suggestions for improvement.

Additional Comments
Appendix Six

Sample ESL Student Essay

I believe everyone has certain incident which has influence one’s life. After the incident, his/her lifestyle is totally different than before. I also had the very incident when I was eight years old. That was my younger brother’s birth. Before my younger brother was born, my family member was father, mother, older brother and me. I was the youngest child in my family and I get the most help and attentions. However, I had to face the reality that I had a younger brother and I have to give up my comfortable position to grow up for my younger brother.

I would say I was the only one who was not happy about my younger brother’s birth. Because I felt he took my parents love away from me. I have to give my comfortable position as youngest child in my family which I wanted to stay forever to him. My parents treated me different way as older sister and I felt he is the priority in the family. I did not like that. Also, I had to learn endurance and forgiveness which were very difficult for me. When my brother was a child he loved to play with my important stuff such as dolls, pretty boxes, necklaces, etc. and he always broke them. I was told to understand that he was a little so he does not understand how important they were. Then I have to learn how to forgive people. That was very difficult for me and it took me a long time.

As I got older, the birth order or the position of the family did not bother me any longer. I assume that I didn’t know how to adjust nor react the new environment and sudden changes in my life (my parents’ treatment, etc.). Although I had hard time getting along with my brother and adjusting my new position as older sister, I am glad that my younger brother was born. This is not only I have more people to share my life with but also I could mature myself from the lesson and grow up as human beings.
Having discussed above, my younger brother’s birth did have influence on my life. Although I had a difficult time with him, my parents and the new environment, as a result these helped me grow up and mature myself. I needed this change in my life. Thus I would say birth order have an important influence on people’s life.

_Taken from Dana Ferris’s Response to Student Writing_
Appendix Seven

Composition Workshop Questionnaire

Name (optional) _____________________________________________

Directions: Please answer the following questions about the IELP composition workshops. Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

The composition workshops helped me better understand composition teaching practices, especially peer review and responding to student writing.

Strongly agree    agree    disagree    strongly disagree

I will apply the methods and techniques I learned in the composition workshops in my teaching.

Strongly agree    agree    disagree    strongly disagree

The collaborative environment of the in-services helped me dialogue with colleagues and better understand other composition teaching methods and approaches.

Strongly agree    agree    disagree    strongly disagree

Please take a few moments to reflect on the strengths of the composition workshops.

Please take a few moments to reflect on the weaknesses of the workshops and offer suggestions for improvement.

Additional Comments
Handout for Feminist Pedagogy in ESL Writing Instruction

What is Feminist Pedagogy and what does it have to do with ESL Composition?

Fisher’s Definition:

Fisher in her book, *No Angel in the Classroom*, questions whether feminist pedagogy is simply a phrase used to describe “good teaching” (23). She focuses on gender and cites five criteria to help educators better understand feminist teaching principles.

1). In a feminist classroom discussion is a collective, collaborative, and ongoing process that pays special attention to women’s experiences, feelings, ideas, and actions.

2). It seeks to understand and challenge oppressive power relations.

3). It supports and generates women’s political agency by addressing women's “personal” concerns and taking them seriously.

4). It questions the meaning for differently situated women of oppression and liberation.

5). It proceeds nonjudgmentally but cultivates the political judgment needed to act in response to gender and interwoven forms of justice. (44)

Tisdell’s Definition:

Tisdell takes the concept further and focuses on three types of feminist pedagogy: psychological, structural, and post-structural models. Each model focuses on the construction of knowledge, voice, authority, and position. Tisdell’s theories of feminist pedagogy are not aligned with composition or ESL pedagogy; however, they can be applied to both. A post-structural feminist pedagogy is most appropriate for an ESL composition classroom, because it allows for more flexibility through shifting identities and calls for the development of voice. It also allows an instructor to assume the role of authority if necessary. Below are the four components of the post-structural model.

1). Foregrounds positionality, especially of the instructor. Difference is due to gender, race, class factors and the “constantly shifting” identities of participants, and is dealt with to facilitate individual and social transformation

2). Connections between social constructions of identity (by race, gender, and class), how knowledge is constructed on an individual level, and the politics of knowledge production

3). Foregrounds the “coming of voice” of those who have been traditionally marginalized in education
4). Instructor’s role as an authority is directive in deconstructing binary opposites and confronting power relations; considers emancipatory possibilities and limitations of instructor’s positionality (race, gender, etc.)

**Feminist Writing Activities and Assignments**

**Collaboration**

Collaboration is common in many feminist classes with students discussing their opinions about gender, race, and other issues pertinent in their lives (Fisher 39). They work in a space where they are free to discuss and learn from their peers. Siebler provides an example about how feminist pedagogy transcends from the classroom into society. In a composition class, students collaboratively critique a university’s sexual harassment policy. They write letters to newspapers and campus officials, urging them to change the policy. Through collaborative writing assignments such as this, students learn that through community action, they can become socially responsible (55). This type of collaboration is necessary in a feminist class for students to become socially responsible and confront oppression.

**Peer Review**

While many ESL writing teachers assign peer review as part of the writing process, they may not be aware of the feminist implications behind the assignment. If we turn to Fisher’s five components of feminist pedagogy, we can better understand how peer review is indeed a feminist activity. 1) Peer review is a collaborative activity that focuses on students’ ideas and values. 2) It addresses students’ personal concerns, especially women’s. 3). Students’ ideas are seriously regarded in connection to their writing. 4) Depending on the topic, it can lead to the creation of political judgment about gender and sexism. The ultimate goal of peer review is to cultivate a discussion amongst a discourse community. Students voice opinions about each other’s writing and offer revision suggestions that a writer or even instructor may overlook. In a L2 class, these ideas are often based on students’ native cultures, politics, and religions. Therefore, new perspectives and ideas are offered that a writer may not consider through research and his/her personal ideas. The ability to interact with peers and discuss revision suggestions are also skills that students need for their future academic endeavors.

**Narratives**

Autobiographical writing has a long standing tradition in feminist theory. Carolyn Heilbrun writes that narratives are a means for women to exercise their voices. “Women must turn to one another for stories; they must share the stories of their lives and their hopes and their acceptable fantasies” (44). Autobiographies shape women’s understanding of the world. In discourse communities women share personal experiences and knowledge with male and female classmates. This is especially important for women who are marginalized in their native countries or who have otherwise experienced oppression. If we turn to Fisher’s definition of feminist pedagogy, we see that narrative writing supports and creates political agency, because the texts address personal concerns of the writer and perhaps even society.
Journals

Journals are another means to promote dialogue and self-reflection. They provide students a safe space to voice their concerns, ask questions, and for non-native speakers to write about homesickness and acculturation. Because feminist pedagogy focuses on student growth and empowerment, journals are assigned for students to document their awareness of learning and growth in class (Clifford 110). Yet, Gore fears issues of authority arise, as students may write what they think their teacher wants to hear (151). Clifford also writes that some students find journals a waste of time (111). They may not openly converse with their instructor and simply go through the motions to earn a good grade.

Authority

Issues of authority in a feminist classroom create a large gray area. While many feminist educators believe they are facilitators who help students find their voices, this approach does not always work. According to Tisdell, within a post-structural feminist lens, it is appropriate for an instructor to assume the role of an authority in order to confront power relations within the class (143). Sielber writes, “Sometimes exerting the power of authority (e.g., in regard to classroom policies) is necessary to create a productive community” (48). Such approach is necessary, for example, when students are off-task while working in small groups. Clearly, writing instructors walk a fine line and need to understand when it is appropriate to facilitate and when it is appropriate to exert their power.

While an instructor may (out of necessity) assume the role of authoritarian, a nurturing environment helps writers from all backgrounds take ownership of their words. Holley and Steiner claim, “The metaphor of classroom as a ‘safe space’ has emerged as a description of a classroom climate that allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views, and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors” (50). Roper-Huilman writes that it can be difficult to manage a feminist classroom, because instructors may feel pressured to create a safe learning environment where students can discuss and write about new ideas or questionable topics. They must tread between facilitator and authority lightly (109).

A safe learning environment is also important in an ESL composition class, as this may be the first space where students voice their opinions in an open forum. It may also be the first time students are introduced to the writing process. Instructors must promote student growth and confidence and nurture students through the writing process. According to Jarratt, this ethic of caring in the writing classroom is connected to the writing process. “Indeed, a teacher’s attitude of caring and nurturing seems very compatible with process writing practices, within which the teacher shifts from the older role of making assignments, waiting for a product, and then judging its value, to the position of encouraging, supportive guide. This compatibility surely constitutes one of the pleasurable foundations of feminist pedagogy” (118-19).

Feminist pedagogy and process pedagogy go hand-in-hand; students are nurtured as they draft their papers, work one-on-one with their instructors, and seek feedback from their peers. Fisher believes this “nonjudgmental space” is essential for writing to occur (31). Therefore, a feminist pedagogy that calls for the classroom to be set up like the “real world” and for students to struggle is counterproductive in a L2 composition course. While pedagogues like bell hooks
believe this struggle is necessary (Talking 53), it can be devastating for a student learning a second language in a foreign classroom for the first time. An ethic of caring enables them to adjust to their new surroundings and find comfort in the writing classroom.

Voice

Feminist pedagogy also focuses on students constructing their voices. This is an interesting and complicated notion for non-native speakers of English, who must find their voices in a second language. Many researchers believe the concept of voice is too abstract for many L2 learners and issues of transfer are problematic. How does a student bring her voice from her first language to her second? Many scholars question whether this is possible. They also worry whether this transfer will communicate with an English-speaking audience. Because the issue of voice is cultural, Ramanathan and Atkinson argue cross-cultural pedagogy should be applied in ESL writing classrooms. Through this approach, voice is not a concern (46-7). Unfortunately, this approach may not adequately prepare students for their future university studies.

When ESL students enter their undergraduate and graduate courses, professors expect them to follow American academic conventions of writing. Voice is an important convention of style. Elbow in his response to Ramanathan and Atkinson writes that the authors, “…Imply that these pedagogical techniques [classroom activities that encourage individualism such as peer review] should not be used with any L2 students implying further that ESL students might never seek to propose in the mainstream U.S. culture or similar cultures” (“Individualism” 328). Stapleton also believes that in order for students to become proficient in the language, voice should be a component of L2 writing instruction. However, he cautions teachers not to focus on voice over ideas (qtd. in Ferris and Hedgecock 7).

As in L1 instruction, a L2 student’s voice can be developed by following Elbow’s suggestion of freewriting to get one’s voice on paper (“How” 63). For example, dialogue journals encourage the development of voice because students write without worries of grammar, spelling, or mechanics. This allows students to construct their voices without hesitation. hooks also assigns journals or has students write paragraphs in class and students then read them to one another. “To hear each other (the sound of different voices), to listen to another, is an exercise in recognition. It also ensures that no student remain invisible in the classroom” (Teaching 141). Students must be present and valued in class; voice recognition allows this to happen. It also helps them personalize their writing and clearly voice their opinions.
Appendix Nine

Feminist Pedagogy Workshop Questionnaire

Name (optional) __________________________________________________

Directions: Please answer the following questions about the feminist pedagogy workshops. Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

The workshops helped me better understand feminist pedagogy.

Strongly agree    agree    disagree    strongly disagree

I will apply the methods and techniques I learned about feminist pedagogy in my teaching.

Strongly agree    agree    disagree    strongly disagree

The collaborative environment of the in-services helped me dialogue with colleagues and better understand other feminist teaching methods and approaches.

Strongly agree    agree    disagree    strongly disagree

Please take a few moments to reflect on the strengths of the feminist pedagogy workshops.

Please take a few moments to reflect on the weaknesses of the workshops and offer suggestions for improvement.

Additional Comments