

L2 Undergraduate Writers' Experiences in a First Year Writing Course

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation explores seven second language (L2) undergraduates' learning experiences in a First-Year Writing (FYW) course at an American university. While the FYW course is designed from the perspective of first-language (L1) composition scholarship and focuses, broadly speaking, on analytical writing and the related development of critical thinking skills, the English as a Second Language (ESL) writing courses most of the participants had taken are designed from the perspective of second language (L2) writing scholarship and the development of more fundamental writing skills. Thus, employing a qualitative case-study approach, the present study was especially interested in the L2 students' transition from ESL to FYW, as this kind of study is not common in writing scholarship, though many L2 writers participate in both types of courses, thus generating a need for such an investigation.

Driven by the theoretical frameworks of knowledge telling versus knowledge transforming, writing to learn, as well as transfer of learning, data was collected through interviews, journals, think-aloud protocols, classroom observations, field notes, and text-based artefacts. Participants included seven L2 undergraduates from Honduras, Bangladesh, and China recruited from three different sections of FYW; two FYW instructors; and the director of the First-Year Writing Program. Five of the L2 students (those from China) had taken one or two ESL writing courses at the university before

they took the FYW course, and their experiences were of particular interest during the study. By following the participants throughout a 15-week semester as they engaged the various FYW course assignments, the study produced an in-depth look at their task representations of what they were asked to do and how they responded to the course activities and expectations.

The findings reveal, first, that the seven L2 undergraduates used their first languages (L1) in various situations when they were completing the writing tasks. The study also uncovered a mixed picture regarding the notion of transfer of learning, that is, applications of what was learned in FYW (and ESL) to other writing-related situations outside of the FYW course. Although the L2 students were aware of those applications, they believed that they could use them only for certain circumstances, such as coping with similar writing tasks in General Education Courses, but not in their own disciplines, which require more specific writing practices as opposed to the general writing skills taught in FYW. Additionally, the findings reveal that the L2 students' participation in peer-review activities changed during the semester. On the one hand, they benefited from written and oral feedback from their native English speaking peers. On the other hand, they were reluctant to offer their feedback due to a sense of self-perceived inferiority as L2 speakers.

The study's findings generated several implications for FYW and ESL researchers and practitioners with respect to how writing courses focusing on teaching English for academic purposes can develop the academic literacy skills necessary for L2 students to meet the writing-related demands at American universities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Since the 1990s, there has been a significant increase in the number of international students pursuing a degree or a short-term program of study in the United States (Leki, 2011). For example, according to the 2014-2015 enrollment report provided by the Enrollment Services office (2014) of a large public university in the Midwest, 6,178 international students (56% undergraduate; 44% graduate) out of a total 55,130 university students were enrolled on the main campus in the 2014 Autumn semester. In other words, international students, i.e., second language (L2) writers, represented almost 10% of the student body. It appears that many other universities in the U.S. face a similar situation. Given the challenges that many L2 writers experience in gaining sufficient command of the academic literacy skills necessary for success in such universities, especially at the undergraduate level, and the fact that these students constitute a not insignificant portion of the overall university population, there is a pressing need to understand those challenges. It was that need which motivated the current study.

L2 undergraduate students are often required to cope with writing-related demands in three primary situations at American universities during their first year of study: (1) ESL (English as a Second Language) writing courses, (2) FYW (First Year Writing) writing courses, and (3) GEC (General Education) courses. However, many of

them have few “experiences with sustained writing, that is, beyond the sentence level” (Leki, 2011, p. 85) when they begin their American university education, thus making it essential that they have successful experiences in their ESL and FYW courses, which are aimed at preparing them to write for other academic courses, that is, courses appearing across the curriculum. These writing courses are intended to provide a foundation in academic literacy that will be useful throughout students’ period of university study in the U.S. This is especially true for L2 writers, since they have not acquired the kind of foundation prior to college study that their native English speaking peers have and may instead have acquired different ideas about academic literacy rooted in the traditions and conventions of their home countries, cultures, and educational systems. As such, it is essential to understand what actually takes place in such course settings as relates to L2 writers, and that is what this study sought to do, particularly in the FYW context. FYW served as the focal point of the current study because it is a crucial bridge between these students’ ESL writing course experiences and the writing demands they face as they navigate the academic curriculum at the study’s larger research site, a Midwestern research university in the United States called University X in the study.

Undergraduate L2 writers generally need initial assistance in English writing upon entering an American university; hence, a typical trajectory for these students is to first take one or more composition courses sponsored by an English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, as is the case at University X. The typical curricular model for such courses is English for Academic Purposes (EAP), an approach rooted in the idea that L2 writers will be exposed to core elements of academic writing in English, such as the use of source texts and the citation practices associated with such use. The ESL Writing

Program at University X follows this model. Upon successful completion of these L2 writing courses, international undergraduates at University X then move to First-Year Writing (FYW). This is a mainstream writing course required for all undergraduate students, both native (L1) and nonnative (L2) English speakers. Typically, FYW operates within a department of English, as is the case at University X. The core mission of FYW is usually to prepare students to meet the demands related to writing (and reading) across the academic curriculum. As such, there is once again an EAP orientation at work, though at a more sophisticated level than in ESL writing courses. There is also a strong Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) orientation, one which is centered around the need to assist students in their literacy-related journey through the undergraduate curriculum. At University X, the FYW program places a particular emphasis on analytic writing and the critical thinking skills associated with such writing, as these are seen as crucial relative to the WAC framework.

Meanwhile, students will also be taking GEC courses as they learn about academic writing in the ESL and FYW courses, thus creating a complex nexus of academic literacy experiences and demands. Those GEC courses will continue through their second year of university study, at which point their focus will shift to courses in their academic major. What takes place in both the ESL and FYW courses can be helpful in these later years of their undergraduate study as well, making it all the more important that their experiences in these writing courses are meaningful and productive.

As will be shown in more detail shortly, this study focused on undergraduate L2 writers in their first year of study at an American university, with a particular interest in 1) their *transition* from an ESL-oriented writing course context to a long-established

intuitional writing course (FYW), that is, a shift from a course or courses introducing basic academic English writing practices, to more sophisticated content and demands in FYW; and 2) their *learning process* within FYW after the completion of their ESL writing course(s), where writing at a more advanced level is taught, with the aim of preparing students to write across the curriculum. In this way the current study has shed light on the possible impact of ESL writing courses in preparing L2 writers for FYW as well as their experiences within FYW and their preparation for the writing expected as they traverse the academic curriculum, with a primary focus on what happens as these students navigate the demands and expectations of a FYW course. An underlying focus in this regard was the notion of *transfer of learning*, that is, to what extent and in what ways the participants transferred, or intended to transfer, learning from one writing context to others, such as from the ESL courses to FYW.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

An important aspect of American higher education is the notion of *academic community* where students gradually establish a disciplinary persona. At the undergraduate level, they eventually need to declare an academic major, which represents their specific area of interest and concentration as they move through their studies and experience the development of relevant knowledge and professional skills (Russell, 1994). American universities usually set up two modes for undergraduate studies: General Education Courses (GECs) and upper-level courses in the academic major. The academic major coursework tends to take place during the third and fourth years; undergraduates at this juncture begin to generate and display the disciplinary knowledge expected of them by the faculty in their major area of study. In contrast to this specialized

coursework, GECs are based on a shared curriculum of university undergraduate courses that are usually completed during the first two years of study.

With respect to the role of writing within these two modes of study, Manchón (2011) has identified three major functions of writing instruction that were relevant in the current study: learning to write, writing to learn language, and writing to learn content. With respect to “learning to write,” the emphasis is on helping students acquire basic knowledge of the skills and components associated with academic writing. Here writing is the goal or object of instruction within a ‘how to write’ framework. This is generally the primary focus of ESL writing courses, as was the case at University X. “Writing to learn language” conceptualizes writing as a tool or means for developing and extending language proficiency acquiring knowledge, and it is also a focus of ESL writing courses. “Writing to learn content” is an extension of the broader notion of what is called “writing to learn.” “Writing to learn” focuses on using writing to acquire knowledge, such as students using writing tasks like synthesizing and responding to texts to deepen their knowledge of content they read about in articles and books or hear about in lectures and thus positions writing as a means, not an end. “Writing to learn content” narrows the focus to using writing to learn more about content in a specified area, such as writing about history. FYW courses, in addition to often having a learning to write orientation, are likely, at least in American universities, to also help students learn how to use writing for learning purposes across the academic curriculum. At University X, the FYW course revolves around the writing to learn emphasis. As Foster and Russell (2002) point out, this emphasis on academic writing courses early in the undergraduate curriculum is a

feature especially common in American universities, and it signifies the importance placed on academic writing in the American post-secondary context.

Manchón's (2011) distinction between types of writing instruction is an especially important one because it plays out within what appear to be two fundamentally different environments for the teaching and learning of writing that L2 writers engage during their first year of undergraduate study. On the one hand, their ESL writing courses are taught by instructors focused specifically on the issues and needs pertaining to L2 writers, and the only students in those courses are L2 writers. The net result is a generally supportive atmosphere in which L2 writers are introduced to the core elements of academic writing in English in ways that account for the fact that they already possess writing skills and knowledge in their L1, and that academic writing in English is new or relatively new to them. In short, the teachers, curriculum, and instructional materials are tailored to the needs of L2 writers, and students interact solely with L2 peers, many of whom may share the same native linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical background that they do. As noted earlier, the primary emphasis is on "learning to write", with some added focus on "writing to learn language."

They then move to a FYW course that constitutes a significantly different learning environment. First, such courses tend to be taught by instructors who generally have little or no training in working with L2 writers. In addition, the FYW curriculum is "not designed with their needs and abilities in mind" (Matsuda, 2006, p. 2) and operates in accordance with L1 composition theories calibrated to L1 writing needs and circumstances and that fail to account for the writing background and issues that L2 writers bring to such a course setting. Furthermore, in a typical FYW course, L2 writers

are likely to represent a small minority of the overall student population within the course's many sections. These conditions apply at University X. The net result is a learning environment that may pose challenges for many L2 writers in various ways. As such, there is a pressing need to learn more about the experiences of L2 undergraduate student writers as they engage the FYW course, especially after having participated in one or more ESL writing courses.

Also worth noting is the body of L2 writing research which shows that L2 undergraduates may not make good use of what they learn in their writing courses, especially their ESL courses. This point emerges especially strongly in Leki's (2007) landmark five-year ethnographic study of several L2 undergraduates at a major American research university. Leki looked at the students' experiences across a wide range of the courses they took during their undergraduate study, and she found that when the students took their writing courses, they did not need to do much writing at that point in their other courses. Hence, there were limited opportunities to connect what they learned about writing to their curricular activities, resulting in an inadequate atmosphere for the transfer of skills from the writing courses to other courses. By the time they did need to utilize what they had learned in the writing courses, one or two years later, they no longer remembered what they had learned about writing or had difficulties in transferring that knowledge to the specific writing contexts they encountered. In this regard, Leki asserted, ESL and FYW courses, despite their key objective of helping prepare students to navigate the writing related demands of the academic curriculum, may be poorly aligned with students' actual writing needs, as they operate on inaccurate assumptions as to the writing-related demands of the GEC classes students are taking while also taking writing

courses. Also pertinent is research by James (2006, 2012), who found that L2 writers in ESL writing courses showed little inclination to transfer their learning to other contexts.

In light of the circumstances just described (and portrayed in more detail in Chapter 2 in an extensive review of the relevant scholarly literature), the current study was especially interested in such questions as: what are undergraduate international students' academic experiences in FYW courses? How do they respond to the teaching/learning environment existing in such courses, especially after their ESL writing course experiences, and to what extent do they meet key courses objectives (i.e., critical thinking and analytical writing)? Do they experience positive transfer from their ESL writing course background to FYW? Do they recognize and utilize the ways in which FYW courses seek to prepare students for the writing demands in their GEC courses? These are questions that relatively little writing research has addressed. In the L2 writing field, the primary focus has been on students' experiences within ESL courses, and yet their journey through university writing courses does not end in ESL. Moreover, it is in FYW courses where more sustained efforts are made at helping students connect writing to the wider academic curriculum they must traverse during their undergraduate study. Thus, this study sought to fill an important gap in the L2 writing literature that needs to be addressed (Hirvela, 2004).

In light of the different pedagogical orientations in which both writing programs (ESL and FYW) are positioned, learning in FYW for L2 writers entails a major shift within the model of writing proposed by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), who distinguish between what they call *knowledge telling* and *knowledge transforming*. Knowledge telling involves reusing what one has learned, while knowledge transforming

goes beyond that function to creating something new out of what has been learned, that is, reshaping the content to fit writing goals. This distinction was an important one in the study, in that ESL writing courses are often seen as emphasizing knowledge telling, while FYW courses concentrate on knowledge transforming, as reflected in the FYW course at University X with its emphasis on analytic writing and critical thinking. This distinction raises the important issue of the extent to which L2 writers are prepared to engage in knowledge transformation as they move from ESL to FYW. The current study sought insight into this issue, just as it explored students' experiences with the core writing functions mentioned earlier: learning to write, writing to learn language, and writing to learn/writing to learn about content. An underlying assumption of the current study was that many L2 writers may not be ready for this transition. L2 writers, as language learners as well as individuals shifting from one writing system (in the L1) to a new one (in the L2), are still dealing with multi-layered cultural, rhetorical, and language issues as they move into FYW courses, and so there is a need to examine this transitional process they experience. Such research can be especially valuable in terms of providing new insights into how FYW courses can be designed to better account for the needs of L2 writers. Because FYW courses play an important role in preparing students to write in other courses across the curriculum, it is essential to ensure that they meet the needs of L2 writers as well as the L1 writers who tend to be the primary audience targeted in the construction of such courses.

In sum, both the ESL and the FYW programs share the same end point: preparing university undergraduate students for writing tasks in the wider university setting, but they pursue that end point in different ways, especially at University X. Furthermore, at

least at University X, it appears anecdotally that attempts made to ease L2 writers' transition from ESL to FYW may be lacking. Then, too, it appears that the courses are not sequenced in ways that would help students see a clear and logical progression from ESL to FYW, or that L2 writers recognize and understand this progression. This is another factor that can potentially impact negatively on L2 writers' experiences in FYW courses, thereby necessitating a study of what actually happens to these writers in FYW. As pointed out earlier, FYW plays an essential role in bridging ESL and GECs for L2 writers, and yet the nature and effectiveness of that bridging role have, to date, received little attention in the writing literature (Zawacki & Habib, 2014). Furthermore, L2 writing researchers have tended to focus on students' experiences in ESL writing courses; as noted in Park's (2011) unpublished doctoral dissertation which looked at L2 writers in FYW, very little L2 research has moved beyond ESL courses to FYW courses. This study, thus, addressed these important gaps in the literature by taking a close qualitative look at the FYW course experiences of several L2 undergraduate writers at University X.

1.3 Research Questions

This study's investigation of L2 writers' engagement and experiences in FYW courses was guided by the following overarching research question: *What were the L2 undergraduate students' learning experiences in the FYW course (especially after taking ESL writing courses)?*

It also addressed the following focused research questions:

1. What was the nature of the L2 participants' transitions, as writers, from the ESL writing course orientation to the FYW framework?

2. What were the L2 participants' perceptions of the transitions involved from the ESL writing course context to FYW?
3. How did the L2 participants respond to the analytically-oriented tasks in FYW?
4. What resources did the L2 participants use to address challenges they faced in FYW?

1.4 Brief Summary of Methodology

This study employed qualitative research methods, specifically a case study approach to investigating the writing processes and experiences of seven undergraduate international students, or L2 writers, enrolled in sections of the FYW course at University X. This method is believed to “provide depth and context not as easily achieved in quantitative approaches” (Hirvela, 2005a, p. 342), and as such was seen as a way to best present a rich and detailed picture of participants' classroom learning relative to the FYW course. Conventional quantitative approaches attempt to create generalizations for larger populations based on data obtained from a sizable and representative sampling of such populations. By contrast, qualitative approaches intend to offer observations of selected participants by generating a “thick description” of their experiences (Geertz, 1973). Such a description, or set of descriptions, while not generalizable to a larger population, nevertheless carries the possibility of “transfer” of insights gleaned from these descriptions to others sharing characteristics similar to those of the research participants (Creswell, 2003). Given the research gap the study sought to fill and the nature of the research context it investigated, the qualitative case study approach was deemed the most suitable for gathering the kinds of data that would shed meaningful light on the

participants' engagement with the FYW course. Data gathering occurred over one academic term at University X. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology employed.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

1. Second Language Writing and Second Language (L2) Writers:

L2 writers are those who learn to write in a language other than their L1. They are called English as a Second Language Learners (ESLs) in this study.

2. Learning-to-write (LW) versus Writing-to-learn (WL):

Manchón (2011) defines LW as “the manner in which second and foreign (L2) users learn to express themselves in writing.” WL, comprising *learning-to-write content* (WLC) and *language knowledge and skills* (WLL), refers to how those writing tasks in which L2 users are engaged “can contribute to development in areas other than writing itself” (p. 3).

3. Writing to learn versus Learning to write:

Both of these terms derive from primary principles underlying a key component of this study, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), which looks at the use of writing across a variety of courses. *Writing to learn* is retrieved from expressivist writing pedagogies, which values writing as a tool for critical thinking and communicating. In contrast, *learning to write*, also called *writing in the disciplines*, emphasizes “writing in different academic discourse communities” (Melzer, 2009, p. 244)

4. Knowledge Telling versus Knowledge Transforming:

In Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) models of different purposes for writing, *knowledge telling* refers to “make maximum use of natural human endowments of language competence and of skills,” that is, to stress the acquisition of core concepts

and skills, while *knowledge transforming* is seen as writing which “involves going beyond normal linguistic endowments” and “the reprocessing of knowledge” (p. 5).

5. Analytical Writing:

Rather than merely summarizing information, narrating one’s experiences, or expressing one’s viewpoints, *analytical writing* focuses on reasoning skills in an attempt to define and explain ideas (Rosenwasser & Stephen, 2015). A key element in this form of writing is critical thinking.

6. Critical Thinking:

According to Kurfiss (1988, cited in Bean, 2011), *critical thinking* is skills used “to explore a situation, phenomenon, question, or problem to arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion” (p. 21) by incorporating all available information and analyzing it, in order to arrive at a deeper understanding or convincing justification.

1.6 Basic Assumptions of the Study

A core assumption guiding this study was that L2 writers’ transition from ESL writing courses to FYW is a challenging one, partly because of the different goals in the two writing course domains (knowledge telling for ESL and knowledge transforming for FYW), and partly because the two domains represent fundamentally different composing and learning environments from L2 writers’ perspective. As noted earlier, ESL courses are designed solely for L2 writers and are populated only by such writers, while FYW courses may be tailored to the needs and backgrounds associated with L1 writers and might be populated primarily by L1 student writers. Also noteworthy is the emphasis on analytic writing in the FYW realm. Thus, it is likely that FYW presents L2 writers with challenges that are worth exploring.

Another key assumption of the study was that the connection between FYW course goals and tasks and the demands associated with GEC courses may pose challenges for L2 writers as they attempt to gain command of both FYW content and the transfer of that content to GEC contexts.

In addition, it was assumed that a qualitative case study methodology is an effective means of capturing the stories of L2 writers' experiences in FYW.

Finally, because the study focused only on gathering data in FYW courses while also accounting for the participants' experiences in ESL writing courses, it is assumed that data gathered indirectly concerning the ESL courses would be accurate and useful.

1.7 Overview of the Dissertation

Following this introductory chapter, which identifies the topic of the study and the reasons for conducting it, Chapter 2 reviews literature relevant to the study. Chapter 3 describes the study's data gathering and data analysis methods. Chapter 4 is a contextual chapter which introduces readers to the FYW course at University X as well as the individuals teaching the sections of the course that served as research sites. Chapter 5 then adds contextual information by introducing the seven student participants. The findings are then presented in Chapters 6 and 7, with Chapter 6 focusing on the processes the participants used as they engaged the FYW course assignments and Chapter 7 exploring their responses to the FYW course. Chapter 8 then provides discussion and conclusions that wrap up the dissertation.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives and Literature Review

2. Introduction

This interdisciplinary study explored undergraduate L2 writers' learning experiences in the First-Year Writing (FYW) course at University X. Employing the theoretical framework—the *writing-as-a-process* model (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Murray, 1972)—that has guided not only L1 writing but also L2 writing research and pedagogies for a few decades, this chapter discusses relevant scholarship in the fields of second language writing and composition studies and the relevant themes as well as related issues raised in the literature. This chapter additionally reviews interdisciplinary literature, such as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and transfer of learning, in order to offer the conceptual grounds for the study. Therefore, the structure of this chapter begins with a section that presents an overview of writing in American higher education and L1 writing research. The following section addresses theoretical foundations of second language writing. Finally, an examination of empirical studies concerning the interfaces of SLW-FYW present the theoretical lens of this study: to investigate L2 writers' journey of learning to write in a general composition course in an Anglo-American university. The end of this chapter also includes a summary of the reviewed SLW scholarship in Table 2.1 to recapitulate the theoretical perspectives of the present study.

2.1 Writing in American Higher Education

In American higher education, writing has been perceived not simply as an act of transcribing thoughts into orthographic words on paper, but also an act involving an efficient cognitive process (Grabe, 2001). As Cumming (1998) describes it:

The word 'writing' refers not only to text in written script but also to the acts of thinking, composing, and encoding language into such text; these acts also necessarily entail discourses interactions within a socio-cultural context. Writing is text, is composing, and is social construction (p. 1)

In the same way, Donald Murray (1984) puts forward that writing can be used “to inform, to explain, to entertain, [and] to persuade” (p.4). It also conforms to Applebee’s (1984) claim of “writing as a reasoning process” (p. 581). Along with a “communications movement” in the nineteenth century striving for the importance of language instruction (Russell 1990; 1994), writing research advocates the multi-functions of writing for integrating learning (Flower, 1994; Homstad & Thorson, 2000). Writing functions as “a model of active student engagement with the material” (McLeod & Miraglia, 2001, p. 4). In academic contexts, the form of writing is commonly called *academic English writing*, or writing for academic purposes, which refers to a formality of traditional language conventions connecting with academic discourse (Bowden, 2003) or formal standard English (Williams, 2003). Before students engage in writing in their disciplines or in upper-level courses, most universities weave at least one introductory writing course into undergraduate studies (McLeod, 2007) to provide “general writing skills instruction” (DePalma & Ringer, 2011, p. 136). The course is often called First-Year Composition (FYC), or First-Year Writing (FYW) at University X (This study will use the term FYW).

A FYW course model was adopted by many schools and became the most prevalent course in American higher education after 1874, when Harvard University implemented the course in the undergraduate curriculum for all entering freshmen (Beaufort, 2007; Hjortshoj, 2009; Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, & Ortmeier-Hooper 2006; Rose, 1985; Russell, 2006). Composition scholars currently lay the groundwork for the course design in accordance with the Writing Program Administration (WPA) Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (WPA, 2014). The following section synthesizes components in composition literature that helped shape the philosophical background of the present FYW course and then discusses issues about the course.

2.2 Writing Research

2.2.1 Cognitive Theories of the Process Models

The field of composition studies has ranged widely in its development of theories and models. Before the 1960s, due to the popularity of the *product-oriented* approach, teachers were only interested in the products of student writing and focused heavily on grammatical conventions. Writing skill was understood as a performance of clarity, grammatical correctness to represent an individual's social grace, "a way of highlighting one's education, class affiliations, and upscale ambitions in an industrial economy" (Nystrand, 2006, p. 15). Since the 1970s, writing research was greatly influenced by the scholarship of cognitive psychology (Emig, 1977; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006) and thus writing processes, where writing is considered as a means "to discover what we know and then what we need to know," or simply to say "writing is thinking" (Murray, 1984, p. 3). Although "Janet Emig was not the first to conceptualize writing as a process" (Nystrand, 2006, p. 11), her dissertation project (1971) shifted the focus of composition

research. She pointed out that twelfth graders did not solely use outlines to organize ideas, but often composed out loud in their writing process. In one's writing process, Emig concluded that the writer was involved in two modes of composing; one is extensive writing to convey a message, and the other is reflexive writing to explore one's feeling (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006).

Moreover, the composing process was traditionally viewed "as a series of decisions and choices" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 365). Flower and Hayes explored the question: "what guides the decisions writers make as they write?" (p. 365). Their cognitive model of the writing process (1980; 1981) (Figure 2.1) delineates the act of writing as the mental product, which includes three major parts: the task environment, the writers' long-term memory, and the writing process. Even though Emig's focus on "a conception of writing as a composing process" (Nystrand, 2006, p. 18) is different from Flower and Hayes' research describing what components comprise an individual's writing process, collectively their work shaped writing research. Such research explores one aspect of the *process* model that depicts the mental processes of how a written product is produced. Another addresses the stage models (Rohman & Wlecke, 1964, as cited in Spivey, 1997) that describe each stage (e.g., pre-writing and re-writing) representing "the growth of the written product" (Flower and Hayes, 1981, p. 367). Another aspect of the process model is that writing is viewed "as a means by which one discovers what one wishes to say" (Odell, 1980, as cited in Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987, p. 143). Writing involves writers' continuous attempts to discover what they know and do not know (Zamel, 1982). Since the 1970s, the *process* model surpassed the *product* model and shaped views of writing instruction that take into consideration writing tasks, writer's voice, audience, purpose,

prior knowledge and a range of composing strategies (e.g., revision) (Durst, 2006; Tobin, 1994).

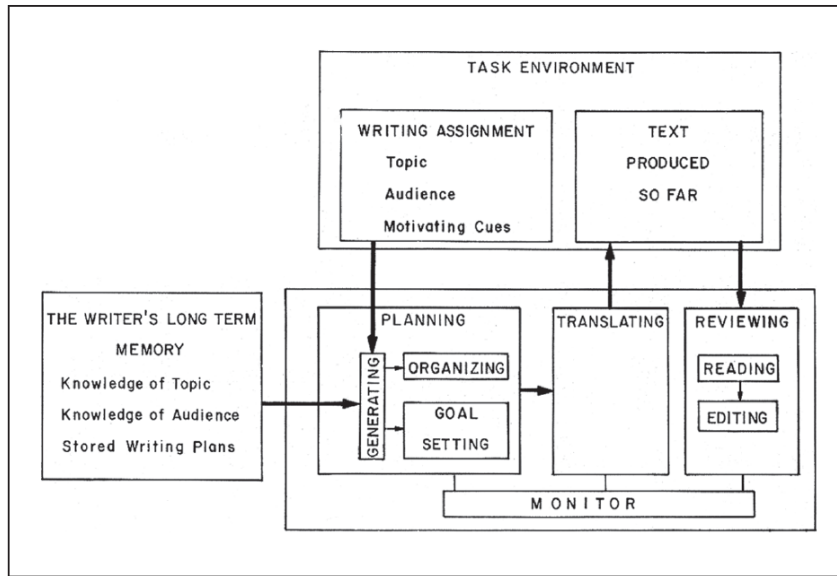


Figure 2. 1 The Hayes-Flower Model (1980)

Furthermore, to scrutinize more what composes one's writing process, Spivey (1984) studied *discourse synthesis* in her own dissertation project. She compared two groups of able and less able college students' performance on discourse synthesis. During the composing process, reading and writing the texts are necessary for production and comprehension. From constructivist perspectives, when writing, people are participating in social practices of literacy (Flower, 1994), and comprehending and composing texts is viewed as a transformational process in which people bring their "discourse knowledge, topic knowledge, and world knowledge, that they have developed in prior social experiences" (Spivey, 1997, p. 123).

Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) models of *knowledge telling* (Figure 2.2) and *knowledge transforming* (Figure 2.3) depict the differences between expert and novice writers' "mental processes by which texts are composed" (p. 13). To generate texts, a writer retrieves information in memory relevant to rhetorical contexts and literary genre, which refers to *knowledge telling* and is also prone to novice writers' problem-solving strategies. They aim to "produce an essay that will be on topic and that will conform to the type of text called for" (p. 9). On the contrary, expert writers' writing process resembles *knowledge transforming*; that is, they are more able to contemplate meanings of texts and also deliberate about what they think through writing, instead of simply telling what he or she knows. They can blend old and new information and express viewpoints. The difference is in line with Hayes' (2012) findings about children's writing. He concludes that *knowledge-telling* tailors novice writers like children's writing process better than that of adults, because the latter one is more complex.

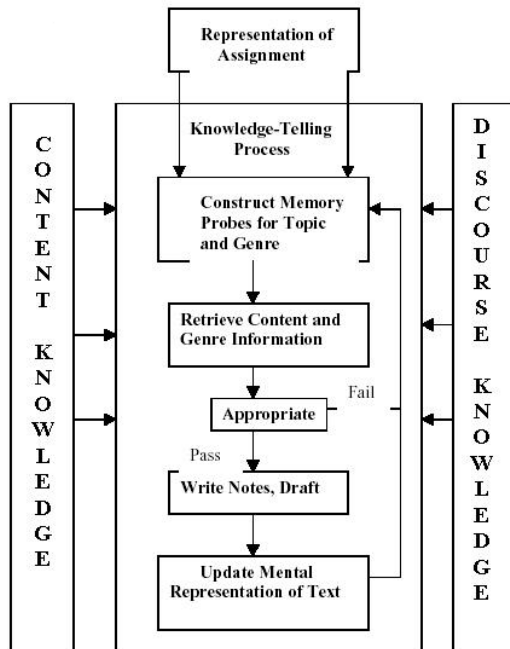


Figure 2. 2 Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) model of Knowledge Telling

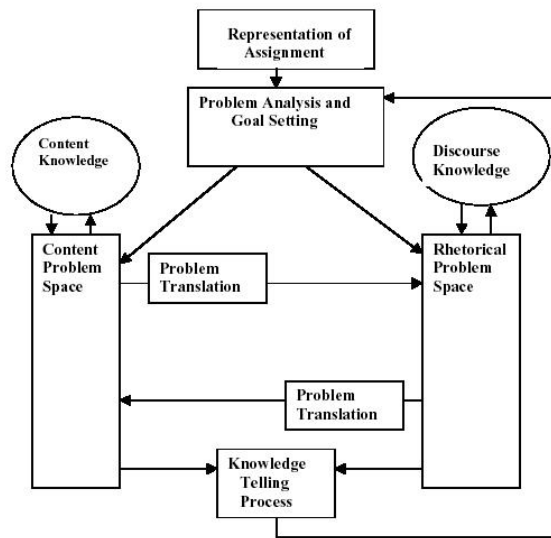


Figure 2. 3 Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) model of Knowledge Transforming

Therefore, in terms of writing instruction, with cognitive constructive writing research that understands what comprises the writing process, the *process-oriented* pedagogy has been prevalently adopted in contemporary writing classes, including the FYW course at University X. As such, writing instructors promote writing as a tool to engage students in analytical thinking and composing, instead of simply producing texts. Elbow (1981) also emphasizes writers' skills of creativity and critical thinking (p. 8) during one's writing process. The *process* approach provokes "attention to *writers* and the activities in which writers engage when they create and produce texts" (Clark, 2003, p. 7). Writing shall not be taught exclusively out of the context or about mastery of grammar; instead, the emphasis of writing instruction is on a person's writing process, as a way to involve students in various cognitive stages, such as planning (prewriting), rehearsing, drafting, and revising (Clark, 2003; Leist, 2006; Murray, 1976; Zamel, 1982).

2.2.2 Social View and Genre Approaches

Alongside the cognitive writing research influence, the field of composition studies was further associated with social constructionists (Nystrand, 2006) in the mid-1980s. Writing research expanded "from a cognitive emphasis to a social emphasis, and finally to a socio-cognitive emphasis" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 111). Bakhtin's theory of *speech genres* (1986, as cited in Freedman & Medway, 1994) developed into the concept of genre writing, which asserts that an individual intends to acquire and internalize disciplinary conventions as a sociolinguistic experience. Compositionists such as Donald Murray (1976; 1978; 1984), David Bartholomae (1986), Kenneth Bruffee (1983; 1984; 1993), and James Berlin (1982; 1996) promoted writing as a social action. Social acts are derived from cultural conventions. Because "individuals perceive the world according to

the shared beliefs and perceptions of the community or communities to which they belong” (Clark, 2003, p. 15), the community’s norms affect the writer’s sense of literacy. This perspective is built in genre theory, which conceives of writing as a way of responding to specific members in a conventional occasion (Freedman & Medway, 1994; Kress, 1989). Carolyn Miller (1984, as cited in Bawarshi, 2003) defines genre “as typified rhetorical ways of acting in recurring situations” (p. 7). Richardson (1994) states that community members socially interact with each other by using language and creating linguistic codes to achieve goals. These codes are the genre conventions that represent the social processes of a particular group.

It is important to note that genre scholars, such as Bawarshi (2000; 2003) and Clark (2003), disagree on the value of general writing instruction, because genre pedagogy for the most part accentuates “the writing context, the social functions of writing, and the features of written discourse” (Zhu, 2010, p. 216). They argue that writing in major courses takes into account discourses that denote the act of writing in social contexts and display conventions which “are recognized and valued by the particular social groups” (Hyland, 2012, p. 197). For example, responses of participants from psychology and criminology in Giltrow and Valiquette’s (1994) study confirmed that advanced knowledge is shared with members in the disciplines. The knowledge of genre can be acquired by increasing rhetorical skills (e.g., organizing ideas, recognizing audience) when students are situated in contexts. Spack (1998) suggests that subject teachers who have the best knowledge of disciplinary conventions should teach writing in those fields, so students can “discuss and write about ideas and information relevant to their professional interests” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 108). Meanwhile, general writing

courses (i.e. FYW) lack specific discipline contexts; thus, how FYW prepares students for the demands in their disciplines is in question (Currie, 1994).

Schultz (2006) summarizes the historical progression of writing research and Canagarajah (2002) reviews the multi-layered writing approaches. Writing research raised a new venue for writing instruction. Since the 1970s (McLeod & Soven, 1992), the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) movement advocated writing instruction in college allowing students to acquire content and develop skills by writing (Nystrand, 2006). Using writing in teaching encourages students to make connections with information, discover new meanings of what they already know and create their viewpoints, in lieu of the lecturing mode (McLeod & Miraglia, 2001; Newell, 2006). WAC was historically “modeled on a British program” (Spack, 1998, p. 90), and has two primary principles: *writing to learn* (WTL) and *writing in disciplines* (WID) (McLeod, 2001; Melzer, 2009). They are considered to be “two sides of the same coin” (Myers, 1984, p. 7), emerged with the *writing-as-a-process* approach. The WTL dimension refers to writing as a tool used to provoke writers’ critical thinking. Then, WID is used to advocate for learning rhetorical conventions in content areas through writing tasks. Both principles regard the use of writing as integral in instruction to support students to communicate in real-world contexts (Homstad & Thorson, 2000).

Since the WAC movement in the 1970s, both principles influenced writing courses in terms of writing pedagogies. Instructors are encouraged to implement writing tasks, including low- and high-stakes activities, in class to facilitate the writing process (Beans, 2011). These tasks also function to develop critical thinking by connecting and comprehending sources and then expressing individuals’ ideas in texts. In sum,

composition research foregrounds scholarship in writing instruction from various perspectives, for example, cognitive constructivism, socio-cognitive views, rhetoric, genre theory, and the British-oriented WAC principles. From this vantage point, FYW has experienced evolutionary changes to its role in American higher education, leading to its contemporary curriculum at University X.

2.2.3 The First-Year Writing Course

The First-Year Writing course (FYW) in American higher education undertakes the role of introducing college writing. Its curriculum usually focuses on “the development of arguments, comparisons, critical analyses, or reflective essays based on topics and readings on diverse subjects” (Hjortshoj, 2009, p. 26). However, FYW in a sense is easily conceived as a remedial course or as an extension of English instruction for those who did not receive it in high school (Hjortshoj, 2009; Russell, 2002). It is also said to inadequately address the level of students’ readiness for writing tasks outside FYW. That view corresponds to Anne Beaufort’s (2007) question: “why graduates of freshman writing cannot produce acceptable written documents in other contexts?” (p. 6).

Writing scholars claim that if there is a transferrable universal educated discourse from one writing situation to another, general writing skills are transferrable to advanced writing and/or disciplinary courses (Downs & Wardle, 2007). In other words, FYW is positioned to prepare students for writing demands after they leave the course. Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, Rhetorical Genre Studies compositionists assert that writing is contextually grounded emerging with disciplinary conventions (Aull, 2015). Genre scholars argue against the assumption that “writing instruction easily transfers to other writing situations” (Downs & Wardle, 2007, p. 556). Students are assumed to

automatically apply “writing knowledge and abilities across contexts” (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011, p. 315), whereas Nowacek (2011) argues that, since the act of transfer is a rhetorical act, explicit contextual cues are necessary to activate transfer of learning across classrooms. Spack (1998) states that there is a discrepancy “between what students bring to the academic community and what the academic community expects of them” (p. 85). Furthermore, Russell and Yanez (2003) argue that the importance of students’ writing skills is institutionally recognized, but there is no universally defined notion of effective writing across the campus. Inconsistent expectations as well as definitions of writing across courses create confusion regarding the transferability of writing skills.

Academic writing or expectations for writing are discordant across courses and disciplines. For example, many tasks in general education courses (GECs) rarely require writing; instead, they look for short-answer exams or exploratory assignments. That is what Applebee refers to as “writing without composing” (cited in Mezler, 2014, p. 22). Melzer (2014) brings up two questions in his research: “Is there such a thing as ‘academic writing’?” and “in what ways are expectations for writing similar and different across courses in the same discipline?” (p. 53). While FYW complies with “the view of writing as a uniform skill” (Gorska, 2013, p. 194), students encounter difficulties in writing academic papers in disciplines. General writing skills seem not to be applicable, since the types of writing vary greatly across disciplines, audiences and purposes (Dong, 1997, as cited in Paltridge, 2004). Elbow (1998) emphasizes the role of audience in writing being as important as in speaking, because writing is also a communication tool. Mayher, Lester, and Pradl (1983) state that “writing cannot be for dummy purposes; neither can it be for a dummy audience” (p. 3). Purposes and audiences in general writing

courses however are undetermined. As a result, it is difficult for students to learn to write for a variety of purposes and/or audiences after taking one writing course.

Thaiss (2001) also observes that writing in FYW courses cannot be the same as it is in upper-division courses. From the perspective of academic literacies approaches, academic writing is considered as a socially situated practice, and writing becomes more complex, specified and difficult in major courses (Hjortshoj, 2009). In the realm of genre across disciplines, words, such as *analyze*, *define*, *describe*, *argue* vary in each academic unit, and even within a course, instructors can interpret them differently as well. Melzer (2014) points out the different expectations for “analysis” among Humanities and Sciences instructors. In this regard, a FYW course is not built in “the context of a particular discourse community’s values and standards” (Beaufort, 2007, p. 12), or in contemplation of disciplinarily curricular grounds, so completing a FYW course is not equivalent to students’ abilities to write across courses or cope with a variety of writing tasks (Bawarshi, 2000; 2003; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Freedman & Medway, 1994; Leki, 2011; Nowacek, 2011; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011; Soliday, 2011).

If not many writing tasks in outside of the FYW course are comparable to those in FYW, the assumed transferrable writing skills cannot be activated. Likewise, methodologically, it is difficult to identify whether or not, when and how to transfer learning across contexts (Nowacek, 2011). Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) studied “whether the skills and knowledge students develop in FYW courses will transfer to other contexts” (p. 313). By collecting students’ responses from a cross-institutional study, they concluded that although students were more or less able to apply prior writing experiences in new tasks, writing had to be taught explicitly, along with cultural context,

increasing genre knowledge and conscious effort and practice, as a way to facilitate better metacognitive reflection. Stewart (2001) adopted an innovative research project to teach critical thinking in FYW. As he suggested, if the assignments are designated to “ask for the depth of thinking required of academic disciplines and careers” (p. 162), students are better able to perform reading, writing and learning, and be equipped for upper-division courses.

Furthermore, the amount of writing required could be minimal outside of the FYW course. Students take a certain amount of GECs to fulfill institutional graduation expectations by completing a designated amount of hours during their four-year undergraduate studies. On the other hand, courses in students’ home departments may not depend upon writing as a means to learn subject matter content. Beaufort (2007) points out that writing papers in FYW could become “an activity to earn a grade rather than to communicate to an audience of readers in a given discourse community” (p. 10). Since few activities outside the FYW course may require writing, there can be a significant challenge in tracking the efficacy of general writing instructions. As a result, writing tasks in FYW could become an evaluation of students’ learning in a course, instead of facilitating the primary purpose of the course—to transfer learning of writing for dealing with demands outside of the FYW course. Additionally, no such unified academic discourse exists, as claimed by Downs & Wardle (2007); as a result, it is difficult to facilitate transferring one’s learning from one context to another. Therefore, teachers of English are recommended to explore how a text in a discipline is interpreted, as well as what conventions are expected in that discipline (Faigley and Hansen, 1985). Elbow (1998) suggests that perhaps the best course objective of FYW should be to help students

use writing for a variety of tasks (e.g., writing notes, letters, stories and journal) in their lives.

2.3 Overview of Second Language Writing

Inasmuch as compositionists call for more research on mapping out the transferability of FYW learning outcomes, the current study also considered the body of literature about the inter-relationship between composition theories and second language writing (SLW). Initially, SLW research was viewed as a derivative field aligned with the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which emerged primarily “from within linguistics and psychology (and their subfields of applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and social psychology)” (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 2) and sociocultural theories, as well as education, and later incorporated insights from philosophy and rhetoric (Connor & Kaplan, 1987). The early attempt to distinguish the complexity of second language acquisition from first language acquisition is ascribed to Stephen Krashen’s (1981; 1982) *Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis*. *Acquisition* is like a child acquiring her first language without obvious attention or instruction, whereas *learning* a language “is a conscious process that results in ‘knowing about’ language” (1982, p. 1). It often characterizes language learners who acquire a second language in formal educational settings (e.g., schools).

This group of learners also refers to the growing population of international students in English-speaking institutions. Most of them learn English in the Expanding Circle¹ (Kachru, 1982; 1985; Higgins, 2003) where they speak other languages as their

¹ Kachru (1985) categories English speakers into three concentric circles: (1) The *inner* circle refers to the regions where English is the primary language, such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; (2) the *outer*

primary languages. While native speakers acquire English through their *ears*, international students are identified as *eye-learners* who principally study linguistic forms of English—i.e., vocabulary, verb forms and sentential rules (Nakamaru, 2010; Reid, 2006; William, 2003). Nevertheless, leading scholars (Johns, 2001; Silva, 1993; Thonus, 2003; Severino & Williams, 2004) categorize L2 writers as an independent group from the 1.5 learners who “are long-term U.S. residents and English learners fluent in spoken English” (Thonus, 2003, p. 17). Much of SLA research recognizes the varied characteristics of language learners. According to Henry Ellis, the differences among them plunge into four fundamental questions: “(a) What does learner language look like?; (b) How do learners acquire it?; (c) What accounts for differences in achievements?; and (d) What are the effects of formal instruction?” (Carson, 2001, p. 191).

While SLA research in the past has inclined to the Communicative Language Learning (CLL) method since the 1990s, Carson (2001) argues that “we simply do not know if the acquisition of oral speech acts is similar to or different from the acquisition of speech acts in writing” (p. 192) or SLA theory can encompass the acquisition of (second language) writing. The differences between speaking and writing, as identified by Barritt and Kroll (1978), are “the immediacy of an audience” and “the facility of production in the two modes” (p. 51). Kaplan (1987) argues cognitive pathways for articulating thoughts orally are different from in writing. Writing is characterized by a threefold distinction: text analytic, composing process and social constructivist views of writing

circle includes the regions going through the spread of English (i.e., colonization). These places are, for example, Nigeria, Kanya and Singapore; and (3) the *expanding* circle refers to the regions, such as Japan, Greece, Nepal and Taiwan where English is used as a foreign language or is an international language.

(Kroll, 2003). Cumming (1998) asserts that the skill for “writing in a second language is very complex psychologically, multi-faceted in its educational realizations, and culturally diverse” (p. 68). Considering the differences between learning a second language and writing in that language, the SLW field was heavily influenced by SLA theories.

The early recognition of SLW did not occur until the mid-1960s (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Hyland, 2003; Leki, Cumming & Silva, 2008; Silva & Matsuda, 2001). Before the 1980s, the work of SLW was aimed at teaching the mastery of sentences and the sound system (Raimes, 1991; Reid, 1993), in lieu of “the nature of writing in various contexts” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 27). Writing was instead “a second representation of language” (Matsuda & Silva, 2001, p. xiv) and “the writer’s command of grammatical and lexical knowledge” (Hyland, 2003, p. 3). Because of prevalent Behaviorism, research on SLW incorporated the work of cognitive psychologists and linguists (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Silva, 1990). Additionally, SLW was also influenced by L1 composition research according to Hedgcock (2010). From that vantage point, it was, for a while, falsely believe that writing in a second language resembles how a person writes in his/her first language (Kaplan, 1966). And yet, many international students, also known as L2 writers, are found to experience difficulties in mastering the conventions of term papers, in which there are lexical and syntactical errors, even though they have years of grammar learning or are highly competent in writing in their first languages (Leki, 1992; Nakamaru, 2010). Moreover, Connor & Kaplan (1987) argue that although students are able to write in their first and second languages, the ability is not tantamount to “the ability to write text—to compose” (, p. 16). Composing here especially refers to highly complex writing in

college, which often requires individuals' rhetorical knowledge to write in contexts and/or in disciplines.

SLA pioneers, such as Joan Carson (2001), Iлона Leki (1991; 1992; 1995; 2001; 2003; 2006; 2011), Tony Silva (1990; 1992; 1993; 1997), Joy Reid (1993; 2006), brought compositionists' attention to first understanding differences between writing in one's first languages and second languages and considering the extent to which L2 writing contexts vary across borders rather than being homogeneous. SLW scholars endeavored to eliminate the underlying assumption that the process of learning a second language is equivalent to the acquisition of an individual's first language (Leki, 1992; Matsuda, 1999; Silva, 1990; 1992; 1993; 1997). In contemplating a fundamental question, "how linguistic expertise in the L2 may constrain the development of L2 composing abilities" (p. 49), Ortega and Carson (2010) categorize the interfaces between SLW and SLA within four areas: (1) text-based studies; (2) correlational studies; (3) observational-introspective studies; and (4) quasi-experimental studies. Silva and Leki (2004) call for future research to recognize "the differences between its parent disciplines" and to "find a middle ground that makes sense for L2 writing studies" (p. 10).

2.3.1 Linguistic and Rhetorical Perspectives on SLW

As mentioned earlier, SLW scholars argue against the perception that L1 and L2 writing are identical and instead differ in cognitive, strategical, rhetorical and linguistic ways (Silva, 1990). Before the knowledge of rhetoric perspectives was introduced to SLW research and due to the prevalence of applied linguistics before the 1960s, teaching L2 writing inevitably focused on "grammar drills at the sentence level" (Matsuda, 1999, p. 709) due to a belief that language learners could write in their target languages because

of their profound knowledge of grammar. The works of Kaplan (1967; 1987) projected a broader view that a language learner's abundant knowledge of grammar does not reveal the person's ability to compose (Edlund, 2006). Patrick Hartwell's article "Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar" (1985) states that some grammar rules or knowledge may not even be identifiable to native speakers of the language (p. 116), as well as Hinds (1987), who stated that "students do not learn to write by studying grammar rules" (p. 86).

Despite linguistic knowledge being viewed as a vital component of learning to write in a second language, Kaplan (1966) took into consideration cultural elements. He argues that one's writing is culturally contextualized, the extent to which it presents the person's *logic*, as the basis of rhetoric (p. 2). According to Kaplan (1967), rhetoric is "the method of organizing syntactic units into larger patterns [and] is as much a culturally coded phenomenon as the syntactic units themselves are" (p. 15). His model of *Contrastive Rhetoric* helps reveal various representations of writing in world languages, such as Oriental, Semitic, Romance, Russian and English. Rhetorical styles of languages are a typology based on speaker and/or writer responsibility as opposed to listener and/or reader responsibility" (Hinds, 1987, p. 143). The issue is whether writers or readers are primarily responsible for generating the understanding of texts through direct or indirect forms of writing. Relating to essential rhetorical differences between the spiral Oriental thinking process and a straight-line Western approach, Fan Shen (1998) disclosed his struggles in creating English composition even though he was an experienced writer in his first language (Chinese). He suggested that because writers from outside Anglo-European cultural discourses are cultivated within a given culture affecting a person's

writing in English, L2 learners not only should be taught about the system of a language, but also be helped “see the world through English-colored glasses” (p. 16).

Kaplan’s arguments underlie the Contrastive Analysis (CA) Hypothesis, retrieved from Robert Lado (1957) and Carl James (1980). It is formulated as an analysis method for systematically comparing and contrasting similarities and differences of linguistic characteristics between writers’ native and target languages. The foundation of CA was also influenced by Odlin’s (1989) notion of *language transfer* or also the so-called cross-linguistic influence, which delves into the act of L1-L2 transfer and the level of dependency on L1 affecting language learners’ productions. Language transfer entails that a person in a context connects his or her L1 and relevant learning habits in the past to current tasks in order to provide appropriate responses. Odlin categorizes positive, neutral or negative linguistic transfer as each is defined as the varied levels of the “influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (p. 27). Linguistic transfer depicts that a learner’s linguistic utterances in the target language resembles the features of his or her first language (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Taking into account social, situational and genre-specific factors (Kubota & Lehner, 2004; Kubota, 2010), Kaplan’s work explaining different language writers’ cultural logic in accordance with the differences in texts (Canagarajah, 2002) heavily influenced the SLW field—to shift the traditional focus on “patterns drills, of the sentence structure and the sound system of the target language” (Silva & Matsuda, 2001, p. xiv) to the representation of the whole text (Kaplan, 1987; Staben & Nordhaus, 2004). An important note on the influence of contrastive rhetoric, as Raimes (1991) states, is that

although SLW teachers and students became more knowledgeable about the links between culture and written products, no concrete applications to classroom teaching were developed after Kaplan's work brought these issues into view.

2.3.2 *Pedagogical Perspectives on SLW*

L2 writing research distinguishes the differences of learning to write in a second language from writing in one's native language and/or skills of writing. Hyland (2003) provides seven guiding concepts to understand teaching L2 writing². Concerning international students' writing skills, many of them come from the educational environment where they do not practice much *actual* English writing. The length of writing is usually confined to a few paragraphs, like the students in Bailey's study (2013) "who have completed an undergraduate dissertation in their mother tongue may have written no more than 400 words at a time in English" (p. 174). Hence, writing instructors continue conversations on how to support L2 students' writing development in American tertiary education.

In the 1980s, the division of labor for designing composition courses in postsecondary education came to light (Matsuda, 2006). SLW scholars discerned complex factors (e.g., L1 interference) involved in the writing process and advocated differentiation in instruction relative to the writer's native language background. The English as a Second Language (ESL) Program in most American postsecondary institutions designs composition courses to ensure that language learners are able to fulfill writing demands. The first ESL class "for international students was taught in 1911 by J.

² Seven concepts to understand teaching L2 writing: language structures, text functions, themes or topics, creative expression, composing processes, content, and genre and contexts of writing (Hyland, 2003)

Raleigh Nelson at the University of Michigan” (Matsuda, 1999, p. 701). Spack (1998) specifies that “the goal of college-level second language (L2) writing programs is to prepare students to become better academic writers” (p. 85) as well as to write in their home departments (Blanton, 1998; DePalma & Ringer, 2011).

The FYW course comprises the features of teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (DePalma & Ringer, 2011; Spack, 1998; Swales, 1990), which refers to training students to use ‘appropriate’ language in college across subject courses. EAP traits, however, are less visible in FYW but more common in ESL Composition classes for English language learners (ELLs) (Raimes, 1991). While the FYW course usually aims to design the curriculum from L1 writing research as well as native-speakers’ learning perspectives, the EAP courses offered by ESL programs are designed by L2 specialists. Leki and Carson (1997), however, stress that the goals of these ESL courses should “enable students to write better not only for EAP writing classes but for academic purposes” (p.39).

The other philosophical difference between ESL and FYW courses is that the ESL courses are designed with reference to Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1987) model of *knowledge telling*. The FYW curriculum is inclined to *knowledge transforming*. Cumming (1995) conducted two case studies exploring the *knowledge telling* and *knowledge transforming* of two ESL writers; one was an experienced writer in her L1 who had used *knowledge transforming* approaches prior to her learning to write in English. The other one was still at the stage of employing the model of *knowledge telling* in her L1. At the stage of *learning to write*, novice ESL writers usually are still developing *knowledge telling* skills. In order to advance to transforming knowledge

writing skills, Hyland (2011) states that L2 writers need explicit instruction involving five kinds of knowledge³, so that learning is not only to *tell* the knowledge, but also to *utilize* and *synthesize* knowledge to achieve goals.

All in all, SLW writing scholars (Hirvela, 2005b; Leki & Carson, 1994; 1997; Silva, 1990; 1992; 1993) assert that the ESL program in the college level should develop students' *academic literacy*, as the “skill and knowledge related to academic reading and writing practices and the ways in which texts operate in academic setting” (Hirvela, 2005a, p. 339). L2 writing specialists still discuss two questions raised in Hirvela's study (2005a): (1) what should they teach? and (2) what should be seen as the primary purpose(s) of the L2, or English as a Second Language (ESL) writing course? (p. 337).

Leki, Cumming and Silva (2006) point out that since the 1970s and 1980s, ESL specialists were usually not writing teachers but language teachers or applied linguists, and most writing teachers were not English language teachers (p. 141). Neither did they feel confident enough to help L2 writers fulfill the writing demands in the university. SLW scholarship extends research on curriculum design and considers whether ESL writing courses should stress “content-based instruction (CBI) involving ‘the integration of particular content with language-teaching aims’” (Brinton et al., 2003, p.2 cited in James, 2006, p. 783) or “should be broad-based (i.e., education) rather than narrow (i.e., training)” (Widdowson, 1984, as cited in James, 2006, p. 783). Shih (1986) urges L2 writing instruction for undergraduate students “to prepare them to handle a variety of tasks across disciplines” (p. 621).

³ Learning to write involves five kinds of knowledge: content knowledge, system knowledge, process knowledge genre knowledge and context knowledge (Hyland, 2011, p. 31).

Along the line with “the *Process* Movement, which originated in native-speaker contexts in the 1960s” (Johns, 1995, p. 277), SLW research in the 1970s focused on how L2 writers compose (Raines, 1991). ESL writing instruction then changed the pedagogical direction (Silva & Leki, 2004) by correlating literacy studies with writing instruction. Writing is not a representation of spoken language. Instead, teaching writing is integrated with reading studies, assembling the perspective on developing literacy skills of native speakers (Benson & Heidish, 1995). Reading achievement is identified to have a direct relationship to one’s writing ability (Reid, 1993). Because “learning to read is always learning some aspect of some discourse” (Gee, 1998, p. 55), as that is a skill requiring decoding and interpretation of words in contexts, reading and writing should be integrated for literacy development (Blanton, 1998). Canagarajah (2002) also asserts that connecting writing to reading is “an important pedagogical strategy of content-based writing instruction” because writers are able to “get a better sense of how knowledge is constructed in the academy” (p. 143). Spack (1985) and Hirvela (2001; 2005b) studied the use of literature in ESL college-level writing courses for L2 writers’ development of literacy and writing in English. The interrelationship of reading and writing arrives to the concept that meaning-making is constructed through extensive reading in which individuals engage in cognitive and linguistic activities, and writing is as a result of active practice presenting writers’ abilities of incorporating knowledge with rhetorical conventions to written texts (Hyland, 2001). Belcher (1995) ascertains critical writing as well as responding to reading is good for students, and critical review assignments are designated to help students shift writing from the model of *knowledge telling* to *knowledge transforming*.

The abilities to read and write are important in academic contexts. Noting Spivey's (1984) *discourse synthesis* study in which she addressed reading and writing the texts are necessary for production and comprehension, individuals' discourse knowledge, topic knowledge and world knowledge are involved in the composing process. However, reading and writing integration, as well as literacy development in second language writing, has not been studied much to provide evidence on how reading and writing are integrated (see Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009; Hirvela, 2004). According to Grabe and Zhang (2013), reading and writing integration is a critical component of teaching English for academic purposes EAP classes. In these classes, ELL students often encounter tasks, for example, comprehending texts, summarizing and synthesizing resources, which "turn out to be quite difficult for L2 learners as they develop their EAP skills" (p. 13), because of various factors, such as limited reading and writing practices, vocabulary knowledge and cultural as well as rhetorical knowledge from that they could retrieve. Drawing from multiple studies, Grabe and Zhang (2013) concluded that EAP instructors should provide many opportunities for L2 learners to practice reading and writing tasks.

SLW scholars continue to navigate what is the ultimate approach to help L2 learners with writing by including research on needs analyses, instructional interventions, rhetorical features, learner processes and assessment (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2006). Regarding instructional approaches, Saville-Troike (1984) prompts instructors to rethink "teaching English is not an end in itself but only a means to an end" (p. 217). With regards to methodologies, analyzing writing errors is prone to understand "the language patterns of that particular learner or into language learners in general" (Kutz, 1998, p. 45). Ferris (2004; 2011) claims error feedback may be helpful as well as harmful as the

types of feedback correlate with effectiveness of improving accuracy in writing. Crossley and McNamara (2009) conducted text analysis by collecting 208 essays of English speaking undergraduate students and 251 essays from the Spanish corpus and employing a computational tool Coh-Metrix to measure cohesion and text difficulty. The findings showed that salient differences were found among L1 and L2 written texts and writers' lexical depth of knowledge, variation, and sophistication vary textual features (p. 119).

Furthermore, qualitative research methodology became prevalent in SLW scholarship. For example, surveys are inclined to gathering data via face-to-face and question-and-answer formats (Brown & Rodgers, 2009). Zamel (1998) "surveyed instructors about their experiences working with non-native speakers of English" (p. 250) and later she surveyed "about what ESL students wanted faculty to know about their experiences and needs in classrooms across the curriculum" (p. 253). A survey can be utilized as an interview, or a so-called survey interview. Hirvela (2005a) used a questionnaire at the beginning of his study to understand ESL students' attitudes "toward computer-based reading and writing in English" (p. 343) and in his follow-up interviews, he asked students about their questionnaire response. In his later study (2005b), Hirvela utilized an attitude questionnaire to survey on 195 ESL students about their viewpoints of reading and writing about literature in English. Instead of running statistical analyses, he compared and contrasted students' responses between two groups and presented descriptive answers. The advantages of surveys allow researchers to have a great sense of participants, for example, about their attitudes, beliefs and culture. Surveys can be also used as a recruitment tool. Asking particular questions, like preference of learning modes or language learning experiences, helps select participants whose personal traits or

characteristics become dependent variables of a study. A selection of methods is used to study topics relevant to second language writing. This study will deliberate more on the rationales of selected methods in Chapter Three.

A collection of chapters by Rosa M. Manchón (2011) addresses the understanding of “written language learning in an additional language” (p. 3). The first aspect *learning-to-write* (LW) conceptually confines ESL composition courses that are designed to help L2 writers learn fundamental English writing and express themselves in writing. The scheme of ESL composition courses (at University X) is contextualized in accordance with the LW dimension, with the intent to acclimate L2 students to write in their target languages (Reichelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert, & Schultz, 2012). Ortega (2011) states that the LW aspect of ESL courses focuses “on good writing and writer development” (p. 238). She further claims that the LW view converges with freshman composition courses developing native English speakers’ writing skills. The second perspective *learning-to-write content* (WLC) ascribes writing activities to the development of content knowledge other than writing itself. Ortega (2011) points out that using WLC approaches is to involve L2 learners in “writing in the (new) language of the (new) institution” (p. 239). They then learn to navigate meanings and engage in deep thinking. Hirvela (2011) addresses WLC is analogous to one of the WAC principles, *writing to learn* (WTL)—using writing as a tool to acquire knowledge other than writing itself. WLC is also related to “what has historically been called Content-based instruction (CBLT)” (p. 39) in ESL classrooms. The third lens is *writing-to-learn language* (WLL), which calls for more of “writing to support and enhance language learning outcomes” (Ortega, 2011, p. 240). It is usually recognizable in foreign language classrooms, but this study connects WLL with

another WAC principle—*writing-in-disciplines* (WID) or also called *learning-to-write*. By implication, the WLL or WID approach is employed to acquaint writers with not only content knowledge but also disciplinary conventions of writing.

Leki (1995b) reports that many studies targeted NS writers, “examining the expectations for the writing of college students across the curriculum” (p. 42), but NNS writers need more knowledge about those expectations, in part because of their limited familiarities with conventions of English-speaking academic writing. L2 writers in Leki’s (2011) study reflected they did not think much about “how the text should work” (p. 93). Interestingly, students from East Asian language backgrounds perceived writing in English was like writing in their first languages. On the other hand, European students “tended to see English writing as excessively structured and in this way different from writing in their own languages” (p. 94). Leki (1995b) suggests EAP writing instructors can help ESL students “become conscious of the existence of different writing contexts so that they automatically ask what the purpose of a writing task is and who the audience will be” (p. 44). It is necessary to spend additional time to help them “in understanding English texts and their cultural and linguistic contexts” (Johns, 1995, p. 279).

2.4 L2 Writers in the FYW Course

SLW research has focused on L2 writing pedagogies within ESL composition classrooms. The present study nevertheless pinpoints the need for more research on L2 learners’ writing development in the first-language composition class (i.e. FYW). In reality, the number of international students has significantly increased in American universities in last four decades (Matsuda, 1999). Silva, Carson, and Leki (1997) acknowledged that L2 “writers are heterogeneous” (p. 424) in multiple respects. For

example, their cultural backgrounds, prior education, gender, age, language proficiency levels in their first languages and in English, professional aims, and in their academic expectations vary across wide range of spectrums (Johns, 2001). Both the ESL and FYW Programs “are immediately concerned with preparing student to write academically, [but] they approach that goal in different ways” (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995, p. 559).

In terms of the design of a FYW course, the MES (mono-lingual English Speakers) Program (i.e., FYW) considers “originality, creativity, Western logic, and rationality as commonsense notions in composition” (Johns, 2001, p. 148). Nevertheless, compositionists and faculty members across disciplines have insufficient knowledge about L2 learners (Matsuda, 1999). They expect them to perform at some levels as domestic students do. A faculty member in Zamel’s study (1998) was upset after knowing that L2 writers had completed two ESL courses, but their writing in essence still showed inadequate knowledge of languages. This faculty member particularly considered it was not her position to improve L2 students’ language proficiency. The response implied that ESL composition courses are perceived to prepare L2 students with adequate knowledge of language terminologies and writing skills for dealing with tasks in regular classrooms. Faculty may not be aware that the difficulties that L2 writers encounter would not “disappear completely after a semester—or even a few years—of additional language instruction” (Matsuda, 1999, p. 715). For example, a Chinese undergraduate nursing student in Leki’s study (2003a) reported that she still struggled with writing, even though she did quite well during the years of taking GECs and ESL courses.

The complexity of L2 writing development across writing courses is not only the reason of the different philosophical backgrounds of ESL and FYW courses, but also the

accounts of four perspectives, i.e., grammar, discourse, sociolinguistics and strategy, according to Hyland (2001). First of all, L2 writers are found to be less effective to produce texts than their American peers (Silva, 1997), often because of L2 writers' developmental language proficiency in English. They are generally still very much in the process of learning English. Understanding complex grammatical structures of readings is challenging since they have to spend a lot of time on decoding the language than dealing with the content (Bailey, 2013).

Therefore, although the *process* model which FYW employs in its curriculum influences SLW research to formulate new pedagogical perspectives on supporting language learners' writing development (e.g., WLL and WLC aspects), literature has not studied much about how L2 students learn under the effectiveness of the *process*-oriented pedagogy in a monolingual writing classroom. The conceptual scheme of this model is that "writing as a linguistic process" (Mayher, et al., 1983, p. 3) which requires syntactic and semantic resources in one's language system as cues to the written system. Mayher, et al. (1983) claim that writing "can be a way of extending linguistic resources" (p. 4), as a way to increase vocabulary and the range of syntactic and semantic knowledge. Nevertheless, how language learners draw their developmental language knowledge of English to learn to write in FYW is yet well identified.

Secondly, a university composition program (i.e., FYW) is operated on an assumption that most students' cultural knowledge fits into general expectations. Nevertheless, the educational system is a cultural presentation. An American classroom is also a miniature of social conventions (Kress, 1989). Learning to write in college is not an automatic act but requires attentive effort (Mayher, et al., 1983). It cannot neglect "the

influence from students' various L1 life and cultural experiences" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 25) to the process of developing L2 writing abilities. L2 writers bring their knowledge about "academic classrooms, theories of writing, and how writing tasks should be approached that have been developed in their first culture and in their writing classrooms in their home cultures" (Johns, 2001, p. 148). Although ELL students' knowledge about writing in L1 may facilitate their acquisition of L2 writing (as positive transfer), transfer of L1 rhetorical conventions and L1-based processing strategies could hinder language learners' acquisition of new textual genres knowledge (as negative transfer) (Canagarajah, 2011; Koda, 1993). In addition to negative linguistic transfer, their far from mainstream cultural orientation could camouflage the adequacy for international students to use prior knowledge to FYW courses (Matsuda, 1999).

For example, scholarship addresses the concerns of plagiarism observed in L2 writing (Grabe & Zhang, 2013). Anglo-American writing regulates giving credit to any retrieved or used source in writing. Some international students may never anticipate a need of recounting references in writing (Bloch & Chi, 1995; Bloch, 2001), because in their cultural and educational context, reciting other people's words is such a natural and assumed action of writing in their first languages. Students are also expected to use this practice—memorization of texts—in their English learning. Thus, they could easily be accused of plagiarism due to unfamiliarity with American cultural inferences (Silva et al., 1997). In Bloch's survey study (2012) on 237 students' attitudes toward plagiarism and intellectual property, defining the appropriate penalty on the amount of copying common knowledge in texts without citing is discordant. They were not aware of complex issues between "the amount of copying and the nature of the text that had been copied" (p. 120).

Pennycook (1996) suggests that instead of directly punishing the act of plagiarizing, instructors need to understand how L2 writers are familiar with across cultures about the ownership of texts and borrowing texts.

Moreover, the objectives of the FYW course at University X emphasize critical thinking skills. Atkinson claims “critical thinking is in fact ill-defined and implicit, more in the nature of a social practice” (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 2006, p. 172). Critical thinking denotes a person’s ability to point out “culture-specific and culturally enshrined concepts” (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995, p. 558; Canagarajah, 2006b) as well as at the stance to “analyze problems, reflect on arguments, and rework their ideas through recursive redrafting” (Hyland, 2001, p. 38). Tracing back to Renaissance and through the Romantic period, the skill was developed into a presumptive social practice in present-day academic English writing. Hirvela (2011) points out the *writing to learn* approach used in composition courses to develop students’ critical thinking skills could be challenging for L2 writers, since the approach underlies the skills of critical analysis encoding social conventions, culture and discourses (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996). FYW instructors assumed that students possess abilities of rhetorical analysis, whereas this assumption could disadvantage non-native English speakers (NNESs), as they are cultivated outside Anglo-American educational systems prior to their attendance in American institutions. In this regard, it is difficult for L2 writers to fulfill the expectations of presenting culturally contextualized analysis (Silva, 1993).

Susan Blau and her colleagues (2002) also state that cultural difference unavoidably affects international students’ adaptations to American educational settings and rhetorical styles ad hoc to their writing. Zawacki and his colleagues (2007)

interviewed 26 international students about their learning to write experiences in their native languages and in English, how they perceive them differently, what cultural differences they encounter and how they learn to meet teachers' expectations. Many of them were concerned about writing, not only because they made grammar errors, but also considered that insufficient knowledge about American socio-political and cultural contexts hampered their interpretation of writing assignment prompts. Park (2009) studied international undergraduates' academic socialization and followed them for an academic year. Those L2 writers assimilated the discursive expectations of every course, including ESL, FYW and disciplinary courses, across learning contexts. They contested the academic socialization process and negotiated their identities to adopt a new self as an academic writer. By the same token, a Pakistani L2 writer in Zawacki and Habib's study (2014) expressed her frustration about learning to write: "When I write in Urdu, my culture thing comes to me. How am I going to put that in English, you know?" (p. 653).

As Flower and Hayes (1980) state, an adult writer should possess three constraints on composing, which are integrated knowledge, linguistic conventions of written texts and the rhetorical problem itself. With reference to Flower (1994), how knowledge is already organized affects the way a writer constructs meaning of new information. Writing about cultural conventions and historic information of particular topics in the U.S. prompts a person to retrieve resources of knowledge. Drawing the writer's long-term memory including knowledge about topic and audience can be a concern of a L2 novice writer whose organized rhetoric repertoire in the native language and culture does not integrate new knowledge in the writing process.

Chiang and Schimida's study (2006) investigated language identity and language ownership of U.S-born children of immigrant parents, rather than traditional ESL students in College Writing Programs. Interestingly, although they were born in English speaking environment, some did not identify their writing skills same as that of native English speakers. A student said, "I am unsure about writing. I am confused. I am frustrated. I think I will never become a good writer because I am Asian" (p. 100). Fan Shen's narrative (1998) describes a conflict between his two identities Chinese and English while being situated in freshman composition courses, which provides notable evidence of an individual's identity in connecting with (cultural) discourse practices in which the one participates (Spack, 1997b). Writing a paper in another language "is not an isolated classroom activity, but a social and cultural experience"; in a sense, learning to write in English accompanies with "learning the values of Anglo-American society" (Shen, 1998, p. 124). As a result, rather than eliminating the old identity, L2 writers have to create a new identity in order to redefine "I" in a new cultural society.

Another strand of writing research (Herrington, 1981; Leki & Carson, 1994; 1997) explores the collaboration of compositions and courses in majors. In this kind of courses, students felt learning how to write was more comprehensive, because professional conventions were explicit taught along with subject-matter contents. Writing tasks were contextualized in disciplines. Students were also more able to discuss papers, "since knowledge is shared among class members" (Spack, 1998, p. 92). L2 writers seemingly learned effectively in writing intensive courses in majors if teachers had solid knowledge of the subjects as well as writing instructions (Spack, 1998).

All in all, Matsuda (1999) argues “composition studies and second language studies should be merged” (p. 715) for theoretical studies. FYW teachers need to rethink pedagogies by including the literature of composition studies and SLW. In addition to Matsuda’s insight into creating an ESL-friendly learning environment in writing courses, Land and Whitley (1998) suggest that L2 writers should “acquire enough facility with standard written English to succeed in school” (p. 135) and beyond. ESL students were found to intend to follow conventions of standard written English in regular writing classes, but they naturally returned to how they used to write in their native rhetoric. Rethinking curriculum and the role of writing in a person’s learning process, Newell (2006) suggests taking into consideration what goals and expectations students bring to classroom as well as what experiences and factors affect their participation.

Canagarajah (2006a) proposes a place for world Englishes in monolingual composition in order to accommodate language variations of English and embrace multilingual speakers whose code-switching skills represent individual voices in writing. L2 specialists (e.g., Silva and Leki) suggest instructors show sensitivity to the challenges that L2 students encounter in class. To the extent, Matsuda and Silva (2006) put into practice “a cross-cultural composition course, which is designed to integrate U.S. and international students and is taught by an instructor who is prepared to address the needs of both groups of students” (p. 247), which is in the direction of offering a comfortable rather than a threatening environment for ESL students. Taught by instructors who received training for teaching “both ESL and mainstream sections of introductory composition courses” (p. 250), L1 and L2 students reported that their increase of cross-

cultural understanding was valuable to their learning in essence gaining insights into culturally diverse integration in composition courses.

One pedagogical aspect of L2 writing development relates to the theory of transfer. Besides linguistic L1 transfer (e.g., Ellis, 1965; Odlin, 1989), *learning transfer* is a vital research focus in Psychology and Education (Alexander & Murphy, 1999; Bassok & Holyoak, 1993; Detterman & Sternberg, 1993; Perkins & Salomon, 2012). It discusses how to prolong an individual's learning beyond classrooms by applying prior knowledge and/or learning in one context to novel situations (Schunk, 2004, as cited in Nowacek, 2011). Therefore, ensuring one's ability to use what is taught in one situation to other situations corresponds to DePalma and Ringer's argument that "transfer of learning is a basic goal of education" (2011, p. 135). Salomon and Perkins (1989; 1998) define transfer various typologies, such as low-road and high-road transfer, near and far transfer, and positive and negative transfer. Learning new knowledge presumably automatically activates 'transfer' from one situation to one another. Students in this regard are assumed to connect what they learn in one course with new information in a new course. This proposition is continuously withstanding in education (Larsen-Freeman, 2013).

However, Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) argue that an individual who wants to have successful transfer should have actively engaged in learning. Active learning and adequate amount of mastery in original context strongly correlates with successful transfer. In other words, the relationship between learning and transfer can be discrete if without attentive support or "any salient similarity between the training and the transfer material" (Bassok & Holyoak, 1993, p. 70). The FYW course as well as ESL courses with an EAP emphasis is designed based on the proposition that writing is

transferrable across courses and contexts (Downs & Wardle, 2007; Russell & Yañez, 2003). And yet, Russell and Yañez (2003) incorporate activity theory and genre systems theory to understand what constrains writing to be “easily” transferred from GECs (i.e., FYC) to specialized courses. Teachers and students have to recognize “not just ‘what’ or ‘how’ to write in a new discipline, but also the ‘why’ or motive of writing” (p. 358). By implication, learning in FYW may not directly transfer to how to write in disciplines or across courses. Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak (2014) bring up the question of “how we can help students develop writing knowledge and practices that they can draw upon, use, and repurpose for new writing tasks in new settings” (p. 2). Discordant expected learning outcomes of a general composition course between upper-level courses imply the need of extensive discussions on the topic of transfer (Downs & Wardle, 2007).

Mark James (2014) reviewed transfer of EAP instruction and his questions are: (1) how EAP instruction might promote or inhibit transfer?; (2) Might there be instructional techniques that are particularly effective for promoting transfer? and (3) Might there be instructional techniques that are less effective for promoting or perhaps inhibit learning transfer? (p. 12). In his earlier studies, James (2008) discussed “whether knowledge of writing is broadly transferable across writing situations or constrained by differences between tasks and communities” (p. 77). Harklau (2002) identifies that “applied linguists seem much more likely to ask *how students learn to write in a second language* than to ask *how students learn a second language through writing*” (p. 332). As a result, L2 writers may perceive writing in English as an isolated skill, rather than as a transferable skill for learning in other courses. In order to enhance the transfer of writing, Harklau

suggests increasing L2 writer's awareness of "the instrumental role that writing can play in the acquisition of a second language" (p. 345) and disciplinary knowledge.

2.5 Summary

To conclude, as is shown in the literature review, composition studies and second language writing scholarship have not fully explored L2 students' learning as well as academic literacy development in a FYW course. This present study synthesizes issues concerning SLW in multiple dimensions, as well as the interfaces of L1 and L2 writing research. First of all, writing in academe is denser and "requires very high levels of reading comprehension ... sophisticated paraphrasing ability and a specialized vocabulary" (Myers, 2011, p. 286). FYW is a course operated in an Anglo-American context and on the assumption that students perform writing practices in accordance with U.S. rhetorical conventions. Literature to date has not given enough attention to the interrelation between L2 students' learning how to write in American universities and/or in the epistemological FYW setting. In addition, most studies seem to have focused on the problematic aspects of L2 students' academic literacy development in ESL settings. Staben and Nordhaus (2004) point out that inasmuch as writing is not only a representation of texts but also a social practice, "ESL writers may need resources—"cultural informants"—to help them understand the assumptions and expectations of a U.S. academic audience" (Staben & Nordhaus, 2004, p. 73). As such, there is still relatively little information about what resources L2 students need or how they learn outside of ESL classrooms.

Moreover, research on composition courses is insufficiently documented (Beaufort, 2007), as is L2 writers' transition from ESL to FYW courses. To address the

gap in the literature, this qualitative case study focuses on L2 writers' learning experiences in FYW. The theoretical frameworks including the process model, knowledge telling versus transforming, writing to learn, and transfer of learning, are especially relevant. By drawing from these frameworks, this study shed light on how to structure a FYW course so as to advocate for Paul Matsuda (2006) and his work with Tony Silva (2006): Renovating FYW class as a cross-cultural composition and an ESL-friendly environment. The findings of this study also attempt to suggest "hybrid" ESL courses as Smoke (2001) designed ESL classes with discipline-specific courses, so L2 writers could "see connections between courses and the writing and reading they did" (p. 132). To supplement the current study, Table 2.1 summarizes key L2 writing research.

Author(s), year	Participants' characteristics	Data Collection & analysis	Findings
Bailey (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 311 students in UK Some completed high school education and were preparing to enter Year 1 of an undergraduate degree; some completed 2-4 years of higher education in their home country and were preparing to postgraduate courses or Years 2-3 of an undergraduate degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> following a three-month English foundation course students completed essay writing tasks (1200-2000 words) reflect on the process afterwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> difficulty of finding source material reading: grappling with discipline-specific terminology and understanding complex grammatical structures
Biber, Gray, & Poonpon (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 grammatical features in empirical research articles, contrasted with the use in conversations (p.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corpus-based analyses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clausal subordination measures are more common in conversations. Grammatical complexity is more common in academic writing.
Chiang & Schimida (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of Asian American students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a year-long study in the College Writing Programs interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are not confident in speaking, reading, or writing their heritage language They do not fully adjust the culture of mainstream.
Crossley & McNamara (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 208 essays from native English speaking undergraduate college students 251 essays written in English by native Spanish speakers from the International Corpus of Learner English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Coh-Metrix to measure "cohesion and text difficulty at various levels of language, discourse, and conceptual analysis, and a statistical method known as discriminant function analysis" (p. 119) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L1 and L2 written texts vary in several aspects, related to the writer's lexical depth of knowledge, variation, and sophistication (p. 119).
Currie (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 NNES female and 1 male undergraduates in the 2nd or 3rd year of the program 2 course instructors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> textual analysis: academic argument and narrative assignments with the written feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> argumentation: expectations not shared narrative: shared understanding of tasks and text
De Larios, Manchon, & Murphy (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 groups in the Spanish educational system with 6, 9, and 12 years of instruction in English an ANOVA test to distinguish proficiency levels 7 in level 1 (aged 16-17); 7 in level 2 (aged 19-20); 7 in level 3 (aged 23-24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> think-aloud protocols of two writing tasks Recording the composing sessions transcripts of the think-aloud protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "the participants devoted twice as much time to dealing with formulation problems in the L2 than in the L1 and that the amount of time allocated to solving problems in the L2 did not depend on proficiency" (100)

Table 2. 1 The Reviewed SLW Scholarship

Continued

Table 2. 1 Continued

Faigley & Hansen (1985)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 student interviews (Psychology, Sociology) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> observations across departments textual analysis of course assignments (teachers' feedback/comments; instructions) interviews (before writing an assignment) compare assignments across disciplines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> different expectations to assignments across disciplines, especially between English and upper-division courses
Gorska (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 international students, 3 writing tutors, 3 subject tutors and 1 programme coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 months' ethnographic observations of a writing class transcripts of in-depth interviews collected during three terms of an academic year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high appreciation of writing classes familiar with the academic conventions of an essay and a critique improving their written language ability learning differences between university writing in the UK and in higher education institutions in their home countries look for feedback from friends the usefulness of generic writing support
Hirvela & Belcher (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 doctoral student in mechanical engineering 1 doctoral student in agricultural economics 1 doctoral student in agricultural education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 case studies interviews of students and their graduate advisors analysis of samples of their writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2 writers encounter conflicts of establishing a voice when they have been professional/academic writers in their native language.
Hirvela (2005a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 undergraduate international student was close to finishing the nursing program, with two children 1 just arrived for 3 months, majoring in architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> case study 10-week activity log interview once per week (45 minutes each time) syllabi and course descriptions for each of their courses a questionnaire at the beginning of the study and when it is completed follow-up interviews about the questionnaire responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2 students' different preferences for expression and disciplinary affiliations vary the use of a computer as a tool for writing and reading (p. 354)
Hirvela (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95 ESL students in Group A and 100 students in Group B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an attitudes questionnaire general tendencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although students see the course over-emphasized on using literature-based reading and writing, they are accustomed to it afterwards.

Table 2. 1 Continued

Hirvela & Du (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 undergraduate students from China 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> case studies Three rounds of think-aloud protocols text-based interviews iterative and progressive data analysis method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because “the transition from knowledge telling to knowledge transforming is a complex one” (p. 92), instructions are necessary to facilitate the process.
James (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 1st year students in a content-based EAP course concurrently with other first-year university courses 2 instructors of EAP and 16 course instructors 1 administrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a longitudinal qualitative case study one academic year through multi-pronged assessment measures interview transcripts, participant journals, class observation notes, course samples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning transfer did occur
James (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42 from a freshman ESL writing course (57% were male) from three sections 11 different major areas of study 15 different nationalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a semester course (FYW-sheltered version for ESL students) semi-structured oral interview a one-page background questionnaire during 2 weeks near the end of the semester completed an out-of-class writing task chi-square test & Pearson correlation coefficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many students use their leaning in the course while completing writing tasks. Subject matter, instructions or requirements, source of information, level of difficulty, context, mode of communication are different among subjects.
James (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 students were enrolled in EAP writing courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> semi-structured interviews during the final three weeks of a semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resource availability opportunity for transfer requirement for transfer personal beliefs about transfer expected impact of transfer perceptions of competence attitudes toward learning outcomes attitudes toward learning and transfer context/tasks
Leki & Carson (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 students who “have taken an EAP writing course or in an ESL section of 1st composition currently enrolling in a university course that requires writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77/128 survey (open-ended questions and fixed Qs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L2 writers feel they did well in their content courses They were also able to use their learning in EAP class to the content courses.

Continued

Table 2. 1 Continued

Leki (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 ESL students in their first term at a U.S. university (3 grad. and 2 undergrad.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interviews (students & professors) • observations of the classes • examination of documents • journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were able to adjust developed strategies and pursue new ones, depending on tasks that they encountered.
Leki & Carson (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61 NNSs who placed into English classes • 78 students (21 agreed to be interviewed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-60 mins-interview (phenomenological and ethnographic) • the problems with all self-reports and face-to-face interactions • a strategy of analytic induction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time constraints • familiarity with the topic • organization • summary • plagiarism
Leki (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 undergraduate international students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-depth weekly or biweekly interviews • 5 years • field notes of class observations • transcriptions of interviews with their professors • class documents (syllabuses and course handouts, written work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting logistics • task allocation • actual contributions to the project of individual group members • anticipated contributions to the project by the bilingual students
Leki (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 undergraduate international students • 58 of the students' professors and instructors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interview bi-weekly (45 min) • observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students see EAP composition courses helpful to their writing experiences across the curriculum.
Leki (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 students' literacy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • case studies: three sets of interview, email contact • examination of documentation • nonparticipant observation • interviews with the instructors • recordings of selected writing center sessions • weekly journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At some points, students feel marginalized or unconfident in group projects.
Matsuda & Silva (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 NES and 12 NNES 1st year students • 14 males and 6 females 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weekly journals • 5 writing projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both NS and NNES students feel themselves learn a lot in the cross-cultural composition course

Continued

Table 2. 1 Continued

Perl (1979)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 unskilled writers (NES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study • composing tapes • open-ended interview • students' written products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students show consistent composing processes, including prewriting, writing and editing across any writing tasks, but insufficient proficiency may inhibit the flow of composing.
Pinnow (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an ELL student (13 years old) • the student's teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2006-2007 • participant observation • field notes • classroom observations • interviews • digital photos, documents and archival data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the social semiotic perspective, the student showed multilingual and social competencies in interacting with the teacher in the language classroom. In sum, "interactional competence is a multimodal semiotic endeavor" that requires explicit instruction to ELLs.
Purves (1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Arabic-speaking student who gradually learned to write American academic essays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • case study ("during the course of five years' research for the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) which has examined the writing of students from 15 countries in their native language" (p. 39)) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-native English characteristics are found in written texts.
Silva (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 international graduate students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • four writing papers • each was completed in 9 one-hour class sessions over a period of approximately three weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students perceive L2 writing to be different from L1 writing in the areas of planning, writing, grammar and vocabulary • ESL writing teachers are suggested to provide help with grammar and vocabulary.
Silva (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72 texts written in L1 and L2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparing L1 and L2 written texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • composing process and features of written texts are different between L1 and L2 writing

Continued

Table 2. 1 Continued

Steinman (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 L2 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a literacy timeline a meta-writing activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students viewed the writing project very positively and the activity helped increase “knowledge about particular features of their first language,” awareness of English” (p. 570)
van Weijen, van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, and Sanders (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 ESL students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 short argumentative essays in their L1 (Dutch and 4 in their L2 (English) • think-aloud protocols • the analysis focuses on the occurrence of “conceptual activities, including Generating ideas, Planning, and Metacomments” (235) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants use their L1 while writing in their L2 • L2 proficiency is directly related to L2 text quality
Wang & Wen (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Chinese EFL learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two tasks: narration and argumentation • think-aloud method • audio-recording the writing process • Analyses of think-aloud protocols • quantitative analyses of the think-aloud data : SPSP for both descriptive and inferential analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students rely on L1 when planning, generating and organizing ideas • They rely on L2 “when undertaking task-examining and text-generating activities”(225) • The use of L1 decreases when writers’ L2 is developed.
Zamel (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 faculty’s responses • ESL students (325 responses from 1st and 2nd year enrolled in courses across a range of disciplines) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey interviews • case-study of 2 students who attended a composition course about students’ classroom experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary instructors focus on content issues and help students make connections between instruction and the assigned readings. • “the myth of transience” means that ESL students’ language issues can be remediated (p. 253)

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study examined undergraduate L2 writers' experiences in a First Year Writing (FYW) course, and this chapter describes both the theoretical perspectives and the data gathering and data analysis procedures used to design and conduct the study. Harklau and William (2010) observe that a theory of inquiry or a theory-building paradigm significantly directs second language writing (SLW) research to justify "which research methods might be used, how and why they are used, and how resulting data are analyzed" (p. 94). From a theoretical perspective, this study drew heavily on Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) notions of *knowledge telling* and *knowledge transforming* as the primary conceptual framework to contextualize L2 undergraduates' transition from ESL writing courses to FYW courses. This was based on the assumptions that (a) ESL courses generally operate in the knowledge telling mode, while the FYW course works from a knowledge transforming orientation, and (b) students' transition from one course setting to another could be challenging. Another important framework came from Manchón's (2011) distinction between three directions for writing instruction: *Writing to Learn*, *Writing to Learn Language*, and *Writing to Learn Content*. The study also drew from Emig's (1971) and Flower & Hayes' (1980; 1981) *process* models of writing as well as Spivey's (1984; 1997) constructivist conception of the *composing process* to determine

“the designation of data sources relevant to research goals” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 54)—probing into L2 students’ composing processes and learning experiences in FYW.

The current study employed qualitative research methods, and specifically adopted a case study approach to address the following overarching research question: *What were the L2 undergraduate students’ experiences in the FYW course (especially after taking ESL writing courses)?* It also sought answers to these more focused research questions:

1. What was the nature of the L2 participants’ transitions, as writers, from the ESL course orientation to the FYW framework?
2. What were the L2 participants’ perceptions of the transitions involved from the ESL writing courses to FYW?
3. How did the L2 participants respond to the analytically-oriented writing tasks in FYW?
4. What resources did the L2 participants use to address challenges they faced in FYW?

3.2 Overview of Research Design

Since the early 1970s, qualitative methods have prevailed in writing research to study how a person writes (Harklau & Williams, 2010; Schultz, 2006). Qualitative research could simply mean any research method that does not use numbers (Harklau & Williams, 2010), in contrast to quantitative research, usually referring to statistical studies that “estimate the probability, or likelihood, that the results did not occur by chance alone” (Brown, 1988, p. 3). Quantitative research is driven to control, verify and explain variables (Stake, 1995). In order to generalize about a (large) population sample,

quantitative research often gathers large data sets to enhance statistical significance. For example, Biber, Gray and Poonpon (2011) ran corpus-based analyses of empirical research articles to investigate how 28 grammatical features were different from their uses in conversations. Crossley and McNamara (2009) also used an enormous corpus database and a computational tool, Coh-Metrix, to measure cohesion and difficulty of texts.

On the other hand, the research goals of a qualitative study usually revolve around *how* and *what* are the meanings of the phenomena under investigation (Yin, 2003). This study investigated *how* L2 writers learn to write in FYW classes and *what* happens in the composing processes as they move through such classes, and so a qualitative methodology was deemed suitable. Moreover, qualitative research accounts for interpretive and naturalistic approaches to inquiring into how people operate in social settings, especially about their behaviors, perceptions, beliefs, phenomena, problems and complex interrelationships between variables (e.g., culture, socio-economic status, language) (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative methodologies seek to capture “what people say and do, as a product of how people define their world” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 8). Instead of theorizing general tendencies among collected responses, qualitative methods are “concerned with process rather than outcomes or products” (Merriam, 1988, p. 19) and “allow the researcher to explore a local context, identify unanticipated phenomena and influences, understand the processes of events and actions, and develop causal explanations” (Tardy, 2010, p. 114). Qualitative research embraces the nuances of human behaviors in specific contexts and explains the multi-layered complexity of a problem, in

lieu of testing experimental variables and conforming to hypotheses. All of these perspectives guided the decision to employ a qualitative design in the current study.

Beginning in the late 1960s, writing research shifted some attention to the processes of composing texts. Janet Emig's seminal study (1971) of 12th graders composing influenced literacy and composition researchers to explore "what are the cognitive processes of an individual writer, and how do these process vary across individuals and contexts? What factors influence the decisions writers make as they compose?" (Schultz, 2006, p. 362). Her use of case study methods, think-aloud protocols, and interviews provided insight into understanding a person's writing process. Cognitive writing research (e.g., Flower & Hayes, 1981) addresses a variety of components involved in the writing process. These elements are unique to each individual and cannot be generalized. These writing studies framed this study theoretically to employ qualitative methods and to look into L2 writers' cognitive activities while engaged in certain writing tasks.

According to Creswell's five qualitative traditions of inquiry (1998), ethnography and case study approaches were deemed appropriate for this study. First of all, the nature of ethnography examines "the group's observable and learned patterns of behaviors" (Creswell, 1998, p. 58). Ethnography, originally associated with anthropology, has been used to describe cultural scenes and people (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Ethnography best suited the needs of this study not only because of its interest in human subjects but also the focus on students' learning in a writing class. In this respect, the study adopted "educational ethnography" as part of the research design that aimed to "provide rich, descriptive data about the contexts, activities, and beliefs of participants in educational

settings” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 17). Newell (2006) claims that “to study literacy practices within school contexts, ethnography methods are appropriate” (p. 243), especially for investigating the stages of writing growth. One characteristic of ethnography is that it strives to depict the changes in human subjects, which requires a period of time to identify the differences that may emerge. Inasmuch as *writing as a process* implies that writing growth occurs over time, this study was built around an ethnographic methodology through a 15-week period to capture student participants’ writing development in FYW.

In order to describe and interpret L2 students’ learning curve, it is crucial to include the context in which human subjects are situated, which responds to Agar’s (1996) statement: “Ethnography always deals with context and meaning” (p. 26). The method “emphasizes and builds on the perspectives of participants in the research setting” (Schultz, 2006, p. 360). Removing contexts would deprive genuine interpretations of phenomena as well as human behaviors. Thus, it is necessary to briefly consider the context in which the current study was conducted. The FYW Program at University X, while similar, broadly speaking, to other first year writing programs at other American universities, also has its own nuances which mark it as a specific context for conducting writing research. Many American universities also regulate a first year composition (FYC) course as part of GECs (General Education courses) in postsecondary education. Learning outcomes of FYW at University X compellingly align with the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) (2014), and the findings of this study were expected in some ways to be comparable to what has been discussed in the literature; for example, students take FYW to satisfy institutional requirements instead of

considering the transferability of writing skills from one course to another (Beaufort, 2007; Hjortshoj, 2009; Russell, 2002). Nevertheless, State Board of Regents and institutional policies affect the FYW curricular programming at University X, especially in its orientation toward helping students use writing in meaningful ways instead of teaching them explicitly how to write.

In particular, the FYW curriculum at University X is designed around a major course project—the Analytical Research Project—which comprises three major assignments: the Primary Source Analysis, the Secondary Source Analysis, and the Analytical Research Project. These curricular components ascribe to the schema of freshman composition in a particular university (i.e., the research site) that possesses institutional expectations for university first year students. Environmental influences shape the curricular design and ultimately student experiences in the course. From the macro-perspective, process-oriented instruction drives the foundation of the FYW curriculum. The English Department trains FYW instructors in the use of process models of writing instruction, so these pedagogies lead students to complete the ARP project through several scaffolded stages, such as planning, drafting and revising. These constituents affect human subject's participation in any activities related to the FYW course. By using ethnographic approaches, this study was able to contextualize participants' behaviors at University X and distinguishes the findings in this local context from other explorations of first year writing courses.

Ethnographic work requires a researcher to be “immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people or through one-on-one interviews with members of the group” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58), and that was an important part of this study's design, which required a

close, hands-on view of what takes place in FYW classes. The methodology calls for both *emic* and *etic* stances while interpreting the meanings of participants' behavior, language and interactions. These are drawn from descriptive, interpretative, and contextual analysis in order to understand participants' behaviors and changes in relation to the natural settings of the research site, instead of focusing on social interaction and cultural studies.

In addition to its use of ethnographic principles, this study also employed the case study approach. Case study research probes into how and why questions of contemporary events, (Yin, 2003) and “gain insight into the processes underlying language learning” (Brown & Rodgers, 2009, p. 22). Issues regarding how L2 undergraduates learn in a composition course necessitated a case study approach to investigate the research questions of this study shown earlier.

Case study stems from the concept of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which advocates a paradigm for attaining “true understanding” and “ultimate truth” (Leki, 2007, p. 15-31). The case study approach is “appropriate for intensive, in-depth examination of one or a few instances of some phenomena” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 46), for the purpose of presenting a holistic picture of a phenomenon to readers (Creswell, 1998). The approach can examine “a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (Merriam, 1988, p. 10) and provide a *detailed* understanding of “individuals in their *natural setting*” (Creswell, 1998, p. 17). For example, Hirvela and Belcher (2001) used a case study methodology to examine three nonnative English speaking doctoral students' challenges while establishing their identities in English academic writing and the role of voice played in the L2 writing of the focal students. They took into consideration each participant as an

individual ‘case’ by embracing individual differences and provided in-depth as well as interpretative descriptions about those doctoral students. That is what the current study sought to do as well by exploring ‘process’ rather than the ‘product’ of the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 1998). Grounded in an ethnographic orientation, the case study’s four main features, including thick description, heuristic function, inductive reasoning and discovery (Merriam, 1998), were appropriate to capture participants’ perspectives and changes over time in a social context.

Case study usually focuses on a small group of people. In that regard, this study recruited seven L2 undergraduates and investigated their learning experiences in sections of the FYW course. I organized my dissertation by using the “cases within a case” approach (Stake, 2000, p. 447). In other words, this study employed a *single-case* design, which complies with the construct of *embedded case studies*. A single-case, according to Yin (2003), can “be used to determine whether a theory’s propositions are correct or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more relevant” (p. 40). A single case strives for uniqueness that is representative, revelatory, and/or longitudinal.

Moreover, this study was also designed within an embedded case studies framework, which means to cross-analyze multiple cases in a study. Within this design, targeted teacher and student participants came from different sections of FYW to account for differentiation across sections of FYW, with some teachers following a standard curriculum developed by the First Year Writing Program and others constructing modified versions of that curriculum. Therefore, a single-case design refers to the overall understanding of seven L2 writers’ learning in FYW, whereas the embedded case design

allowed the analysis to take into consideration the multi-layered interrelations between a set of subunits—pedagogy, course theme, class atmosphere and behavioral interaction.

All in all, during the study, I was *monitoring* the context and participants (Yin, 2003) by taking into consideration emerging issues during data collection and uncovering participants' experiences in FYW in ways. Instead of testing hypotheses, case study strives for “insights, discovery and interpretation” (Merriam, 1988, p. 10), and that was true in the current study. The findings that appear in later chapters will thus present “a detailed account of the phenomenon under study” and factors relevant to the interaction, rather than investigating cause-and-effect relationships (Merriam, 1988, p. 38).

Within case study approaches, ethnographic features, i.e., immersed fieldwork, emic and etic perspectives, function as an analytical tool to research students' behavioral changes. In this vein, the current study also featured an interpretive orientation through which the findings contain “thick description” of human behaviors and interactions in (cultural) contexts (Geertz, 1973). *Thick description* comes from anthropologists who use “the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (Merriam, 1988, p. 11). Instead of simply presenting what I observed, this study also strove to be interpretative by analyzing, interpreting, and theorizing about how human subjects learn in a class setting. While doing so, I also drew both from participants' *emic/insider* perspective and my *etic/outsider's* perspective. Gaining two sets of side insights in this regard added richness to the data. This interpretative process thus could generate a heuristic explanation of the interplay between variables in the context being explored (Merriam, 1998). Such a case study method was especially aimed at creating space for

participants to tell their life stories as their testimony to what they experienced during a specified period of time (Leki, 2003).

However, while appreciating the merits of case studies, I also took into consideration the limitations of the approaches just described. Since “the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 42), reporting findings can rely too heavily on the case writer’s ethics. For instance, a researcher’s bias can shape the process if the investigator intentionally selects and presents only what he or she wants to show rather than what the inquiry requires. Barbara Johnstone (2000) suggests that researchers need to collect data not only in a systematic way but also through diverse sources so that they can verify findings and reduce bias through a process of triangulation. Thus, to minimize researcher bias, this study collected different types of data, in conjunction with the concept of *triangulation* that strives for understanding human behaviors from more than one standpoint (Brown & Rodgers, 2009).

3.3 Research Site

As noted earlier, the study took place in sections of the First Year Writing (FYW) course at a Midwestern research university, called University X in this dissertation. The FYW course was seen as a viable research site because of its focus on analytic writing and its positioning as the next writing course international undergraduate students would take if they had completed an ESL writing course, or as the first course some students might take because their backgrounds qualified them to bypass the ESL writing courses and directly enter FYW. In each of these student scenarios, the student participants would have been unlikely to have gained prior experience in analytic writing, and so this research site would allow for meaningful exploration of L2 writers’ engagement with

analytic writing and a closely related focus on critical thinking skills. More information about this site is provided in Chapter 4. Moreover, the ESL writing courses were also considered an important research site with respect to understanding L2 students' transition from ESL to FYW. Although I did not follow the participants when they were in the ESL courses, the ESL course information is also presented in Chapter 4 for the purpose of providing more contextual details about the participants and their experiences.

3.4 Participants

3.4.1 Students

The operative research term—case study—implies “the sample is small, by definition, consisting of the single case or handful of cases that the researcher has under her lens” (Gerring, 2007, p. 21). Sampling aims to be purposeful, because it is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). The findings of a case study lead readers to understand in-depth about participants' natural behaviors in contexts, in lieu of making certain generalizations over a large-scale population. Also, because L1 and L2 scholarship has not sufficiently documented L2 writers' learning experiences and writing development in Anglo-American oriented composition classes, it was considered necessary to focus on a purposeful sampling of international students in the First-Year Writing (FYW) course.

Within this purposeful sampling approach, a key criterion was to include some variability in the English writing background of the participants. This initiative resulted in the selection of five student participants who had taken at least one ESL writing course at University X. They had enrolled in this course as a result of their performance on the

university's writing placement examination upon their arrival at University X. The enrollment in this course was mandatory, as their placement examination results indicated a need to acquire the foundation in English academic writing provided by the ESL Composition Program at the university. For these students, FYW was their next writing course destination, and so their inclusion in the study allowed for a detailed and meaningful examination of their transition from ESL to FYW. All five of these participants (i.e. Penny, Yenta, Yulia, Loni, Sono) were from the People's Republic of China. To counterbalance these participants, two L2 writers who were exempt from placement in the ESL writing courses were selected: Naomi (from Honduras) and Anika (from Bangladesh). This arrangement also allowed for examination of students from different linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. In addition, these students were majoring in a wide variety of disciplines, thereby assuring more variation in the participant selection. There was also some range among these participants in terms of both their English language proficiency in general and their English writing proficiency in particular. Chapter 5 provides a detailed introduction to all of these participants.

Recruitment of the student participants involved several stages. The first was obtaining the permission of the director of the FYW Program at University X to gain access to the email addresses of both FYW instructors and of students who were enrolled in FYW for the Spring 2016 semester. I then sent a recruitment email to only students who enrolled in face-to-face sections of the course in light of the intention to conduct classroom observations. They were asked to indicate their interest in and to provide some information about their English education background, which included that they self-identified as second language students who learned English as a second language.

The next stage involved sifting through the recruitment responses that were sent to me. I first received five students' responses and met with them to confirm their participation. This allowed for examination of the information they provided, including which section of FYW they were enrolled in, as I was interested in studying sections of the course where more than one participant was enrolled. I was also interested in finding students who were enrolled in different types of sections of the course so as to observe their classroom participation and responses to different instructional emphases and practices. However, due to his busy schedule, a student withdrew his participation before the semester started. In light of that, I continued the recruitment during the first week of the semester. Michelle, as one of the confirmed FYW teacher participants, encouraged her non-native English speaking students to participate in the study. Thus, from one of her sections, I recruited Yulia first, and Loni was recruited by snowball sampling (Patton, 1990) by Yulia's recommendation. Sono also joined the study after he switched from his original section to Michelle's class during the third week. There were five students (Anika, Loni, Sono, Yenta and Yulia) enrolled in Michelle's three FYW sections, respectively, and seven L2 students in total participated in this study. I then did not recruit any more students in the hope of focusing on this small and representative sample.

3.4.2 Teachers and Director

In line with the study's ethnographic approach and the need for triangulation across data sources, it was also necessary to include some non-student participants, though their roles were secondary in the data analysis. That is, the findings chapters rely on data about the student participants, but that data is supplemented, where appropriate, by information concerning the teachers of those students and the Director of the First Year Writing

Program. For instance, Hirvela and Belcher (2001) interviewed three participants' graduate advisors, even though the study focused on the aspects of L2 writers' experiences in constructing a voice in English writing. James (2006) investigated "what factors influence transfer of learning from a university CBI course to other university courses" (p.784) by interviewing five first year language learners in a content-based EAP course, two instructors of EAP, and one administrator. Viewpoints from instructors and the administrator represented the connection between the design of CBI courses and students' learning. Currie (1994) recruited three undergraduate students and two course instructors to investigate non-native English speakers' enculturation in an introductory course in the School of Business at a university. Given the interviews of course instructors from different sections, Currie concluded that even in the same course, expectations of good writing were inconsistent. Although these individuals (i.e., teachers and administrators) cannot be called full participants in the current study, they did play a role, and so some information about them is provided here. I conducted *focused interviews* (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990, as cited in Yin, 2003) with these individuals. Chapter 4 provides detailed information about the three teachers who were involved in the study, and so they are introduced there instead of here.

The Director of the First Year Writing program was consulted so as to receive his support for the study and to obtain from him important contextual information about the FYW program. He has directed that program for many years and has played a key role in the design of its curriculum, including the current emphasis on analytic writing and the creation of an assignment sequence that addresses analytic writing from different angles via a series of carefully coordinated writing tasks. I had an informal meeting with the

Director at the preparation stage of this dissertation to collect institutional information about the FYW course. In addition to providing important course-related information, the Director assisted in a preliminary step before data collection. He leads the training program for new Graduate Teaching Associates (GTAs) and teaches a pre-semester workshop and a pedagogy course every year. Those usually take place in the autumn semester. Therefore, with his permission, I sat in the GTAs' pedagogy course to gather comprehensive contextual information about teacher training and the course curriculum.

The selection of the teacher participants depended on their FYW sections in which student participants enrolled. That is, after confirming participation in the study with the student participants, I emailed their FYW teachers and invited them to participate in the study. Three FYW teachers were selected as a result. A key factor in their selection, in addition to their willingness to participate in the study, was variability in their approach to teaching FYW. Although there is a well-developed FYW curriculum and syllabus and a textbook called *Writing Analytically*, the approximately 70 sections of the course offered during the research period (Spring Semester, 2016) were far from identical in terms of how they were approached.

Teachers were given some latitude relative to the amount of experience they had with the course and with writing instruction in general. Those with relatively little experience, such as GTAs, follow the set curriculum/syllabus and use the course textbook mentioned earlier. In the current study, those are called the "standard" sections of the course. There are also more experienced teachers who, for a variety of reasons, prefer a kind of hybrid model for the course that draws on the course curriculum but also has modifications. In particular, these instructors like to arrange the course around a theme-

based approach, one that often is culturally-based. In this study, those are called the “modified” sections. Then there are some highly experienced teachers who have considerable freedom to approach the course as they prefer while still adhering to the core FYW goals revolving around analytic writing and critical thinking. These individuals teach what are called in this study “innovative sections” of the course. As noted earlier, detailed information about them is presented in Chapter 4.

In summary, the interview of the Director provided off-site information about the FYW course, in contrast to the information from students and teachers that presented on-site facts. The information strengthens the validity of the study in lieu of simply relying on student participants’ responses. All in all, to avoid overly relying on a key informant or source for answering research questions, and to strengthen data triangulation (Yin, 2003), I also recruited the non-student participants, the Director and two FYW instructors.

3.5 Data Gathering Instruments

In accordance with the concept of triangulation, this study gathered data through various means. Thus, the data sources included (a) audio-recorded interviews with seven L2 undergraduates, two FYW teachers, and the Director of the First-Year Writing Program; (b) text-based journals of L2 undergraduates and FYW teachers; (c) video/audio-recorded think-aloud protocols of L2 undergraduates; (d) field notes, and (e) cultural artifacts (i.e. course materials, writing samples). More details of data sources and methods appear in the following sections.

3.5.1 Interviews

Student Interviews

This study used interviewing as a principal method to elicit information from the participants (students, teachers, and Director of FYW). In order to “build an in-depth picture of the case” (Creswell, 1998, p. 123), a case study researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, who must be a good communicator and who “empathizes with respondents, establishes rapport, asks good questions, and listens intently” (Merriam, 1998, p. 23). A case study researcher should also “be as unobtrusive, as interesting, as wallpaper” (Stake, 1995, p. 59) while interacting with participants. Yin (2003) suggests six forms of data collection for case study. Of them, interviews, is “one of the most important sources of case study information” (Yin, 2003, p. 89), the value of which observation or other data courses cannot replace. I was able to acquire the descriptions and interpretations of human subjects through well-conducted interviews (Stake, 1995), and especially establish on-going relationships and exchange views with interviewees (Yin, 2003).

This study drew in particular on Taylor and Bogdan’ (1984) suggestion— “nondirective, unstructured, non-standardized, and open-ended interviewing” (p. 77)— which is termed *in-depth interviewing*:

By in-depth qualitative interviewing we mean repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words (p. 77).

Interviewing was essential for me to gather information about participants’ inner feelings (Merriam, 1998). For example, Chiang and Schimida (2006) interviewed a number of Asian American students and found that these students encountered identity conflicts while speaking, reading or writing their heritage languages. The interviews reflected

participants' life stories in which they constructed a new identity in college. Faigley and Hansen (1985) used in-depth qualitative interviewing to investigate the writing processes of six students from the departments of Psychology and Sociology. They interviewed targeted students before writing every assignment, so that the writing process could be revealed. Aligning with Faigley and Hansen, this study used interviews as an important means to elicit participants' feelings, opinions and perspectives about learning to write in the FYW course.

Two types of interviewing techniques were employed. One was in-depth qualitative interviews, and the other was ethnographic interviews. With respect to the in-depth interviews, this study adopted a semi-structured interview approach that allowed both the respondents and I to generate new ideas in conversations while also providing information that was necessary. For case study research, interviews are often conducted in less structured ways, including the semi-structured approach, so as to allow a beneficial combination of structure and freedom. Yin (2003) suggests that case study interviews should "be guided conversations rather than structured queries" (p. 89), and that was the view adopted in the current study. Leki, in her seminal longitudinal study (2001; 2007), extensively used the semi-structured interview approach to explore six L2 writers' growth of academic literacy and to record their undergraduate studies life. During the interviews, Leki provided flexibility for "the participants themselves to designate significant focal areas and define their own experiences" (p. 43). In other words, semi-structured interviews grant both researchers and participants the space to confer relevant information to the core of a study.

Regarding the structured dimension of the interviews, I prepared a short list of questions to work from, but also formulated or modified questions in accordance with participants' responses (Stake, 1995). There was an allowance for the *open-ended nature* (Yin, 2003) of interviewing through which questions were generated spontaneously in response to what was occurring during the interviews. As Taylor and Bogdan (1984) stated, in-depth qualitative interviewing functions as a direct communicative panel bolstering the relationship between the participants and the researcher. Leki and Carson (1997) explored ESL students' writing experiences of learning to write source-based texts. They interviewed 21 out of 78 students, because they not only considered that interviews could be a unique social interaction between researchers and participants, but also enabled them to acquire "an emic view of [the] student writers' perspectives—an insider's perspective—and a sense of their understanding and interpretation of their writing experiences" (p. 44). Their approach was influential in the handling of the semi-structured interviews in the current study.

Regarding the ethnographic interview component, the ethnographic interview "has long been utilized in sociology as a way of shedding light on the personal experiences, interpersonal dynamics and cultural meanings of participants in their social worlds" (Heyl, 2001, p. 372), and that was an important consideration in the current study. The approach can help develop rapport with and elicit information from participants (Spradley, 1979, p. 78). Ethnographic interviews were used in the current study to document students' feelings and allowed me to connect the dots of my classroom observations. Such an approach is also called an 'intervention interview', as it aims to elicit specific information that is needed under certain circumstances. In the current

study, this approach was tied to the procedure called “member checking” (Stake, 1995) that allowed me to verify correctness of data.

Using interviewing in the two formats described as a primary form of data collection complied with a central value of the qualitative methodology—in-depth exploration of informants. Given the qualitative, case-study orientation of the current study, this type of exploration was essential. In order to “maximize the time spent getting informants to share information” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, as cited in Merriam, 1988, p. 77) as well as establishing a trusting relationship between me and each individual student participant, this study utilized bi-weekly interviews throughout the entire semester. Schatzman and Strauss (1977, as cited in Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) explain that *duration, number, setting, identity of individuals involved* and *respondent styles* affect the outcomes of interviews (p. 129), and all of these factors were considered in conducting the interviews. I continually sought to “conduct interviews in the conversational mode of everyday interaction” and established an atmosphere in which the interviewees feel “what they are saying is acceptable and significant” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 131). In this way, the conversation permits empathy, encouragement and understanding (Lofland, 1971, as cited in Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), and that approach was emphasized throughout the current study.

I began by identifying the preferred relationship between amount of data collected, time and rapport, and the extent to which participants would not be exhausted over a relevant period of time. In the first meeting (about 60-90 minutes), which was conducted in English, I collected information about the L2 participants’ personal background, educational background, and writing experiences in their native language

and in English. Then, I met every participant every other week to discuss their participation in the FYW course. Those bi-weekly interviews were kept within a 40-50 minute period, especially given students' 15-18 credit hours schedule. An important note is that the later interviews with those five L2 participants from the People's Republic of China were in Mandarin Chinese. Due to concerns about their language proficiency in English, they felt more comfortable speaking their first language and were better able to share their thoughts. This situation was aided by the fact that I speak the same native language that they do. However, interviews of other two student participants (from Honduras and Bangladesh) were all conducted in English since I could not speak their first languages (i.e., Spanish and Bengali). All interviews were audio-recorded and I transcribed/translated them. As a reminder, the rationale behind why I changed the use of language with Chinese participants and how it was considered to affect the original research design will be discussed in the later section of this chapter. Additionally, I also carefully protected participants' identity; every interview took place in a quiet, secluded room on campus, and data was stored in an encrypted computer to ensure confidentiality.

Teacher Interviews

I conducted three semi-structured interviews each with two of the FYW teachers (I was unable to interview the other teacher because her only involvement in the study was to allow me access to her classroom; she declined to participate in other ways). In my research design, the students were seen as the primary participants, and so they were interviewed more extensively than the teachers. The teacher participants' interview responses were mainly used to shed light on the students' responses to the FYW course and its assigned tasks; they could corroborate or counter-balance student perspectives and

also increase the reliability of the study. The teacher interviews took place at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the semester, so that I was able to document FYW teachers' perspectives on working with L2 students throughout the course. Interview questions also sought information about the curricular designs for their sections of the course, their involvement in FYW teacher training programs, and their views about writing instruction, classroom management, and grading. The two teachers (Briana and Michelle) were interviewed in their office on campus. Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes, was audio-recorded, and was conducted in English.

Director Interview

As mentioned earlier, the Director of First Year Writing was interviewed to obtain contextual information about the FYW course. Prior to the data collection, I had met the Director informally to consult with him to gain institutional knowledge of the FYW Program and curriculum design. With his permission, I observed the GTA Pedagogy course in the Autumn 2015 Semester to learn about the "standard" FYW course at University X. In the following semester, when the current study took place, I conducted a semi-structured interview with the Director. The interview lasted around 90 minutes, and it focused on the philosophy underlying the FYW course and his administration of the First-Year Writing Program. He also described his views regarding preferred pedagogical approaches to coping with the increase of L2 students in each FYW section. The interview was conducted in English and was audio-recorded.

3.5.2 Journals

Student Journals

When case study researchers probe participants' behavioral changes through interviews and observations, they often also ask participants to keep a journal (Creswell, 1998), because journals help participants explore and record their inner feelings (Merriam, 1988; 1998). Many SLW researchers use participants' journals to explore the language learning process as well as a learner's perspectives. For example, Matsuda and Silva (2006) collected students' weekly journals and five writing projects to dissect the learning process in a cross-cultural composition course. By the same token, ESL students in Leki's study (1995) were asked to keep journals to record their academic literacy experiences across the curriculum. Also, journals of the first year students in a content-based EAP course constituted a part of the data for James' (2006) longitudinal qualitative case study. In contrast to field notes, which "describe behavior and events" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 94) that happen on a research site, journals are used to record participants' emotions and viewpoints that cannot be observed on the site. Because the students' writing processes were an important component of the current study, journals were seen as a useful means (in addition to interviews) of learning about their thoughts regarding their writing in FYW.

For the current study, a weekly academic journal approach was adopted. The rationales were that, first, students might not discuss their inner feelings in face-to-face interviews even though I made sure to establish a rapport with them. Secondly, given students' busy semester schedules, meeting on a weekly basis was not feasible. The weekly journal allowed the students to share their inner feelings at their convenience, and minus the dynamics associated with face-to-face interviews. They were asked to record their self-reflections about *what*, *how* and *why* they approached the FYW tasks as well as

how they felt about the situations they encountered in FYW (e.g., peer review). They were encouraged to spend around 30 minutes per journal entry.

The overall approach to the use of journals resembled one adopted by Hirvela (2005a), who not only used interviews to explore “ESL students’ computer-based encounters with and reactions to reading and writing” (p. 342), but also requested his two undergraduate international student participants to compile a weekly activity log of their relevant actions. In this regard, the activity logs were similar to journals. Hirvela used the information in the activity logs to construct interview questions and to gain an ongoing sense of the kinds of academic reading and writing the participants were engaged in. The journals in the current study operated in a similar manner. They were meant to capture the 5 W’s (who, what, where, when, why) and one H (how) related to the students’ engagement in FYW.

An important note is that some of the Chinese participants used their first language to write journals after the mid-point of the semester. Because I found their (Yenta, Yulia, Loni and Sono) journal entries were rather short, in which they told little information about their learning in FYW, I was concerned that could be a result of the language barrier, since it could be more difficult for L2 students to express their thoughts in their second language (i.e., English). Therefore, in order to retrieve their inner feelings, I reminded them that they could use Chinese to write the journals, as we did in the interviews, if they felt in that way they could express themselves more effectively. They then wrote their journals in Mandarin, except Naomi, Anika and Penny who continued to use English. The concern about this decision-making related to the validity of the research design will be addressed in a later section of this chapter.

Teacher Journals

Likewise, I collected teachers' journals in the hope of understanding their perspective on their teaching and observations about student participants in their classes. Their journals or log of activities resemble the records of their lesson plans, pedagogical decisions and self-reflections. Like the students, the teachers considered the five W's (who, what, where, when, why) and one H (how) related to their instructional activity. For example, they could write about what teaching methods they used to teach and the pedagogical rationales behind the choices. Teachers' journals allowed me to maintain communication with the two teacher participants and learn about their teaching through reading their inner reflections. These journals also allowed me to learn more about their reactions to the L2 participants' writing performance and participation in the course.

3.5.3 Classroom Observations and Field notes

Observations of class sessions along with field notes about the sessions played an important role in this study, especially in conjunction with the interviews I conducted. Maxwell (2005) explains that coordinating interviews with observations "can provide a more complete and accurate account than either could alone" (p. 94). For example, Gorska collected data in ethnographical ways; he observed and interviewed participants over nine months of an academic year. The findings generated heuristic insights into international students' transition from undergraduate to graduate programs. While both observations and interviews "are used to find out what happened" (Stake, 1995, p. 66), they do so in different ways.

My interviews were prepared in advance in accordance with what I wished to learn, while observations recorded what actually took place as it took place, with no prior

expectations on my part. Merriam (1988; 1998) suggests that when conducting a case study, the researcher “must physically go to the people, setting, site, institution (“the field”), in order to observe behavior in its natural setting” (p.19). What happens within a research site is unpredictable and unmanageable, and that is where observations, along with accompanying field notes, are useful. As an outsider at the FYW research site, I found things leading me to understand the context through firsthand observation (Merriam, 1988). Classroom observations maximized my opportunities to serve as an instrument for case study research, because the human instrument can understand the complexity of human interactions in social situations (Merriam, 1988). In educational settings, observation enables researchers to better understand participants in a context (Stake, 1995) and the context itself, such as the daily instructional practices of teachers, how these pedagogies are related to student participants’ comprehension of writing activities, and how class participation affects the ways that students complete tasks. That information was essential for this current study.

What to observe on the research site depends on the topic and the framework of a study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Observation is also a means to obtain data about *who* is in the scene, what is happening there, as well as the nature of interaction between people (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Observation calls for emic perspectives of a researcher from being a participant observer who is not a passive observer but acts as both an insider and outsider of the research site (Spradley, 1980). Participant observation provides unusual opportunities for data collection, which may not be accessible to scientific investigation (Yin, 2003). For instance, Gorska’s data (2013) consisted of not only in-depth interviews but also observation of a writing class over three terms of an

academic year. In a like manner, classroom observation as well as field notes in Leki's longitudinal project (2001; 2006; 2007) played a significant role in sketching out a picture of six undergraduate international students' class participation and connections to students' perceptions retrieved from their journal entries.

Qualitative researchers often seek participant observation, which "was developed by cultural anthropologists interested in finding out from the perspective of natives what foreign cultures were like" (Johnstone, 2000, p. 81). For example, Pinnow (2011) situated herself in a participant-observer position and looked for opportunities to spend time with members of a community, so that she could "gain an emic perspective of [her] participants and research site" (p. 383). She built close relationships with the student and teacher by focusing on how one Latino English learner leveraged his multimodal fluency in the ESL classroom. She was able to interpret the interactions between herself and participants through her emic lenses. The current study utilized observations to focus on exploring student participants' behaviors and teachers' teaching. I documented students' in-class participation, but instances to be observed were allowed to emerge, such as interactions between the teacher and peers and teacher-student conference. Field notes I wrote captured in words what it was that I was observing and thus created a written record of the observations that I could consult during data analysis.

According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984), observation can be also an approach to verify discrepancies between participants' reports (e.g., interviews, journal, etc.) and the observed behaviors. Observation allows researchers to "determine whether people are processing information or reacting to curricular innovation in the manner intended" (p. 110) since it enables researchers to identify how elements (i.e. interaction, pedagogy,

behavior, etc.) are interrelated. This study thus employed participant observation to gain insightful data about what happened in a classroom setting. The classroom observation to some degree documented my learning as if I were taking a FYW course wherein I noted the teachers' instructional practices and activities and watched how my student participants responded to them. The field notes provided contextual information about each FYW section, which is presented in Chapter 4.

While observations and field notes are intended to obtain important information about a research setting, such as descriptions of an instructional activity, they place the researcher in a complex role as both data gatherer and participant and thus generate possibilities for subjective responses that can corrupt the data gathering and data analysis processes. As a regular observer of what takes place, the researcher can easily begin to form opinions and judgments about what is being observed. Taking into consideration potential subjectivity causing researcher bias, I sought to be a *researcher participant* who “participate[d] in a social situation but is personally only partially involved, so that [she] can function as a researcher” (Gans, 1982, as cited in Merriam, 1988, p. 93).

In addition to classroom observations, I used field notes as *descriptive* accounts (Emerson et al., 2001) for what happened in a FYW class session. Field notes comprised my *on-site* notes and *off-site* reflections. The on-site notes documented the instructors' teaching as well as student participants' in-class performance. By contrast, the off-site notes are often called *in-process* memos (Emerson et al., 2001). Making such notes, I intended to interact with the collected data simultaneously in the data collection phase, and developed initial interpretations and analyses (Emerson et al., 2001). New insights emerged in these reflective field notes, as this activity helped me to generate tentative

inductive interpretations of what I observed. Both kinds of notes recorded my thoughts as if I were taking the course with the students.

3.5.4 Think-Aloud Protocols

An important component of the current study was exploring *how* the L2 undergraduates completed the analytically-oriented FYW tasks. That is, I sought to learn about their actual writing processes. Drawing from influential cognitive writing research (see Flower & Hayes, 1981) and stemming from Emig's (1971) seminal work, the study used the data gathering technique of think- aloud protocols to identify and understand L2 participants' cognitive activities when they were composing. From the conception of composing processes (see Flower & Hayes 1980; 1981; Spivey 1997), one person's writing process comprises two kinds of information: "a representation of the task environment [...] and knowledge stored in long-term memory [...]" (Galbraith, 2009, p. 9). The inner knowledge of a writer is not observable except through think-aloud protocols, in which the writer has to speak out what she is thinking. In such protocols, research participants describe what they are doing as they do it.

The decision to employ the think-aloud method for this study was also driven by Spivey's (1984) dissertation project. She says that in one's writing process, at least in the case of source-based writing such as the analytical tasks used in FYW, the writer has to synthesize readings (i.e. sources), develop arguments, and use strategies to represent ideas and content (Newell, 2006). The think-aloud protocols used in the current study were verbal reports of how the L2 students completed writing tasks, and, collectively, they made it possible to track possible changes in their writing as the course proceeded.

The think-aloud method is prevalent in SLW scholarship concerning “how the writers produce the writing” (Polio, 2001, p. 91). Wang and Wen (2002) stated that the think-aloud method could “gain insights into what was going on in the student writer’s mind” (p. 229). They collected think-alouds of 16 Chinese EFL learners to explore how learners’ L1 was used when they were writing in English as well as “how such L1 use [was] affected by L2 proficiency and writing tasks” (p. 225). Built upon Wang and Wen’s (2002) study, to examine writers’ use of their first language in their second language writing, van Weijen et al. (2009) also used the think-aloud method to analyze the occurrence of conceptual activities. Twenty-five L2 writers wrote four short argumentative essays in both of their L1 and L2 languages. They had to speak out loud their thinking while writing, including how they generated ideas and plans as well as the composing itself. The findings revealed that students used L1 in the composing process, and their L2 proficiency affected the quality of their text.

The think-aloud approach is also used to understand one’s problem-solving process (Someren et al., 1994) and how decisions are made. For example, De et al. (2006) recruited three groups in the Spanish educational system with different years of English instruction and tape-recorded “participants’ think-aloud protocols while performing two writing tasks” (p. 104) in order to compare and contrast the allocation of composing time and problem-solving formulation processes among groups. Hirvela and Du (2013) also used think-aloud protocols to gain evidence of students’ decision-making processes during paraphrasing activities and described participants’ composing procedures. Hirvela and Qu brought together three rounds of think-aloud protocols during an academic term

“with the aim of increasing the consistency of data collected” (p. 92) as well as minimizing controversy about the effectiveness of using the think-alouds.

For the current study with the focus on delving into how L2 students completed some course tasks in FYW, using the think-alouds recorded what was going on in participants’ mind. When I was conducting the think-aloud sessions, the students were asked repeatedly to tell what he or she was thinking while writing and “keep on talking, speak out loud whatever thoughts come to mind, while performing the task at hand” (Someren et al., 1994, p. 25). The frequent reminder of how to approach the think-alouds is deemed necessary because of the unusual nature of the activity, since writers do not normally verbalize their thoughts while composing.

The number of think-alouds with each student participant varied, which was a result of each students’ availability during the semester. I planned to conduct three think-aloud sessions with each student in the hope of understanding how they completed the scaffolded assignments (i.e., the Primary Sources Analysis, the Secondary Sources Analysis, and the Analytical Research Paper). However, given students’ schedules and occasional reluctance to participate, the number of think-aloud sessions with each student was not equal, and especially in one case, a participant (Sono) refused to participate in this activity. To understand how he wrote, this study thus used other data sources, such as interviews and his journals, to compensate for the missing data.

Regarding procedures, to collect “authentic” protocols, the think-aloud session needs to be “situated in ‘authentic’ composing situations” (Smagorinsky, 1994, p. 13). Therefore, each think-aloud session took place in a quiet place and was audio-recorded. I asked students to keep talking about what they were thinking. As it turned out, my

constant questioning when writers were composing might have sometimes have interfered with their threads of thinking, especially because the participants were not accustomed to the protocols (Hirvela and Qu, 2013; Smagorinsky, 1994). Therefore, I intervened only when they were silent for more than 15 to 30 seconds or stopped speaking (Smagorinsky, 1994). After the think-aloud sessions, I asked the participants to retroactively describe their writing process because they did not always follow the think-aloud protocol as instructed. However, it must be acknowledged that retrospective accounts may not be reliable (Greene & Higgins, 1994). The writer may report false memories, especially when some time has passed after completing tasks. Therefore, I conducted retrospection soon after a think-aloud protocol session. In a recap meeting, students shared their feelings, emotions and opinions about the tasks.

3.5.5 Artifact Data

In addition to the data sources from interviews, journals, observations and think-aloud protocols, I collected artifact data. Artifacts refer to a wide range of materials, such as public or archival records, personal documents, and physical traces (Merriam, 1988; 1998). Even though this kind of data source is considered as having “less potential relevance in the most typical kind of case study” (Yin, 2003, p. 96), Merriam (1988) suggested that the combination of various data sources and analyses “allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated” (p. 102). The artifacts in this study assisted in providing contextual information. I used them to support my inquiry into what contexts the participants were situated within and how that related to their performance. Without such artifact data, interpreting the participants’ behavior would lack a frame of reference. Therefore, the artifact data source was essential in this study.

For the current study, artifacts included course materials, such as syllabi and assignment prompts. Stephen Wilhoit (2002) stated that “at the heart of every assignment is the rhetorical situation—someone writing to someone about something for some purpose” (p. 62 cited in Melzer, 2014, p. 20), and so it is necessary to gather materials which show how writers were directed to write (Newell, 2006). Hirvela (2005a), for instance, reviewed syllabi and course materials of each course that participants were enrolled in to navigate L2 writers’ use of computers for reading and writing across the curriculum. As for this study, Course materials helped make references to the interrelation between the FYW curriculum and students’ writing products, and also construct students’ understanding of what academic conventions they were expected to follow in the course.

Additionally, as this current study focused on the participants’ transition from the ESL writing courses to the FYW course, it is important to know how those courses were designed. However, because this study did not follow the student participants in their ESL writing courses (as part of limitations of this current study), I collected the syllabi of the ESL writing courses, especially those of the Chinese participants’ ESL sections. Those materials enabled me to see what the L2 student participants learned in the ESL writing course and thus helped me analyze their transition from ESL to FYW.

In addition to course syllabi of ESL and FYW courses, students’ writing was another important type of artifact. Perl (1979) analyzed NNES students’ writing to illuminate the composing processes of unskilled college writers. In like manner, I collected students’ writing samples (e.g., drafts and notes), as the textual analysis of writing samples could draw a picture of L2 writers’ rhetorical patterns. Moreover, analyzing students’ drafts

assisted in chronicling an individual’s changes across writing assignments and over a period of time, as the evidence of a person’s growth in a course. Other textual data, such as the feedback from teachers and peers, was also important. I used that material to better understand the changes of participants’ writing, so I gathered that kind of material whenever it was possible.

To summarize my approach to data gathering, Table 3.1 identifies each of the instruments employed in the current study.

Methods	Sources of data collection
Semi-structured Interviews (audio-recorded)	Student Interviews 1 st , 3 rd , 5 th , 7 th , 9 th , 11 th , 13 th and 15 th weeks: Teacher Interviews 1 st week 6 th -7 th week 14 th -15 th Week: Director Interview
Weekly Journals	Student Participants and FYW Teachers
Think-Aloud Protocols	Student Participants (2-3 think-aloud protocols)
Observation and Field Notes	Class meetings and Teacher-student conferences
Collections of Artifacts	Course materials and Students’ writing samples

Table 3. 1 Timeline and Methods of Data Collection

3.6 Data Analysis

For a case study, data analysis depends heavily on the theoretical frameworks of a study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), and analysis emphasizes “a detailed description of the case and its setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 153). That was the rationale underlying the current study and the collection of a wide array of data types. Those data sources provided essential contextual information from a variety of vantage points. Then,

regarding the data analysis procedures, Stake (1995) suggests that case study researchers should think about a reporting plan to help readers understand the cases. The plan also correlates with the rationales for the data analysis procedures and is closely coordinated with the study's research questions, since the primary purpose of data analysis is to answer the research questions posed. In light of that, Table 3.2 portrays the relationship between the current study's research questions and the data sources used to address them during data analysis:

Research Question	Method of Data Collection
1. What was the nature of the L2 participants' transitions, as writers, from the ESL course orientation to the FYW framework?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Participant's journal • Observation & Field notes
2. What were the L2 participants' perceptions of the transitions involved from the ESL writing courses to FYW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Participants' journal
3. How did the L2 participants respond to the analytically-oriented writing tasks in FYW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Participants' journal • Think-Aloud Protocols • Artifacts
4. What resources did the L2 participants used to address challenges they faced in FYW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Participants' journal • Observation & Field notes • Think-Aloud Protocols

Table 3. 2 Methods of Data Collection

Triangulation

The concept of triangulation augmented the research design of this study as well as the analysis of data. First of all, this study drew on the notion of theory triangulation (Yin, 2003) by using multiple theoretical frameworks (i.e., Emig; Flower & Hayes; Spivey; transfer of learning) to analyze L2 undergraduates' learning experiences in FYW. Secondly, in addition to collecting sources via various means (i.e. interviews, journals,

etc.), the current study used time triangulation; that is, gathering data in different time frames. For example, I collected weekly journals of the FYW teachers and student participants. Interviews of different kinds of participants took place in different times. Most importantly, data triangulation derives from the notion that there is more than one source of data, and this view was also an important part of the data analysis procedures. I adopted triangulation in analyzing data sources for the purpose of enhancing the validity of the study and making data meaningful.

Data triangulation is a well-established method which is used to look carefully across data sources and make principled comparisons between those sources. For example, triangulation through journals to modify my semi-structured interview questions was helpful to capture meaning and confirm my interpretations. This was done with the intent to minimize researcher bias as well as ensure that the data was presented heuristically and holistically. In that light, Table 3.2 portrays my approaches to data sources in the process of answering research questions, and it shows that to answer each research question involved more than more one source of data, because cross-referencing sources bolsters the correctness of the information and interpretations of what it means while also preventing over-reliance on one source that could result in researcher bias.

3.6.1 Data Analysis Procedures

This section explains my approach to data analysis. Merriam (1988) stated that “data collection and analysis is a *simultaneous* activity in qualitative research” (p. 119). She suggested that in these circumstances, a researcher has to be sensitive to any emerging insights in the data collection phase (Creswell, 1998; 2007; Merriam, 1988; 1998), and here I tentatively formed interactive and intensive relationships with the data.

To do so, I started my preliminary data analysis while I was collecting data. I also formed new (interview) questions and member checked for the later data gathering when I continued that simultaneous activity. In this regard, I first read the collected data, including interviews, journals and course materials, spontaneously, as this is usually the first analytic procedure used in qualitative research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Then, my analysis focused on creating basic categories that should be “generated through content analysis” by “comparing, contrasting, aggregating, and ordering” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 171). As for this, I not only determined the relationship between incidents and the settings, but also reviewed the data with the intent of discovering logical groupings, linking categories and identifying connections between individuals, which enabled me to make inferences among classes of constructs. Qualitative researchers have to focus on discovering new meanings from data, instead of expecting that “issue-relevant meanings will emerge” in qualitative research (Stake, 1995, p. 75). I thus teased apart collected cases, and examined issues in each instance and cross-referenced data, for the purpose of identifying phenomena or relationships within a single case as well as across cases. I aimed at pinpointing similarities and differences among participants and portrayed the complexity and uniqueness of each single case. I also sought for patterns, consistency, or so-called “correspondence” (Stake, 1995, p. 78) across all data sources. To conduct such intensive data analysis, including comparing, each data source, contrasting, and categorizing all sources, I mainly used the program called HyperResearch to complete the analysis, which will be discussed shortly in later sections. What follows is a discussion of my approach to each data source.

Analysis of the Interview Data Source

Because the interviews constituted the largest amount of the data in this study and they provided crucial information, I started the data analysis with this source. Regarding how I approached the interview data, I first transcribed all interviews because “interview scripts require careful organization and sequencing as well as statements that communicate to the respondent the researcher’s intent and direction” (Goetz & LeCompte, p. 129). Results are presented qualitatively by using words and pictures. An important note on transcription is that I also translated some of the Chinese participants’ interviews and journal entries because some of those data were provided in their first language. Ideally, I would have transcribed all interviews verbatim or in full, which “provides the best data base for analysis” (Merriam, 1988, p. 82), but the process was very time-consuming. In light of time constraints, I adopted an alternative—the *interview log*. The interview log is a researcher’s annotated notes on interviewees’ responses afterwards and locates notes along with particular responses for the purpose of future reference. Therefore, while I endeavored to transcribe interviews word-by-word, using the interview log was as a way to save significant transcribing time and also integrate informants’ responses with my initial interpretation of data.

After transcribing the interviews, my analysis concentrated on inquiring into commonalities across the cases and the uniqueness of each single case. Moreover, because a qualitative case study is highly personal research, this research approach encouraged me “to include [my] own personal perspectives in the interpretation” (Stakes, 1995, p. 135), which was, in particular, important when I analyzed the interviews. I had the most direct interactions with participants through the interviews; thus, I was able to gather my personal perspectives on each participant. As a result, before importing the

transcription into HyperResearch, I read and highlighted themes, first, in accordance with the theories that this study employed, such as the responses relevant to how the L2 participants coped with the assignments, how they considered the connection between ESL and FYW or other courses, and what they talked about their FYW course. I also wrote my personal notes as I was reading the interview data source retrospectively.

Analysis of the Think-Aloud Protocols

In addition to interviews, I transcribed significant phenomena within think-aloud protocols, that is, those comments that were most relevant for analytical purposes. I also organized the think-aloud protocol reports with interviews and journals in chronological order for each individual participant. This was an attempt to compose a portfolio of each single case in a consistent manner and create cross-referencing opportunities. Organizing the think-aloud protocols with other sources can also “reflect a process occurring at a particular time and under particular conditions” (Smagorinsky, 1994, p. 16). This made it possible to triangulate across the data sources where that were desired.

Analysis of the Artifacts

Regarding analyzing artifacts, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggest “locating artifacts, identifying the material, analyzing it, and evaluating it” (p. 155). My approach to the artifacts, including syllabi and student writing samples, focused on coding the major assignment prompts and the final products of the student participants, for which I highlighted the key themes by coding key themes related to the goals of the assignment prompts or identifying particular sentence structures in writing samples. An important note on analyzing the artifact data sources is the concern about reliability. For example, Silva (1993) collected 72 reports of empirical research and compared L1 and L2 writing

to discover the salient differences between L1 and L2 written texts. In the matter of enhancing the objectivity during the textual analysis, Silva worked with another experienced ESL writing teacher. They evaluated texts independently, and their evaluation results needed to possess “100% agreement on the classification of references for both differences and suggestions” (p. 31). However, due to the time constraints and the availability of evaluators, I did not seek out external assistance in data analysis, though such an approach could impact on the validity and reliability of the current study. As for the future research, I will take into consideration the need to include external evaluators for similar research circumstances.

HyperResearch

I also used a program called HyperResearch to assist in data analysis. It can organize sources by codes, which allowed me to work with a subset of cases, analyze subgroups, compare them and look for patterns among large amounts of data. Given the capabilities of the program—tagging key phrases (i.e. codes)—within a single case and also across multiple cases, the analytical lenses focused on seeking for “correspondence” (Stake, 1995, p. 78). Transcriptions, journals, and field notes were imported to HyperResearch. Here it is critical to understand my coding approach. Appendix B provides a list of codes on HyperResearch. At the preparation stage of this study, I had created a list of codes that were derived from the research questions and theoretical frameworks of this current study. For example, while the research questions looked at the L2 participants’ transitions and perceptions regarding their learning in ESL and FYW, the codes captured FYW writing tasks, similarities and differences between FYW and ESL, as well as students’ perspectives on the FYW/ESL courses. Other codes in relation to

other research questions were, for example, students' concerns, difficulties, struggles and challenges, and writing processes. Additionally, in order to understand the student participants, I created a code for L2 participants' English education in their home countries. All in all, these initial codes functioned as the primary focus of my analysis—looking at all data sources for the purpose of answering research questions and providing contextual information about the research sites and participants.

Moreover, as the analysis was progressing, I was sensitive to any arising themes both within a case and across cases. For example, the code for class peer-review and feedback, including both oral and written form, was created when I found it was discussed by all student participants. The findings revealed an important perspective regarding the dynamic aspects of feedback from instructors and peers. In this regard, I created this new code as I identified emerging themes in my data sources. In other words, my analysis was not merely focused on using the initial coding list to find “answers” for the research questions. I also allowed “new codes” to present unique findings. That is, I used the designated codes (basic codes) as a sorting process to find out “what’s there” (Merriam, 1988, p. 148) and also new codes to delve into unexpected observations.

Given the coding schema I adopted, HyperResearch assisted me not only in generating inductive interpretation of each single case as well as cross cases, but also organizing new and old codes. That is, while conducting a single case analysis and noting relations between cases, I extended the analysis on categories of differences. The new codes beyond the basic list of codes accounted for understanding particularistic or unique phenomena of a case, and then the analysis delved into the interrelations between variables. New codes likewise emerged as the analysis continued. I revisited each single

case after applying the basic list of codes, and then compared and contrasted correspondence. The coding schema (Appendix B) was created as a result when I constantly reiterated tagging and verifying codes of all data sources.

Besides discussing the analysis procedures, it is critical to acknowledge the difficulties that rose in the process. In spite of the difficulty in recruiting external evaluators, the challenges in the data analysis included unequal amounts of data sets from each participant. For example, a Chinese participant (i.e., Sono) without any think-aloud protocols resulted in a great missing data source to understand how he completed the FYW assignments. Similarly, Loni's second think-aloud session was too short to provide useful information about how she revised her Christopher Columbus research paper. Such missing data affected available sources to answer research questions. Additionally, some of participants' journal entries contained merely two to three sentences, which provided little information to help me understand the student participants' weekly learning and importantly their inner feelings. These challenges complicated the data analysis.

Therefore, I revised the analysis plan (Table 3.2) while I was analyzing the data. For example, as for the first research question, I relied on interviews more than the other three data sources. In interviews, I asked the student participants about their ESL learning, such as what they thought about the connection between ESL and FYW and what they learned in ESL. Those questions directly aimed at the first research questions. Similarly, as for the second research question, the interviews rather than journals provided specific information about the student participants' perceptions, since I was able to ask relevant questions in interviews. As for the third and fourth research questions, I

cross-referenced all sources, especially because there was an unequal amount of think-aloud data. In this regard, triangulation data and analysis helped fill this missing data gap.

As discussed earlier, analyzing qualitative research data is a key to identifying any arising themes. Triangulation can assist in identifying themes and patterns emerging from different data sources. By using HyperResearch as I imported all transcribed interviews and journals into the application, I cross-coded cases, which allowed me to identify emerging themes, such as feedback. Although this finding might not directly relate to answering the research questions, such an instance illustrates how triangulation helped the analysis of data, that is, presenting the interrelationship of cases. Triangulating data sources and analyses also augmented the reliability and validity of this study, which is discussed in the next section.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

The term *reliability* conventionally refers to “the replicability of scientific findings” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 210) in quantitative research, whereas it implies the quality of a qualitative study (Golafshani, 2003). Although qualitative research does not rely on statistics to confirm the credibility of the study, reliability, or the term “transferability,” of findings establishes the value of the study. A good qualitative study should also present replicable findings. The counterpart of reliability refers to validity; as Golafshani (2003) states, “there can be no validity without reliability” (p. 601). Validity refers to “the accuracy of scientific findings” (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984, p. 210). The notions of validity and reliability have been commonly discussed for experimental as well as statistical research (i.e., quantitative research). However, considering the reliability as well as validity of a qualitative case study is as important as for a quantitative study. A

case study researcher has to be wary about whether the research design enforces external validity, whether the data sources are “reliable” (i.e., reliability), and whether data analysis procedures are cogent enough to present “correct” findings (Yin, 2003).

Concerning reliability and validity, a key concern is subjectivity in the research and analytical processes. For example, as a researcher, I could impose subjective perceptions and biases toward the participants, to the extent that the data analysis would potentially be inclined to present incomplete or inaccurate findings. There could also be problems during data gathering. For example, participants could behave differently from what they would normally do in the presence of the researcher; this is called reflexivity (Heyl, 2006). For instance, I was aware that my presence in the participants’ think-aloud sessions could impact on their responses, so I sat at the corner to avoid eye contact. To cope with such situations, “triangulation is typically a strategy” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 603) so as to substantiate the researcher’s evidentiary and interpretative assertions.

Moreover, in this study, there were some challenges arising during the research process. For example, I collected unequal amounts of data from each participant, especially with respect to think-alouds. Also, as discussed earlier in the chapter, I allowed the use of Chinese for some research participants to ensure accuracy in their reflections, while others only used English. In addition, I did not observe the Chinese participants in the ESL classes before they took the FYW course. I compensated for the possibility of those challenges altering the original research design and affecting some degree of the reliability and validity of the current study through careful triangulation, especially in the data analysis phase. That is, I carefully counter-balanced data sources, and I was

thorough in terms of frequent reviews of the data sources during data analysis. In these regards, I endeavored to minimized bias and subjectivity.

Additionally, member check was employed to maximize reliability (Yin, 2003). For instance, Honeycutt (2002 cited in Honeycutt & Pritchard, 2006) reviewed notes on observation and video/audio recordings with participants to verify information. As for this study, the member check procedure occurred constantly; however, it was conducted differently from the common member check process. Normally, a researcher would sit down with participants retroactively to go through research notes, such as the transcriptions of interviews and think-aloud protocols. However, I mostly member checked during the data collection. That is, in the data collection phase, whenever there was unclear information about participants' responses, I asked the student participants and FYW instructors to clarify the information as soon as possible in various situations. For example, I approached the participants immediately after the classroom observations, I emailed them confirmation-related questions, or I often asked for clarification during the interviews. In other words, member check took place when I was collecting the data to not only verify information, but also to generate follow-up questions about participants' responses. Hence, I did not member check with the participants after I transcribed the data (e.g., interviews), since I had constantly confirmed the information during the data collection. However, I was aware of the validity concerns this approach created. Here I felt confident that my thoroughness during data collection confirmation was sufficient. One notable exception was my English translations of the Chinese participants' responses in Chinese. These could have been shown to those participants;

however, I took great care during the translation process and was confident about the degree of accuracy I achieved.

Moving beyond the student participants, I only conducted member check with the FYW instructors and not the FYW Director. This was due, first, to time constraints in the research process; I was not able to transcribe the interview with the FYW Director while collecting the primary data sources from the student participants and the FYW instructors. Moreover, the director's interview is a data source used to provide contextual information about the FYW course, so that it operated more as a secondary source of data and was not connected to the formal data analysis process. Furthermore I had an information-gathering meeting with the director in the preparation stage of this dissertation and so had already gained a certain amount of information prior to the formal interview with him. Hence, I felt confident about my understanding of his perspectives and therefore felt that member check was not essential in that set of circumstances. However, it might still impact on the validity of this current study. To resolve this concern, I particularly referenced the FYW instructors' interviews to confirm information which came from the director. Because they had the first-hand information about the FYW course design as well as working with international students, I was confident about triangulating with them.

In summary, triangulation assisted me in cross-referencing, comparing, contrasting, categorizing as well as identifying emerging themes. In these regards, it played an invaluable role in controlling for researcher bias and subjectivity and ensuring a suitable degree of reliability and validity.

Chapter 4: The Curriculum and Instructors of First-Year Writing Classes at University X

4.1 Introduction

This study recruited seven L2 student participants from three types of the First-Year Writing (FYW) course (English 1110) at University X. Each FYW type to some degree differs from one to another; thus, the researcher defines each type of FYW as a separate case study. While one FYW type is treated as an *individual case*, student participants are *embedded cases* within each FYW case. The relevance between an individual case and its embedded cases implies that there is a connection between the course design and L2 students' reflections on different issues. Thus, this chapter presents the curriculum of three FYW courses and introduces instructors, for the purpose of contextualizing participants' responses in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

This chapter is composed of two segments to provide the contextual information about the FYW course at University X. A large portion of this chapter first introduces three selected FYW course sections that represent the different types of FYW options available to students, which are discussed in the following order: *standard*, *modified* and *innovative*. Before that, it presents information about the ESL courses that most of the participants had taken. The second segment introduces the three FYW course instructors, including their education and teaching experiences. The data sources were retrieved from course materials (e.g., syllabi, assignment prompts), interviews of instructors, and

classroom observations. Following the contextual material presented in this chapter, Chapter 5 will introduce the L2 student participants and elucidate their learning experiences in the type of FYW class in which they were enrolled.

4.1.1 The English as a Second Language (ESL) Writing Course

As a brief reminder, the FYW course is a university-wide course required for first year undergraduate students. L2 students typically take at least one English as a Second Language (ESL) writing course prior to enrolling in FYW, in accordance with university rules for international students. Five L2 student participants (i.e., Penny, Yenta, Yulia, Loni and Sono) took ESL courses at University X. However, this study did not observe these students in their ESL courses. Instead, the information about those courses was drawn from participants' retrospection and the collected ESL writing course syllabi. I had also spoken with the coordinator of the ESL Composition Program. The following section provides information about the two undergraduate ESL writing courses. It thus helps delineate the writing-related background most of the L2 students brought into the current study, especially a knowledge telling orientation and a notion of what writing courses should provide for students.

The ESL Composition Program at University X offers writing courses that aim at assisting international students whose first language is not English in the “development of writing skills for them to perform successfully as writers” (The ESL Composition Program Website, 2016). The Program offers two ESL writing courses for undergraduate international students. Depending on the results of their English proficiency replacement tests upon their arrival at the university, international students may take one or two ESL courses. Yenta was the only student participant who completed the full ESL writing

sequence before she enrolled in a FYW course; the other four Chinese participants took only the second ESL writing course of the sequence.

The first level ESL writing course introduced L2 undergraduates “to composing for a variety of rhetorical purposes, while carefully considering the concepts of audience, purpose, and context” (The ESL Writing Course I Syllabus, 2014). A required textbook was *American Now: Short readings from Recent Periodicals* by Rober Atwan (2013). Table 4.1 provides information about the major assignments. After taking this course, students were expected to know: (1) how to accommodate audience, context, and writing for specific purposes; (2) how to participate in peer-review, and (3) how to use a citation style. In a sense, the first ESL writing course taught fundamental concepts of academic English writing. The course aimed at modeling L2 students’ early writing development by engaging them in writing about their ideas and responding to others. This kind of design converges with the knowledge telling approach that constructs beginning writers’ awareness of what they know about the topic and are able to answer questions in an appropriate way. It follows a ‘teaching students how to write’ approach.

Assignments	Objectives	Percentage of the Course Grade
Discussion Board Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting response to discussion board topic/question • Responding to the postings of others 	20%
Personal Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting profile • Responding to others 	15%
Photo Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composing, revising, and posting a multi-media reflection about readings • Constructive peer feedback 	20%
Group Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and posting a multi-media collection of information and images • Presenting the project in class • Evaluating others 	25%
Plagiarism Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting advice regarding intellectual property 	15%
Polished Portfolio		5%

Table 4. 1 The ESL Writing Course I Syllabus (2014)

The second ESL writing course of the sequence featured more sophisticated activities while also embracing the ‘teaching how to write’ orientation. This second ESL course emphasized source-based writing with the intention of giving L2 undergraduates “extensive and intensive exposure to writing using sources” (The ESL Writing Course II Syllabus, 2015). Students were expected: (1) to understand the academic writing style and university resources for research writing; (2) to value peer feedback as well as incorporate it in writing, and (3) to document sources appropriately. Table 4.2 provides the information about the major assignments. These activities also seemed to conceptually associate with the knowledge telling orientation, which required writers to “tell” what they know about the topic and how they organize ideas by incorporating sources in an appropriate way.

Assignments	Objectives	Percentage of the Course Grade
Research Paper (5-6 pages)	Using the textbook as a back drop, choosing a topic, developing research questions, and findings sources	25%
3 Short-Research Papers (1-2 pages)	Picking an idea or topic from a specified chapter of the textbook and find a source to further explain it	20%
4 Motivational Narratives (2-3 paragraphs)	Emulating “Allen’s style” from the textbook and writing students’ own motivational narratives	20%
3 Reading Quizzes (1-3 questions)	Answering questions about readings and using the reading as a source	15%
3 In-Class Group Writing Discussion (1-2 paragraphs)	Writing a short summary of a video and responding to peers’ summaries in class	10%
In-Class Research Paper Presentation (4-6 minutes)	Presenting students’ research papers	5%
Attendance/Participation	Active participation in class	5%

Table 4. 2 The ESL Writing Course II Syllabus (2015)

Collectively, these courses sought to give students a solid grounding in what were seen as the fundamentals of academic writing in English within the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) framework. In this way they would be equipped with baseline writing knowledge and skills that could be used to complete assignments in other courses in line with the knowledge telling orientation noted earlier. What was especially important, in addition to the knowledge telling emphasis, was that these courses gave the Chinese students the key notion of a writing course as a place where students are taught *how to write*. This was the background they brought to FYW, a course that is designed from the knowledge transforming orientation and helping students learn *how to use writing* instead of being taught how to write.

4.2 Research Site: The First-Year Writing Course at University X

The First-Year Writing Program is housed in the English Department at

University X; it supervises the curriculum design, enrollment and teacher training related to the course. The course objectives comply with national, local and institutional expectations, particularly with respect to student needs for writing across the curriculum. First of all, concerning national parameters, an introductory writing course in American postsecondary education is mandated to fulfill the learning outcomes published by the Writing Program Administration (WPA). These outcomes are aimed to develop students' rhetorical knowledge, writing processes, knowledge of conventions, and critical thinking, reading and composing skills (WPA, 2014). Moreover, the FYW Program at University X has added two objectives to its course objectives, which are *collaboration* and *multimodal literacy*. According to the Program's Handbook (2014), collaboration suggests that students "understand that the writing process is often collaborative and social" (p. 2) and improve their writing through working with others. Multimodal literacy means composing in electronic environments; students engage in newly emerging composing platforms through media and technology that are part of today's Digital Era.

Secondly, the FYW course aligns with the state and institutional expectations. At the institutional level, the FYW course is a part of the General Education Curriculum (GEC) of undergraduate studies. It aims to improve the Writing and Communication component of the GEC, such as "students are skilled in written communication and expression, reading, critical thinking, oral expressions and visual expression" (Course Syllabus, 2016). The FYW course in that capacity teaches college writing, in particular practicing expository writing, to all freshmen not exempted from the course requirement. The ultimate aim is to prepare students to meet the writing (and to some extent the related reading) requirements embedded in many other undergraduate courses at the university.

Here there is alignment with the Board of Regents specifications, which “*break things down into a rhetorical knowledge of conventions and ability to work with outside sources, and I feel like we are pretty well aligned with each of those expectations in the WPA outcome statement*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016).

Another dimension of the State Board of Regents’ regulations that has had a major impact on the FYW course at University X is a change in the college admission criteria that took place in 2010. The major change was that students were granted college credits from the College Board’s Advanced Placement Program for exam scores of three or above, instead of the previous minimum of four (personal communication with the FYW director, 5/27/2014). As a result, more students are able to receive college credits and waive university requirements, especially for GEC courses and the FYW course. This change has impacted significantly on the student demography of a typical FYW section at University X. In particular, it appears that there are more students who did not take advanced English classes in high school or need basic writing instruction. It is also likely that the proportion of L2 students to native English speaking students is much higher than in the past. These demographic shifts have necessitated some changes in the handling of the FYW course to account for the needs of the current student population.

Regarding the presence of L2 student writers, University X shares the nationwide phenomenon of the changing student demographic. According to the Institute of International Education *Open Door* Report (2016), a total of 119, 262 international undergraduate students were enrolled in American colleges and universities in 2015-2016. The increase of international students affects the FYW enrollment. While more domestic students can be exempted from the introductory composition course in light of

their admission scores, a steadily increasing number of undergraduate international students are present in the FYW course. When University X students come from other countries, upon arrival “*they are automatically channeled through a placement process that’s not run by English but by [the] ESL program*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). According to their placement test results, they are placed in one of two possible ESL writing courses or qualify immediately for the FYW class. Unlike domestic students, “*there’s no possibility of them [...] getting credit for FYW based on that placement*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). As a result, a FYW section nowadays is comprised of more culturally and linguistically diverse students than was the case in the past. This study thus to a certain degree provides insight into how L2 students reflected on their learning in the FYW class and considers the extent to which the course may need evaluation in order to determine the extent to which it fulfills their needs as novice writers of academic English.

As mentioned earlier, there were three FYW sections involved in this study. How these selected FYW classes differed from each other depended in large part upon instructors’ teaching experience. The more years of teaching an instructor has, the more flexibility he or she is granted in terms of changing the basic course design established by the staff overseeing the course. For instance, instructors at the rank of Lecturer are able to create their own FYW syllabi; by contrast, graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) during their first year of teaching at University X are required to use the standard FYW curriculum. In the current study, two of the FYW cases were taught by lecturers while the other one was taught by a GTA. The descriptions that follow shortly begin with the section/case taught by the GTA. By reporting the cases in this order, the findings reveal

the degrees of differences between these types.

4.2.1 FYW GTA Training course

Before presenting the details of the standard FYW course design, this section introduces the training program for GTAs. The Director reported that a wide range of people were teaching FYW, including GTAs, lecturers and regular (i.e., tenure-line) faculty members. The standard FYW class is usually taught by GTAs who are graduate students in the English Department and pursue different graduate programs, such as Writing, Rhetoric and Literacy; Literature, Film and Popular Culture Studies; Folklore, and Creative Writing (Department Website 2016). All three FYW instructors in this study focused their work on Literature or Creative Writing, which suggests that FYW teachers at University X are not limited to compositionists or rhetoric teachers. Given the different interests of these instructors, there was more than one kind of FYW course as a result.

GTAs have to complete a mandatory FYW training program, which includes a pre-semester training workshop in the summer and a training course when they teach FYW in their first semester. Lecturers who also teach FYW are exempt from attending both training courses. The lecturer participants confirmed that they did not receive any training since they started teaching FYW. This training program is designed by the FYW Program team that consists of a Director and WPA Coordinators (i.e. GTAs from the English Department) mainly to help GTAs “*be familiar with the curriculum, understand the theory of composition and [introduce GTAs] to university resources*” (personal communication with the FYW director, 5/27/2014). The researcher had observed the semester training course in Fall 2015, in the preparation of this dissertation project. There were 45-50 GTAs who attended this course in that semester. These first-year FYW

GTAs' teaching experiences varied. Some GTAs were novice teachers just launching their teacher career, while some had had additional teaching experience, such as being K-12 English teachers or teaching in their previous postsecondary institutions.

Most of the training course time essentially accentuated pedagogical approaches and assessments for the major project—Analytical Research Project—which was comprised of the Primary Source Analysis, Annotated Bibliography, and Secondary Sources Integration. Additionally, an important training agenda included the discussion of “*the changing dynamic and demographics (of the FYW course)*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). The Director described the demographic changes in the FYW course over the last ten years as follows:

“The university itself has welcomed more students from around the world. ... what we have is that 10 years ago if an instructor encountered, as we say one international student over the course of teaching in a year that would be pretty typical. And now in any given section that could be anywhere from, you know, three to 10 or 12 international students. Like it sometimes like half of the students in the class, English is not their first language and this is particularly true in the summer when it could be as many as 22 of 24 students” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016).

Given this change in the FYW enrollment, it was unavoidable to bring up in conversation the pedagogical approaches needed to be changed in order to account for the needs of the non-native English speakers (NNESs), that is, the L2 students. The course allocated a class meeting to discuss the obstacles that GTAs could encounter when working with NNESs in their classes and suggested approaches for coping with those difficulties. A prevalent concern that GTAs brought up in conversation was about NNESs' readiness for the course. Because of the numerous grammatical errors in NNESs' writing, many GTAs felt the University ESL Program should have retained NNES students in ESL classes for

a longer time before they took the FYW class. From the GTAs' perspectives, teaching English grammar or fundamental writing skills was not part of the FYW curriculum and instead belonged only in ESL courses.

An important note is that this class session about working with NNEs was scheduled toward the middle of the semester. By that time, some GTAs had reflected that they did not receive sufficient training to teach NNEs, leading to some resentment among them, in particular, those instructors whose classes had many L2 students. In light of their frustration about NNEs' performance, some instructors even suggested that the department should consider an alternative FYW class that was designed exclusively for NNEs. The Director nevertheless argued against an independent FYW class only for NNEs in consideration of the social elements in one's learning. He explained that:

Some schools "have instituted first-year composition course is completely for non-native speakers and just sort of institutionally segregated native speakers from non-native speakers. It just doesn't strike me that that is the way we should go at University X. I never think how we could use the design that personalized. There is little social interaction between native students and international students at University X. I think if somehow more of that social interaction could be fostered, then I think that would benefit everyone academically" (Director Interview, 2/18/2016).

Continuing on the theme of increased social interaction, the Director stated that

"international students may be bringing a different set of experiences to the classroom"

(Director Interview, 2/18/2016). In the FYW Handbook (2014), a teacher resource

section acknowledged that "multilingual students should not be patronized when they

lack culture-bound understandings of heavily contextualized readings" (p. 24). While

they understood the course assignments, *"the thing that most often gets in the way of*

success is more in language than it is in concept" (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). The

Director therefore had called for a “broader” assessment in the course; that is, the evaluation should not discount their work due to their language limitations. The Director specifically indicated that “*we don’t expect that international students by the end of the FYW course will be able to pass as native speakers of English. I mean it’s unrealistic and counterproductive, because it gets in the way of accomplishing the more important goals of the course—analytical goals and conceptual goals*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016).

The FYW course goals were aimed at every student and thus not meant to discriminate against the L2 writers, including the belief that it was acceptable to find grammatical errors in their writing. Moreover, the Director shared his observation that L2 students’ fluency in English was not necessarily one of their stated goals at the university. He noted that students had other priorities “*and to an extent they can achieve those things without gaining that kind of fluency*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). That is, they may prioritize subject content knowledge over their language proficiency development and were able to succeed in other courses without gaining a high degree of English language fluency. However, he pointed out that the FYW class “*does help them because at least it gives them practice*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016) and drew attention to their achievement of writing and related skills more than language fluency.

4.3 The First Case: The Standard FYW Class

4.3.1 Philosophical Background

This section presents the philosophical background of the standard FYW course taught by GTAs. There are approximately 65 sections of the *standard* FYW course per semester, excluding online sections. According to the FYW Handbook (2014), this course “introduce(s) students to college level writing through original research projects within

the scope of a course theme” (p.1). The philosophy behind the curriculum design is that “*we definitely take a process approach to thinking about writing by dividing the overall work of the course into many smaller segments that build on one another, giving students plenty of opportunity for revision*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). The Director then stressed that the course had adopted a modified process model; that is, “*each step along the way is a partial step toward the final goal, but it is also discrete in that we don’t go back to it, so the first major assignment, the Primary Source Analysis, students write and receive comments and grades. Students don’t go back and rewrite the PSA. They use that to take the next step toward the Secondary Source Integration*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). Hence, there was a kind of scaffolding at work in the course assignments, with each assignment helping students acquire knowledge and skills that would carry over to the next assignment. That being said, the series of assignments were one-time completion tasks as opposed to allowing for multiple drafts of student work.

The Director confirmed the focus of the course was on analysis as an intellectual act, which he explained that “*really does inform the other things that we’re doing in the class. For example, when we talk about developing an academic ethos, we’re talking about the ethos of an engaged and curious observer and researcher, rather than someone who is, you know, seeking to pick up kind of political stance or an argumentative stance or persuade someone on an issue*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). Students are expected to “*be keen observers of their world and not leap to judgment either too early or even really maybe much at all, but rather to adopt a kind of thoughtful curious analytical approach to their writing*” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016).

An underlying assumption in these comments is that students will transfer FYW

learning to other contexts where academic writing is involved. The Director clarified the question of *transfer* when discussing the relationship between the FYW class and other courses as well as how FYW prepares students for writing in other classes. Below is his response in the interview:

“Well, the question of transfer is a pretty gigantic one that has sort of fraught dynamics and some way we do talk about it in class. And when we talk about this with others outside the program, we say, you know, people learning skills that will serve you well in upper level courses are in professional writing situation. I’m not sure we actually have proof that that’s the case, but I think we just sort of hope that that is true.

I think that where it is most likely to show itself is in the direct transition from the first writing course to the second writing course, but we worry that students, I mean, it’s sort of almost like a psychological phenomenon they tend to box up everything from a course, and just say, ‘okay, I’m done with that right now. I’m going to start something completely new as they encounter. New writing expectations are new intellectual challenges. They don’t naturally just think well when my FYW teachers say about this.

So sometimes I think that transfer is sort of lacking, but then on the other hand, I also reject the notion of thinking about this in an entirely linear fashion where FYW leads to this to the second writing course, which leads to maybe a capstone writing course or senior thesis or something like that with each step like basically starting where the previous one left off. Because we also know the literature tells us that learning to write is a recursive process and not just a straight line of progress on the part of student.

I think to the extent that transfer as possible it’s aided by literally talking about it in class and then in subsequent courses. If this were possible for instructors to have conversations about what students did in their previous work, the light bulb can come on and students could say ‘Oh, this is what my FYW teacher was talking about, but I don’t think they make those connections easily as naturally. Sometimes that needs to be guided in some way” (Director Interview, 2/18/2016).

The Director’s response indicates that transfer plays an important but complex role in the FYW course. There is a notion of transfer at work in the course, but there is also a recognition that transfer is a complicated process, and that the FYW course can only help

set some grounds for students' learning transfer. An important point made in the Director's comments is that there is actually a follow-up course to the FYW course, one that undergraduate students take in their second year. By following the FYW course, the second year course can build on principles established in FYW and thus further promote transfer of learning to other writing contexts. Also noteworthy is the Director's belief in the value of talking about writing as a means of helping to promote learning transfer; such discussion is an important component of FYW.

4.3.2 *The Standard FYW Curriculum*

Before depicting the details of the standard FYW curriculum, it is important to note that University X is classified as a Research One university. Therefore, the standard FYW course design (Table 4.1) was based on the assumption that students would participate in research activities during their attendance at the university and "write for a scholarly audience using the conventions of academic discourse" (FYW Handbook, 2014, p. 29). Moreover, it was assumed that to some extent students had already acquired these skills in their past writing experiences, because the curriculum did not take into consideration that students possibly needed direct writing instruction, for example, about style, grammar, and basic writing skills. Instead, the course stated that students should avoid "*sticking to a formula and, you know, we often hold up the so-called five-paragraph theme ... break that cycle ... we really need to take it to the next level*" (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). These aims were pursued through a textbook called *Writing Analytically* (2015, 8th Ed.), by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen. Table 4.1 provides a breakdown of the assignments, objectives, and grading system for the standard FYW sections.

Assignments	Objectives	Percentage of the Course Grade
Analytical Research Project: Primary Sources Analysis, Secondary Sources Integration and Annotated Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of sources • Synthesis of multiple critical viewpoints into new interpretations, thesis development, composing process, style and grammar 	50%
Symposium Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of appropriate rhetorical decisions • Understanding genre expectations, attribution and citation of digital and visual sources 	30%
Process Posts & Symposium Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory writing and image collection • Careful listening, responding to presentations in oral and written form 	15%
In-Class Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in discussion, in-class writing and productive collaboration 	5%

Table 4. 3 The Standard FYW Syllabus (2016)

As the table shows, the standard FYW course revolved around the Analytical Research Project (ARP), with an intent of engaging students in producing a piece of academic writing on a topic within the scope of the course theme. The sequence of the ARP was implemented to allow students to learn *“by writing in this particular context where they are getting frequent feedback on their writing, and being asked to think about their writing in particular ways in relation to some pretty sophisticated reading that we’re asking them to do”* (Director Interview, 2/18/2016). Through this project, students practiced core skills associated with academic writing that were considered important for writing in other university contexts. The ARP comprised five steps, and each was built on the previous step. These included Primary Source Analysis, Annotated Bibliography, Secondary Source Integration, the Research Conference and the Analytical Research Paper. Collectively, the ARP constituted 50% of the final course grade.

The Primary Source Analysis (PSA) was a two to three page analysis paper with the intent of situating novice researchers in a discovery phase of research; that is, they explored a topic by searching for and evaluating sources. Students analyzed two sources of artifacts that could include images and textual sources, and fitted within the scope of the course theme. Analysis specifically referred to the definition in *Writing Analytically*; that is, “a form of detective work that typically pursues something puzzling, something you are seeking to understand rather than something you believe you already have the answers to” (p. 2-3). Rather than simply providing a lot of information about their sources, students had to not only describe but also focus on the most important aspects of each source. Students were expected to articulate their interpretation of the sources in a coherent essay, instead of an outline. However, an introduction and a conclusion were not necessary for the PSA. Because the assignment in a sense was the first draft of the ARP, the focus was more on the student’s idea development. Instead, research questions had to be included in the PSA and acquaint readers with researchers’ claims concerning the primary evidence that yielded insights into the sources (PSA Prompt, 2016).

The assignment that follows the PSA is the Annotated Bibliography (AB). Students searched for three to four “secondary sources that are timely, useful, credible, and relevant to” their primary source (Course Materials, 2016). At least one of these sources had to be retrieved from a scholarly and peer-reviewed academic journal. Then, students described each source in a paragraph, summarized the authors’ claims, and explained how the source was related to the argument made in the primary source. At this research stage, students were expected to already have an argument to develop after choosing their possible secondary sources. Besides searching for and evaluating their

sources, students were introduced to the Modern Language Association (MLA) citation style in accordance with the writing conventions of a course in the Humanities.

The Secondary Source Integration (SSI) was the third step of the sequence. The four to five page SSI paper required students to revisit their PSA and AB in order to extend their “analytical claims and integrate secondary evidence seamlessly and effectively into” their writing (SSI Assignment Prompt, 2016). In doing that, they had to state a thesis statement as well as “allow for [their] Research Questions to evolve and to take shape, revise or extend claims made in the previous assignment” (SSI Assignment Prompt, 2016). The SSI stressed students’ development of *integration* skills such as analyzing and refining arguments, rather than simply adding sources to the end of the PSA paper. Students were reminded to avoid “source anxiety,” as it was called in the textbook (p. 182), that is, to be sure to have their own ideas instead of simply deferring to content in the source texts. In order to get started with the SSI, students should review their PSA and reevaluate their claim. Then, they decided two selected secondary sources from their AB assignment. Choosing their secondary sources should not be simply because the sources supported students’ arguments; instead, the sources should “allow [them] to engage in conversation” (SSI Assignment Prompt, 2016). The SSI resembled the PSA in some ways, for example, analyzing the (primary) sources. However, the SSI required more advanced research skills, such as selecting appropriate sources, evaluating the claims of sources, and considering their relevance to the writer’s argument.

4.3.3 The Case One Instructor and Context

The standard FYW course investigated in the current study was aligned with the framework just described. It was taught by Lisa (pseudonym), a first-year Creative

Writing graduate student from the English Department, for the first time in the Autumn Semester, 2015. In the same semester, she was taking the FYW training course. Hence, she was initially teaching the course while being trained to do so. She continued to use the standard syllabus to teach her second FYW class at the time of the data collection in Spring Semester, 2016. Lisa was around 25-26 years old. In class, she was quite laid back. That is, she adjusted her lessons according to students' needs during the semester. For example, she planned activities for more analysis practices when some students expressed their concerns about analyzing their primary sources. Lisa agreed to participate in the study with respect to allowing classroom observations and collection of course materials; however, she was unable to participate in interviews and weekly journal writing due to the demands of her own academic schedule.

Each standard FYW class was given a title representing a thematic-based topic which served as the focus of the class. Lisa assigned "Gender and Sexuality Representations in Modern Society" for this purpose. A large amount of class time was attributed to discussing the scope of the course theme, and here Lisa preferred to push the students with course content that could be considered contentious in nature so as to stimulate class discussion and promote deeper levels of analytical thought and writing. Lisa thought that the topics of her materials (e.g., sex, marriage, etc.) were age appropriate for students at the college level and wanted them to know that "not everything is black or white. It's not easy to judge, if looking at it in more analytical ways" (Classroom Observation, 1/27/2016). This comment reflected her desire, in line with the FYW's course goal, to help the students become more analytical thinkers, readers, and writers.

For example, in one class session she listed curse words (e.g., fuck, bitch, cunt, faggot, etc.) on the blackboard and said, “Context does not stay alone, so you feel offended” (Classroom Observation, 3/02/2016). The lesson emphasized how contexts affect people’s reactions, especially when words like those curse words were connoted with cultural, social and sexual implications. In the following class session, Lisa brought up University X’s campus climate survey in 2016 and related it to discussion of sexual harassment on campus. She further led the class to ponder over how male and female harassment are treated differently. She posted questions, such as “who to blame?” and “gender stereotypes” and selected readings about cases of rape in the military (Classroom Observation, 3/04/2016). The conversation was penetrating; however, Lisa wanted to teach students to critically think about the course theme and be able to examine their ARP topics from different perspectives.

In addition to the materials she selected, Lisa used the afore-mentioned *Writing Analytically* as her textbook. The book focused on not only the relationship between analysis and writing but also the procedures for writing analytical research papers and specifically source-based papers. It first introduced the definition of analysis and why analytical writing was the kind of writing that students were most often asked to do in college (p. 1). Then, the chapters included content on how to integrate sources and identify appropriate writing convention. An important selection from this textbook was about logos, pathos and ethos (p. 9), that is, Aristotle's elements of persuasion as the fundamental concept of rhetoric and the analytic lenses that students should use as “a set of habits for observing and making sense of the world” (p. 10). Lisa used Michael Jackson’s music video “Bad” to practice logos, pathos and ethos as analytical lenses to

analyze sources. This use of material from the world of popular culture was typical of Lisa's approach to the class. For example, she allocated a few class meetings for helping students delve into their research in the preparation of the SSI. She selected contentious videos about topics such as feminism, drag queens, and transgender to discuss perceptions on those topics and led students to sort out different perspectives of gender and sexuality. In one of these analysis activities, she stated that "gender can be manipulated" (Classroom Observation, 2/22/2016) to help sharpen their analytic skills. All those in-class practices were also designed to help students analyze their secondary sources critically in support of their thesis statement.

A student-and-teacher conference, or the so-called Research Conference, was scheduled soon after the SSI, during which Lisa met each student to discuss their revision plans and how they would be developed into the ARP. Because the ARP constituted 50% of the course grade and each assignment was built on the previous step, students must complete every step so as to experience the scaffolding that would be reflected in this culminating project.

The final step of the sequence was the full-fledged final ARP, which were seven to eight pages in length and the culmination of students' research work throughout the semester. Students at this stage had engaged in reading and evaluating their primary sources, developed their thesis/claims, and used secondary sources to support their arguments. In addition, Lisa assigned an in-class peer-review activity. Students brought their first complete ARP draft to the classroom. They were paired and commented on each other's drafts by "looking for general comments, highlighting what you see it's a problem and figuring out what you want to improve on and expanding" (Classroom

Observation, 4/18/2016).

In summary, the sequence of the ARP-related activities led students to experience the research process in ways that would prepare them similar activities as they moved through their coursework at a research-oriented university. More importantly, because the course adopted the notion that writing was as a means to express one's claims after engaging in reading and analysis of sources and other people's arguments, the ARP was designed with a focus on analysis instead of acquisition of fundamental writing skills. Students should expect to apply this analysis skill in other classes and, in particular, for academic writing. Therefore, every step of the ARP contributed to a broad vision of writing; that is, students should become keen observers and analysts of what they see, hear and read across print and digital sources as well as establish their own positions in articulating their viewpoints after critically analyzing others' arguments (FYW Handbook, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, besides the ARP, a Symposium Presentation (SP) was the other large standard FYW task (30% of the course grade). The SP was an oral presentation and designed to engage students in practicing composing on technological platforms. It not only was designated for developing students' *multimodal literacy* but also functioned as another venue to deepen students' thinking about their ARP, as "the process of preparing your presentation—and the feedback you will receive—will better position you to strengthen the final version of the ARP" (Symposium Assignment Prompt, 2014). Also called Backtalk, it was "a presentation that combines the visual with precisely crafted written text. The Backtalk is a means of re-imagining the work of students' ARP of an actively listening audience" (FYW Handbook, 2014).

As a GTA instructor, Lisa followed the standard FYW curriculum and assigned the course theme of her choice: Gender and Sexuality Representations in Modern Society. She used a variety of materials to allow students more varied analytical practice associated with each assignment. Lisa also provided additional direct writing instruction on grammar and stylistic choices not accounted for in the standard course curriculum. She referenced the textbook to explain what writing style meant, which was defined as “the writer’s decisions in selecting, arranging, and expressing what they have to say” (*Writing Analytically*, 2015, p. 265), in contrast to tone, which was “implied attitude of a piece of language” (*Writing Analytically*, 2015, p. 294). Given these definitions, Lisa let students analyze presidential campaign advertisements of Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and Bernie Sanders, and particularly about what the style and the tone each presidential candidate presented in the commercial. This activity alerted students to “the problem of inflated diction” (*Writing Analytically*, 2015, p. 300). To that end, Lisa suggested “don’t use inflated language” (Classroom Observation, 3/09/2016).

Compared to the other two FYW teachers in this study, Lisa selected more contemporary and controversial course materials and dealt with linguistic aspect of writing they did not address. In summary, her class featured an emphasis on the FYW Program’s curriculum concerning rhetorical analysis, and at the same time, Lisa modified the lessons in support of students’ needs. As for the presence of L2 students in her class, they represented approximately one fourth of the class of 24 students. One student participant, Naomi (pseudonym), was recruited from Lisa’s class. Her learning experience will be detailed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

4.4 The Second Case: The Modified FYW Class

In contrast to the standard FYW that was usually taught by a GTA, a *modified* FYW class was taught by a senior lecturer—Briana (pseudonym). Unlike the GTA instructor, Lisa, Briana was free to revise the syllabus in light of her greater amount of experience with the course. As will be seen shortly, she made some changes in the course while still adhering to its fundamental emphasis on analytic writing of a kind that students could use across the university curriculum.

4.4.1 Introduction to Briana

After receiving her bachelor's degree at a university in New York, Briana taught English in Japan for a year, which "*was a great learning experience for [her] as a teacher and working experiences with students who learn English as a foreign language (EFL)*" (Interview, 1/14/2016). She obtained her MFA Degree in Creative Writing at University X. During her graduate studies, she also taught composition (i.e. the standard FYW section). After receiving her MFA, she taught a first-year composition course in another institution for a few years. She then returned to University X as a senior lecturer in the English Department, where she taught three to four FYW sections per semester. It was this senior lecturer status, along with her extensive experience teaching FYW, which allowed her considerable latitude to shape the course as she saw fit while still pursuing core course objectives.

With respect to Briana's modified FYW course design (Table 4.2), she entitled her class as one featuring *literature-based short stories*. This orientation was related to her degree in Creative Writing and nonfiction. She "*felt comfortable and secure*" using short stories after she spent three years to "*test drive*" the curriculum and revise the materials (Interview, 1/14/2016). Besides using the core textbook, *Writing Analytically*,

unlike Lisa with her use of a multitude of text types, Briana selected another required course book, *The Best American Short Stories 2015*, by T. C. Boyle and Heidi Pitlor, to restrict students' use of primary sources to short stories for the ARP paper assignment. Although her FYW course revolved more around literature-based analysis, she also used a variety of artifacts (e.g., videos, readings) in her classroom teaching.

As a teacher, Briana was around her 30s. Comparing to Lisa's laid-back teaching style, Briana's class seemed to be more structured with respect to the planned activities. For example, during the first week of the class, she used an "icebreaker" activity to "*get a sense of the room, the dynamic of the classroom, and potential issues with shyness or behavioral appropriateness, and gauge the speaking and comprehension abilities of NNEs*" (Briana's Journal 1). She also talked to NNEs and looked at their written work in order to determine how much support each of them might need from her. She was also aware that she not only spoke more slowly in class but also encouraged international students to talk one-on-one with her, especially during her office hours. The most important note to the class was that she hoped students communicated with her about their needs "*because otherwise [she] won't know and [she] can't help [them]*" (Interview, 1/14/2016). Collectively, these points show that Briana was sensitive and responsive to the needs and attitudes of L2 writers.

Table 4.2 below provides a breakdown of the FYW assignments as allocated by Briana. Briana's modified FYW curriculum retained the emphasis of the standard FYW curriculum; that is, the skills of analysis and using sources to support claims. However, she increased the value of the ARP assignment from 50% of the course grade to 65%, and she created differentiation in how she weighted each component, with the PSA

constituting 10%, the SSI 20%, AB 5%, and the ARP itself 30%. She also eliminated the Symposium Presentation and Process Posts that played important supporting roles related to the ARP. She replaced them with informal writing tasks, such as free-writing activities, pop quizzes, and take-home short essays, so that she achieved various objectives. These tasks, along with class participation, accounted for a total of 25 % of the course grade. Briana’s determination to ensure that students were reading the assigned material and understanding it represented a sharp contrast to Lisa’s approach.

Assignments	Objectives	Percentage of the Course Grade
Analytical Research Project: Primary Sources Analysis, Secondary Sources Integration and Annotated Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification of appropriate primary sources for analysis ● application of analytical frameworks and rhetorical methods ● analysis of primary and secondary sources ● Synthesis of multiple critical viewpoints into new interpretations, thesis development, composing process, style and grammar 	65% (PSA 10%, SSI 20%, ARP 30% and AB 5%)
Personal Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making appropriate rhetorical decisions to reframe the results of academic research for a new audience, understanding genre expectations 	10%
Informal Writing Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preparatory writing, practicing skills, understanding concepts, experimenting with ideas 	15%
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Active participation in discussion, in-class writing and productive collaboration 	10%

Table 4. 4 The Modified FYW Syllabus (2016)

Another noteworthy move of Briana’s was to replace the Backtalk with a personal essay (PE) task that served as the “final exam” and in that sense book-ended the ARP work that took place much earlier in the course. The PE was a two-page essay based on students’ ARP topic and counted as 10% of the course grade. In a sense, the PE was

comparable to the Symposium Presentation that was intended to discuss the topic of the ARP in a different format. How the PE differed from the symposium is that besides the modes of delivery, writing a personal essay involved self-disclosure and reflective capacities about the topics. In essence, it was a much more personal version of the ARP that allowed students to work more with voice in their writing and was also an opportunity to practice non-source-based writing. In these regards it departed significantly from the highly academic focus of the Symposium Presentation where there was the use of evidence to support arguments using an impersonal third-person voice.

With the changes just described, Briana put her own stamp on the FYW course, perhaps in line with her background in creative writing. Her inclusion of the various components of the ARP assignment showed her fidelity to the standard course goals related to analytic writing, but Briana intended to not only teach the concepts of audience and genre but also students' reflective skills in writing. Because the standard FYW course focused so heavily on academic writing, she wanted to help these novice writers to convey meaning to a larger audience that might even be outside of the academy, especially through the Personal Essay task.

Regarding the course's core emphasis on analytic writing and to show students what made rhetorical analysis special, Briana chose Hemingway's short story, "Hills Like White Elephants" to "*get students accustomed to making arguments based on textual evidence, and to present the idea that a single text can have a multitude of equally valid interpretations*" (Briana's Journal 1). An interesting fact is that while the Briana framed her FYW as a literature-based short stories section, like Lisa, Briana also used a variety of artifacts, such as videos, images and songs in the class to assist students in analyzing

different kinds of sources. For example, when teaching Chapter 2 of *Writing Analytically* about analytic methods (e.g., repetitions, binaries and strands as a series of analytical steps), Briana used a visual storytelling approach and referenced “Little Red Riding Hood” (Briana’s Journal 3) to demonstrate the analysis methods. Likewise, she also selected the song “Hotline Bling” by Drake and some of Bob Dylan’s songs as non-academic sources to practice analyzing media artifacts. In this regard, the actual role of short stories as the course theme only played as sources for the PSA, for which students selected five stories to analyze. The distinction between Briana’s and Lisa’s sections, in a sense, only lay in the selection of the primary sources, instead of analysis approaches.

Another noteworthy change Briana made, and one driven by her extensive experience teaching FYW dating back to when she had been a graduate student at University X, was her approach to revision in writing. She had always placed considerable stress on the learning outcomes she expected her students to obtain, and these included the ability to revise writing effectively. Thus, she added drafting and revising opportunities, particularly for the PSA and SSI papers. In support of this emphasis, Briana provided extensive written comments and a provisional grade on the first drafts of these papers (Figure 4.1). Students were able to revise and improve the grade if they carefully implemented Briana’s feedback.

This was a sharp contrast to the handling of the PSA, SSI and ARP in the standard FYW course, where there were no revising or drafting opportunities. Although the FYW Program believed in the notion of writing as a process, revision was absent in the sequence within the ARP. The FYW Director clarified that the course design was based on a “modified” process model, which referred to the scaffolding assignments as a

comprehensive process toward the completion of a large project, in lieu of reinforcing the process for each task. Briana, instead, embraced the process approach.

personal life. *There's a heart given as to why/how this may be -*

As for Joe, one can comfortably say that she is disillusioned of religion, which the story refers to as "a crisis of faith". In the story, this atheist person, her gender wouldn't serve much difference, is characterized by many dramatic adjectives, including muscular, authoritative, tough and savage, and also lavish and vain. An interesting point to note is that although Joe herself doesn't believe in religious faith any more, she has built a church on her island and employed a priest. Yet this isn't inconsistency with her religious attitude and character; rather, it conveys a sense that religion, as it is on the island, is also under her control, which actually emphasized that she wants to establish herself as the god and would not lay herself to the other God. Also note that Mariene's attitude towards religion is more ambiguous but still seem to agree with Joe's, and she is described in the story as equally attention-seeking, lavish and not very humble. *By what about when Mariene asks George about God?*

Good point

Figure 4. 1 Sample of Briana's Written Comments

Briana's modifications of the FYW curriculum arose from her teaching experiences in different institutions over the years. She also took into consideration the shifting demographics of the FYW student population and drew upon her teaching experience in Japan when making changes. She reflected upon working with ESL students in her classrooms and *"what it felt to be that kind of overwhelmed and not understand a lot of things that are happening around you"* (Interview, 1/14/2016).

Looking back to when she went through the training course as a GTA teaching the FYW

course at University X, “*we worked with very little information about the background of students who were international students*” (Interview, 1/14/2016). Briana also cited what she saw as an important change resulting from the university’s transition to a semester system calendar from a quarter system approach. In the latter, international students were more likely to take at least two ESL writing courses before moving to FYW, resulting in much more preparation for FYW. In the semester system, they were receiving less of such exposure.

At our first interview, I inquired about Briana’s expectations for international students and below is an excerpt from the interview:

CL: What are learning outcomes do you want international students to obtain?

Briana: I think the university wants from that course is that students will understand how to write a research paper, how to conduct research, to know the difference between an academic source and a popular source, and what makes academic sources special, and to understand the register in the tone of academic discourse. Academic writing frequently sounds really opaque and difficult, or comprehend that there is a reason for it. At least there should be a reason ... I like to make sure that they understand how to apply analysis critical lenses to text and that’s the center of the work that they do.

CL: How do you think international students will be able to meet those expectations of critical thinking or analysis?

Briana: Because these students are uncomfortable formulating an idea on their own, essentially they are not sure what I want, and they want very badly to give me what I’m looking for and so it’s a disconnect, because it’s like what I’m looking for is for you to come up with something on your own ... I will say that that tends to be the situation more often with students who are coming from Asian countries than from European countries or Middle East ... When I was in high school in Japan, independent thought that may challenge your teachers’ thought was different from what the teacher was thinking. That was not encouraged ... I don’t expect perfect English ... but I do hope that by the time they finish the course, they feel comfortable enough communicating an academic English and in listening and speaking in a classroom that it’s not something they’re anxious about or something that is holding them back. (Interview, 1/14/2016)

Briana placed a lot of emphasis on group activities, as she shared the FYW philosophy about the importance of having students hold academic conversations and thus better engage with academic materials and literacy. However, when implementing these activities, she recognized that there some challenges that had to be accounted for. For instance, she was aware that NNEs tended to group with other NNEs, which *“hinders language apprehension and increases the sense of isolation from the NESs”* (Briana’s Journal 3). Furthermore, she observed that miscommunication could happen between NESs and NNEs for various reasons. For example, *“because they’re (NESs) too lazy basically to discuss it with someone who doesn’t understand thing exactly the same way that they do”* (Interview, 2/03/2016) or *“they perceived as ‘extra work’ or carrying someone else’ through the lesson”* (Briana’s Journal 3). She wanted to avoid that kind of counterproductive social interaction. Therefore, she intentionally arranged for NNEs to work with NESs, in order to increase more interactions between all students and also went around the groups to check on *“if they do well”* (Interview, 2/03/2016).

Briana noted that this kind of arrangement was also for the purpose of establishing a support system. Although she already carefully selected materials that were accessible for NNEs, there were bound to be some culturally contextualized artifacts that could prove problematic, such as songs by Drake and Bob Dylan as well as American television shows. She was afraid that NNEs *“feel lost with heavily idiomatic slang”* (Briana’s Journal 3). In groups that were comprised of both NESs and NNEs, domestic students were able to help international students within a group understand culturally, socially, and historically related topics.

Regarding Briana’s modified FYW curriculum, the course design, in her view,

fulfilled international students' needs on the basic level, and yet she felt it could do better (Interview, 5/04/2016). Briana reviewed the FYW course objectives in our final interview. She hoped that after this class, students were able to distinguish the academic tone or register from non-academic discourse as well as recognize the distinction between objective and subjective language. Regarding assessment, Briana was once again sensitive to the situation faced by the L2 writers, and so she did not "*take grammar and syntax into account*" (Interview, 2/03/2016) as long as she understood what NNEs were communicating. She elaborated as follows:

"To me, it seems like non-native speakers are working with a number of additional obstacles and that seems like a sort of fair to me. I don't hold them to the same standard of English ... If you're a native speaker and you have major usage issues when you're in college, that indicates a bigger problem for you in terms of language ability and skill who's working in not their own language" (Interview, 2/03/2016).

On the whole, she believed that the course was not necessarily harder for NNEs. Moreover, she did not recognize significant qualitative differences between the work (i.e. ARP) of the NNEs and NESs. For NNEs, "*it's just harder to read a short story not in your native language, but the results don't seem all that different to me*" (Interview, 5/04/2016).

Briana summarized her perspectives on the responsibilities of a FYW course with respect to undergraduate international students' needs and characteristics in an interview.

Below are some excerpts from that interview.

Briana: It ought to be giving them the tools they need to handle basic academic writing in all of their classes. Even though different disciplines are going to require a different particular skill set, the basic foundation of how we do, what we do, it should be doing that.

CL: How do you think FYW plays a role in international students' writing development?

Briana: I don't think they can meet all of them, because it is just one semester. Second, they can get this specific stuff that they need for their particular disciplines which is something is going to be massively ... but I mean the underlying principles are the same for all disciplines. The idea places what acquires academic writing is different from other types of writing. Why matters?

CL: What advice do you give you international students after they took the FYW course?

Briana: (...) to stay confident that in the fact that their opinions matter. What they want to say is worth expressing and that other people ought to hear it and to keep on trying ... Trust me, two languages that's pretty impressive and it's worth it. It's hard, I mean. (Interview, 5/04/2016)

These comments show that, on the whole, Briana saw real value in the FYW course as one that can help students learn to write across the undergraduate curriculum, and she believed that it had a lot of offer to L2 writers, despite the limitations of having just one semester to work with them. Regarding the interests of the current study, Brian's FYW section was an especially valuable one to study because of her adjustments in the course curriculum and her attitudes toward L2 writers, particularly as someone who had taught English overseas. As for the presence of L2 students in Briana's class, they represented approximately one fourth of the class of 24 students. One student participant, Penny (pseudonym), was recruited from Briana's class. Her learning experience will be detailed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

4.5 The Third Case: The Innovative FYW Class

The third case is referred to as the innovative FYW course due to its significant departures from the standard FYW curriculum. It also differed significantly from the other two cases in the current study and thus added considerable variety from the perspective of multiple-case research. As a result, it enriched the possibilities for

meaningful comparison across the three cases. It also produced 5 of the L2 student participants in the study; they were drawn from across three sections of FYW of the instructor, Michelle (pseudonym).

4.5.1 Introduction to Course Instructor

Michelle had much in common with Briana. For example, she, too, was an alumnus of University X hired as a senior lecturer by the English Department. Both she and Briana, by virtue of their experience and senior lecturer rank, had the freedom to design their own FYW classes, instead of using the standard syllabus. Michelle also came from the East Coast, i.e., New York City, and went to a liberal arts college in the city for her undergraduate study. She was also a GTA when pursuing her graduate studies at University X and had received her Ph.D. degree in American Literature. Regarding her teaching background, Michelle taught Business Writing in the Business School at University X for ten years before coming back to be a FYW instructor. As a Communication Specialist while at the Business School, she worked “*with faculty to improve their pedagogy so that would be helping to form of the cohort program and supporting faculty in the honors accounting program, and then working also with MBAs and Masters of Accountancy students*” (Interview, 1/22/2016). These opportunities had enabled her to gain rich hands-on experience in course design, experience that later served her well in FYW.

After teaching at the Business School for a decade, Michelle had been teaching the FYW course for ten years when the current study was conducted. Michelle recalled that when she was a GTA teaching FYW, like the current GTAs, she had participated in an FYW training program, at which time the curriculum was “*ten weeks four essays,*

persuasive, informative and argumentative. It was so deadly dull” (Interview, 1/22/2016). She also worked at the Writing Center at University X “*where I just love to teach composition ... I really like that one stop shop for all problems related to composition and then feeling you get when you immediately solve a problem or help someone on the spot*” (Interview, 1/22/2016). Drawing upon these experiences, and now, as a senior lecturer who had the freedom to create her own syllabus, Michelle restructured the FYW objectives and tried to “*deepen the pedagogy more than just to teach critical thinking and reading and writing to everything from we already did*” (Interview, 1/22/2016). She was interested in “*everything you would need to succeed in college*” (Interview, 1/22/2016) and so took a broader view of the FYW course than the standard curriculum did.

Michelle described her philosophy as follows:

“Writing is developmental and I privilege it as a process, not as a product approach. For me, it does not make any sense to have them do an assignment, get a grade and move on. I would rather they do an assignment to get feedback, understand, revise and resubmit to get a new grade and then have an opportunity to write again ... My expectation is that these students will be apprentices to writing well and strongly, and then across time get stronger in their understanding and the practice of writing and thinking and collaboration. That’s the goal” (Interview, 1/2/2016).

Working from this ‘apprenticeship’ view of students and learning to write, she saw it as her responsibility to prepare them to be “*ready to take those skills and work with them in a larger way*” (Interview, 3/04/2016). She wanted “*to be practical, try to make the things we do in the room reflect the kinds of requests that they’ll have more work life outside of the school*” (Interview, 3/04/2016). Central to her thinking was a transfer of learning perspective. She explained that:

“I try to make everything I do be like what I call it is like a toolbox of skills that

are bigger than the assignments that would go forward in time. Because I think the evidence is that within six months, you forget nearly almost everything you've learned, yet any business, so the skills are what I'm hope we could carry ... I have a student of Pakistani born ... used the skills she learned in this FYW class to sit in a room with a group of medical professionals" (Interview, 1/22/2016).

Thus, her intent seemed to be to help students become generalists rather than focusing narrowly on the needs of a particular discipline. While the standard FYW curriculum was thus revised with the intent of "*teaching thinking as well as writing*" (Interview, 3/04/2016), she wanted to "*make [students] love writing and thinking well, deeply and independently... more than almost any other facet of development... Those are the attributes of people that go far in any field and being able to work with others in the world we live in*" (Interview, 4/29/2016). These were perspectives that had apparently been shaped heavily by her experiences in the Business College.

Michelle's section of the FYW course was built on three primary objectives: (1) Learn strategies for reading, analyzing audience and purpose, using effective writing style and designing effective documents; (2) build skills in proofreading, revision, peer review and working in groups; and (3) practice reading and writing (Course Materials, 2016). Furthermore, instead of using the *Writing Analytically* textbook, Michelle created her own "textbook" which was a custom—printed collection of students' essays from previous terms. This resource provided "*a lot of exemplary model writers [that] gives them the impetus to think I can do that also*" (Interview, 3/04/2016). Her use of this key resource reflected a belief in the importance of modeling in writing instruction; that is, exposing students to model essays that they can later emulate in their own writing. This was a very sharp departure from the approaches taken by Lisa and Briana. The other

required textbook was Shaun Tan’s (2007) *The Arrival*; it was connected to a digital narrative project included in her section of the course.

4.5.2 *The Innovative Course Curriculum*

Michelle’s approach to the FYW was reflected especially strongly in her significantly revised curriculum, which is presented below in Table 4.3:

Assignments	Objectives	Percentage of the Course Grade
Writing Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cluster of assignments that tap into natural fluencies (e.g., Story of My Name, descriptive writing, character sketch, Common Sense, “The Falling Man” and “Dilsey”) ● Cluster of assignment that give students a competitive advantage upon graduation (e.g., The American Scholar, “GRIT”) 	35%
Mid-Term Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take-home: a two-page essay and a note card (a week) ● In-Class: two essay questions and short answer questions (55 minutes) 	10%
Literacy Adaptation Project (LAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a digital (multimedia) story/literary adaptation of Shaun Tan’s <i>The Arrival</i> 	15%
Academic Research Paper (ARP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research (i.e. finding sources) and Note-taking, Annotated Bibliography, Strategy Session and In-class Debate, and Academic Research Paper 	25%
Class Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● writing workshops, quizzes, peer-review and in-class discussion 	15%

Table 4. 5 The Innovative FYW Syllabus (2016)

This syllabus bore almost no resemblance to the standard FYW curriculum Lisa had used or the modified version Briana had created. The only common denominator was the inclusion of a class participation component, while there was considerable overlap between Michelle’s Academic Research Paper task and the ARP seen in Lisa’s and

Briana's classes, though the value of the assignment, at 25% of the course grade, was far below that assigned by Lisa and Briana. Michelle had chosen to place the greatest grade value (35%) on a portfolio project she created, and she had two other new assignments: a midterm exam essay component and the Literacy Adaptation Project that involved digital storytelling. Also noteworthy was the quantity of writing assignments in Michelle's class: a total of ten assignments. This went well beyond what was required in Lisa's and Briana's classes.

The first component of the curriculum, an e-portfolio was initiated before the midterm exam. As a collection of short writing assignments (i.e. from one to three pages in length) with the intention of making the students write as a "habit" (Michelle's Journal 2), an e-portfolio was comprised of three clusters of assignments meant to engage students in practicing various writing skills and acquiring problem-solving tactics. With an aim to improve students' fluency and build their confidence in writing, the first cluster of the e-portfolio was composed of tasks such as "Story of My Name" (a personal introduction essay), "Descriptive Writing" (an essay about a place or thing), and "Character Sketch" (an essay that brings a character to life in words), that required student to describe objects either related to themselves or general topics. The second cluster was meant to "*help students ramp up into the Academic Research essay*" (Michelle's Journal 2); that is, to focus students' attention on taking a defined position and being able to use textual support for their arguments. The assignments in this cluster, such as "Common Sense" (a position essay), "The Falling Man" (an editorial essay) and "Dilsey" (a literary response), emphasized audience-focused writing and "*how self-reference will not be necessary, as the entire writing reflects the author's opinion*"

(Michelle's Journal 2).

The third cluster of the e-portfolio stemmed from Michelle's experiences teaching in the Business School. Michelle specifically pointed out that:

“Students have traditionally spent four years in undergraduate studies and all their aspiring to do is to get a good GPA. What I use the American Scholar for is to get them to think if you're going to burning out four years of your life, you want to have some higher purpose than a GPA. It's a Phi Beta Kappa talk on oratory designed to get them to think more comprehensively about what their goals will be in school and young motion will be very early in their careers” (Interview, 1/22/2016).

She was concerned that grades were emphasized too heavily and wanted students to realize what was more important in their college education. Therefore, she drove students to think independently and develop problem-solving skills by designing the tasks like “The American Scholar” and “GRIT” that required students to read complex materials and write reflections to present their points of view.

With respect to assessment of the portfolio, students were able to revise every paper as many times as they wanted throughout the course. Michelle did not give a terminal grade until the completion of the e-portfolio, because she wanted students to be accountable for each paper with their consistent effort and “*have the habit of writing, to become habitual*” (Interview, 3/04/2016). At the end of the semester, students compiled their e-portfolios as an electronic file and appended a cover letter, which Michelle called “*a great justification [which] is where they can tell me a little bit about their performance, remind me of things they may have done well. They can account for things that maybe they didn't do as well as they wanted. [It] is just a way for them to talk to me about the performance in the class and then also to anticipate what they think they*

scored, you know, my exit grade should be” (Interview, 1/22/2016). In other words, the memo was an opportunity for students to negotiate their grade, and given that the portfolio counted for 35% of the course grade, this negotiation process was an important one. Additionally, students were able to see their growth by reviewing their e-portfolio when they recognized the changes from the first draft to the final draft.

Another innovation in Michelle’s FYW class was a mandatory two-part midterm exam that constituted 10% of the course grade. The first part of the midterm exam was a two-page take-home essay on the film (2000) *Erin Brockovich*, for which they compared and contrasted the distinguishing characteristics of the characters. The second part was a 55-minute in-class exam on the film, which was also called a Blue Book exam because all of the writing was included in a small blue exam notebook. Michelle also considered the importance of teaching students how to prepare for an essay exam. In this regard, she required “a cheat sheet” for the in-class exam. It was an index card which she saw as a “*powerful tool[s] for success*” (Interview, 3/04/2016), on which students noted down their analysis of characters on both sides of the card.

In addition to the skills of test-taking, reading, analyzing and writing, students must also acquire research skills as part of their “*college survival kits*” (Michelle’s Journal 2). Therefore, after the midterm exam, the class then focused on two projects. One was a research paper (i.e. ARP) and the other was a digital literacy adaptation project. These two assignments were intended to fulfill the objectives of conducting and writing about academic research and multimodality of writing.

The ARP assignment was where Michelle introduced her course theme (rather than having it run throughout the course, as Lisa and Briana did). The theme was: “Is

Christopher Columbus a hero or villain?” (which the L2 students in the class did not find interesting). Like Lisa and Briana, Michelle scaffolded the Academic Research Paper (ARP) into a handful independent tasks, which included Research, Note-Taking, the Annotated Bibliography (AB), Strategy Session, In-class Debate and the complete research paper, though, as noted earlier, Michelle attached much less grade value to this assignment than did Lisa and Briana.

The scaffolded components in Michelle’s ARP were somewhat similar to those used by Lisa and Briana. For example, students were still required to find and work with suitable sources: at least five sources that were retrieved from credible sites, such as from *edu* or *gov* entitled sites. Students had to locate places in the sources looking at whether Christopher Columbus was a hero and/or a villain. They also still evaluated sources carefully and determined how each source was connected to one another and how it supported the writer's arguments. Michelle reviewed every student’s sources at an in-class writing workshop where they discussed “*how to do peer review, how to actually respond when you read model revision, how to research and do an annotated bibliography and essentially ... about taking notes and getting prepared to write*” (Interview, 1/22/2016) during the research process. Thus, the students were engaged in analytical thinking in the ways that Lisa’s and Briana’s students were.

Where Michelle shifted from what Lisa and Briana had done was in her use of debate as a learning tool. This actually involved two steps, A Strategy Session and In-class Debate. Before the debate day, students were engaged in a Strategy Session; working in groups, they first chose a position either in favor of Christopher Columbus as a hero or against him as a villain. Then, the pros and cons teams within their group

determined what role each teammate played, such as opening, rebuttal, posing questions, and providing research, with the understanding that everyone had to speak during the debate. Winning the debate not only depended on the strength of their materials but also on team collaboration.

As for the debate itself, Michelle believed that through a debate, students were able to learn about argument and articulate their voices in an activity that engaged every student. The strategy session allowed students to gain new ideas and strengthen their arguments. As for debate, according to Michelle “*the debate [is a] test [of] how well they’re prepared to argue critically,*” which was “*a very vigorous kind of a critical and intellectual activity*” (Interview, 3/04/2016) that fed well into the goals of the ARP. She usually found that students had prepared well, which helped them “*to be fluent in their positions on the debate ... because it’s going to embody in the debates personalized. You actually get that personification of argument*” (Interview, 3/04/2016). As she saw it, “*when you write, it’s a really engaging vigorous activity and students don’t see it that way, so that when you make a claim, you know in a debate you’re getting attacked ... it actually personified argument*” (Interview, 1/22/2016), and “*in rare instances, a student has changed his or her position post-debate and written an entirely new research paper*” (Michelle’s Journal 2). A key element in this was the teamwork involved, something not experienced in the ARP as implemented by Lisa and Briana.

Partly because Michelle allocated less time and attention to the ARP than did Lisa and Briana, and because she placed considerable value on the acquisition of digital literacy, she had space in her FYW curriculum for another innovation: the Literacy Adaptation Project (LAP). This took place after the ARP, and to a small extent it

resembled the Symposium Project seen in the other two FYW classes included in the current study. Michelle felt that possessing the skills required to use these digital tools provided students competitive advantages in this Digital Era. This is where she looked beyond the FTW course as a place to help students learn to write across the curriculum; she was preparing them for success in the larger world as well. The LAP was a digital media project linked to Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* (Figure 4.2), a wordless graphic novel about an immigrant's life in fictional settings. The students were required to compose an original story deriving from this book by incorporating multimodal resources as story-telling devices. An interesting dimension of this assignment was the way in which Michelle connected it to the needs and characteristics of the L2 writers in the class. She explained that:

“When you are working in a second language, you know another language than your own. It's really hard to have the fluency of a natural-born citizen and so when you're working with a wordless novel that has only pictures, it levels the playing field. They get to have the same chance at success as anyone else ... I think it's a great exercise especially for foreign nationals, because they can tell affluent visual story without needing necessarily, have the same sophistication of language” (Interview, 3/04/2016).

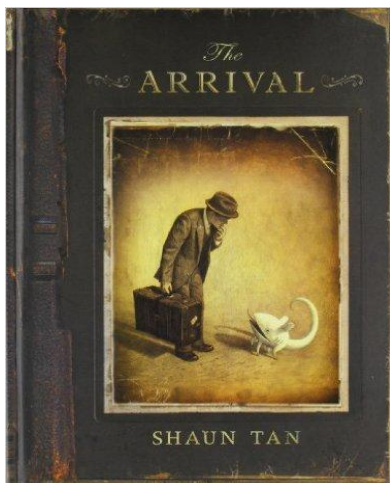


Figure 4. 2 *The Arrival* by Shuan Tan (2007)

Another feature of Michelle's FYW class that was different from others is that there were not a lot of readings, because she preferred students to spend "*all of their time writing ... because that's the competency ... there's lots of skills you can develop for academia that are just beyond writing academic research papers. Thinking and responding it and then cooperating with ideas and then when you disagree, how do you disagree, but I'm not really working out of a Rhetoric textbook. It's a practical approach*" (Interview, 1/22/2016). Michelle tried to "*limit the amount of time [she] spent in lecture*" (Interview, 3/04/2016) by providing handouts, examples or instructions that students were able to retrieve from or read through the online course management system (i.e., Carmen). The course was student-centered; students often were engaged in coordinated activities, such as workshops and peer-review. Michelle stated that "*practicing feedback is important also, so it's always working on something coordinated that helps with fluency. That helps them develop that competence ... there is a learning that takes place when you see it done differently*" (Interview, 3/04/2016). Peer-reviews signified students' sense of the audience, as they were readers of their peers' work as well as writers wanting to receive responses from an audience. Peer-reviews also involved students in speaking, which increased their class participation, another important area of emphasis for Michelle.

Motivating her approach, in part, was Michelle's own experiences when she was an undergraduate, that is, someone who did not think independently and simply gave "*the faculty exactly what they want to hear*" (Interview, 1/22/2016). To prevent this from occurring among her students, she structured her course to be somewhat open-ended. She

wanted the students to have some sense of ownership that reflected them in their writing for the course. When discussing her course design, Michelle revealed her passion about composition. Below is an excerpt of Michelle's interview that elucidated her approach to the FYW course:

“I want to be an ambassador for writing. I want them to have a love of reading, in the love of writing, an appreciation for rhetoric, and I think going through these exercises which I believe to be not so painful and which accommodate their interests, I think they can come to a better understanding in a better confidence and a better ability to communicate and all the goals we want them to have, you know the Renaissance goals of, you know, being passionate and skillful and confident” (Interview, 1/22/2016).

Michelle wanted to pull students away “*from their comfort zone and being adaptable*” (Interview, 4/29/2016). She indicated that teaching FYW when she was a GTA was like “*I was building castles in the air, not really practically*” (Interview, 4/29/2016). In light of her later experiences in the Business School, she built a course that could allow students to “*get a more robust well-rounded student experiences, not just paper-based, writing something*” (Interview, 4/29/2016).

Regarding the L2 students' participation in the class, Michelle noted that she was more attuned to L2 students in her classroom because she gained insight into working with them from her ten-year teaching period in the Business school, where many international students were enrolled. In particular, those international L2 students needed to learn about fundamentals of writing and etiquette because they lacked Western cultural knowledge. She thus introduced the culture of the University and its expectations as an Anglophone university. Additionally, learning is not confined within a classroom, from Michelle's point of view; she endeavored to encourage students, and especially L2

students, to participate in the campus community and use the university resources. First of all, as a teacher, Michelle provided students resources in order to prevent herself from “babysitting” them (Interview, 3/04/2016). She used to pay additional attention to international students, which hindered native speakers’ pace of learning. Language competency related issues, such as assimilation, comprehension and writing issues, sacrificed “*the experience of the majority of the class for the minority of students*” (Interview, 1/22/2016). Secondly, Michelle taught three FYW courses, totaling more than 70 students a semester; she needed to “*put the responsibility on the students’ shoulders*” (Interview, 1/22/2016) as a result by directing them to use resources to get help while also trying to be supportive of them.

Michelle understood language learning took a lot of effort as well as time; L2 students “*could better successfully use the resources, so that’s why I push the English conversation partners and the Writing Center. Take advantage of them all the time. I push it with all students, not just the non-natives. If they will take advantage of these resources, all of them will get stronger*” (Interview, 1/22/2016). Encouraging students to use campus resources aligned with an essential component of Michelle’s philosophy not just toward L2 students, but the FYW course itself; that is, one of college survival skills is that students knew where to seek help and get it when they need it (Interview, 4/29/2016). Michelle’s students received extra credit for utilizing these campus resources. As she said, “*my extra credit opportunities are designed to put them in places where they can expand the network of support*” (Interview, 4/29/2016). She attempted, in particular, to bolster L2 students’ fluency throughout diverse venues, both in and outside the classroom. The interview segments below capture some of her thoughts about the

benefits that L2 students received from the university resources:

CL: Do you think FYW meets second language students' needs?

Michelle: Yes, so for feedback that I get is that they gain confidence and they get to see themselves as professionals ... I think the practicing helps them become more proficient. I tried to get them matriculated into support networks outside of the classroom ... I have a student who reported he went to the Writing Center every week, so for me the habits of seeking help and gaining instruction making it a part of the training. I think that's so much more important than what feedback I provided in the room. That's an ongoing habitual way to improve.

Michelle: I had another student who said that he participated in English Conversation Partners Program and talked about he made so many more friends. They did so many great activities and it was people from all over the world. He felt really connected.

Michelle also pointed out that a great difference she saw between domestic students and L2 students *"is the ability to be sophisticated, both in the language and in the thought processes ... the critical reasoning is not as deep with foreign nationals. I just don't think they've practiced as much as people here we come up into a system that from the time were in grade school there"* (Interview, 3/04/2016). This difference impacted on her as a FYW teacher. In particular, it meant she was not always using the same standards when responding to the students and their work, though doing so troubled her to some extent. She explained that *"It's very unfair and to expect a student comes in with that deficiency and picks up ground in a short window, like four years. It's not rational"* (Interview, 1/22/2016). Instead, she honored students' effort, growth and change, as she believed that *"there is a smaller percentage of this person working in a little capacity all the time. I think everyone here is getting smarter"* (Interview, 1/22/2016).

In summary, Michelle was a very strong believer in the process approach to

writing instruction in which students are allowed to seek feedback on their work and revise in response to it. The portfolio aligned with her approach that allowed students to revise and experience learning without penalty. In this kind of pedagogy, learning is an ongoing process, a point that Michelle stressed during the FYW course.

Chapter 5: Introduction to Participants

5.1 Introduction

Like Chapter 4, this chapter provides contextual information that helps set the stage for the findings chapters that follow: Chapters 6 and 7. The chapter introduces each of the study's seven participants by providing relevant background knowledge about them. This information serves as a helpful lens for viewing the findings about their experiences in and responses to the First Year Writing (FYW) course that was the research setting for the current study. Pseudonyms are used for each of the participants.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the researcher sent a recruitment email to the list of all of the students enrolled in the FYW sections provided by the Director of the FYW Program. Because observations of students' in-class participation were part of the study's data gathering protocol, this study excluded students from online FYW sections. Students were considered qualified to participate in this study according to the following criteria: (1) self-identifying as learning English as their second language, (2) having received initial English education outside of the United States, and (3) taking the FYW course when this study was conducted. Eventually, six female students and one male L2 student (Table 5.1) were recruited (as discussed in Chapter 4).

TYPE of the FYW Section	Pseudonym	Gender	Home Country	Started English Learning	Academic Major & Year
Standard	Naomi	F	Honduras	5 years old	Microbiology - freshman
Modified	Penny	F	China	6 years old	Chemistry - freshman
Innovative	Anika	F	Bangladesh	6 years old	Neuroscience - freshman
Innovative	Yenta	F	China	5~6 years old	Economics - sophomore
Innovative	Yulia	F	China	6 years old	Finance - freshman
Innovative	Loni	F	China	6 years old	Business - freshman
Innovative	Sono	M	China	6 years old	Business - freshman

Table 5. 1 The Student-Participant-Background List

As Table 5.1 shows, all of the participants had begun learning English around the same time in their lives (5 or 6 years old), nearly all were female, and most were from China. In addition, all but one were in their first year of study at the university. Hence, they had much in common. At the same time, there was important variation among them in terms of their academic majors, which could, in turn, affect their approach to learning in FYW, since the importance of academic writing in their chosen disciplines could range widely. It was this combination of similarity and difference that made them appropriate participants for this study.

5.2 Participant Descriptions

5.2.1 Naomi from the Standard FYW Section

As the only one L2 participant enrolled in a standard FYW section which followed the generic FYW course syllabus, Naomi came from Honduras to pursue her college degree at University X in August 2015. At the time of this study, she was 19 years old and studying in the second semester of her freshman year. Naomi aimed to be a

doctor and was majoring in microbiology on the pre-med track of her undergraduate studies. Before she was twelve years old, studying in the United States was not a part of her life plan. A community service opportunity, however, changed her thinking. Naomi's father was a medical doctor, and her mother was a pharmacist. Both worked in a medical organization as part of a Honduran and U.S. based healthcare team that provides healthcare to communities that suffer from poverty, malnutrition, and poor access to healthcare. A group of medical students from University X contacted Naomi's parents when they were visiting Honduras. Naomi helped this medical student group translate during their volunteer services. After that experience, her desire to become a doctor grew. Even though Naomi did not choose University X as the original destination for her college education, "*coming here is like dreams come true for me,*" said Naomi (Interview, 01/28/2016).

Though she grew up in Honduras and spoke Spanish as her first language, Naomi was quite confident about her English, specifically her American English accent. She credited that to learning English at an early age and attending an international English school throughout her K-12 education in Honduras. She said, "*I was like five years old, I started learning English and the reason why my accent is like so good ... I came to the U.S. and a lot of people started saying like you barely have an accent. I can hear my accent. Since many people have been telling me that, that boosted my confidence, so now I am not shy anymore to speaking English*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). Because the American culture is widespread around the world, Naomi was exposed to American music, movies, and books. She believed that exposure to these kinds of American media also helped her learn English outside of school.

She received her English education in one of the best schools in Honduras—an international English school—where approximately 90% of the teachers were native English speaking Americans and Canadians. They “*were very strict and had high expectations of students; they evaluated students’ English as it was their first language*” (Interview 01/28/2016). Naomi recalled that when she was a child, those teachers had even made her cry. Because they enforced an “English Only” policy in class, Naomi was punished for speaking Spanish by being given more assignments or having points deducted from her completed assignments.

Although she went to the international English school for her K-12 education, English was still a difficult subject for her. She attributed that to the limited opportunities of speaking English outside of the school and using it for the purposes other than academic tasks. In fact, the school did not institute a complete English-immersion program; the core subject courses (e.g., math, science, etc.) were still taught in Spanish. There were approximately twelve hours of English instruction per week, which was based on a grammar-driven curriculum that included intensive reading and in-class discussions. The curriculum was also designed so that vocabulary increased according to grade levels, and vocabulary knowledge was measured along with grammar as part of weekly tests that emphasized memorization. In addition to these tests, students were required to write essays both in English and Spanish, which functioned as a proficiency assessment in every year of high school. Naomi said, “*In my essays I would never get an A, even though I try like really hard. I always get like Bs*” (Interview, 01/28/2016). She wished she had learned to write better in high school, because “*writing was the one that*

was less emphasized (at school) and I feel like that's why we have a hard time. Most of my friends also have like trouble with writing" (Interview, 01/28/2016).

Naomi did not take English as a Second Language (ESL) Composition courses at the University X before taking the FYW class. Because of her high scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), she was able to opt out of the prerequisite language classes (i.e. ESL Composition courses) for students whose first language is not English. During her first-year study, even though Naomi was highly confident of her English, she as well as many international L2 students faced linguistic issues in academic discourses. One of these issues was lexical differences. She found that some words were used differently in America from what she had learned at her English school in Honduras. For example, chemistry tests were challenging because it took her a longer time than her peers to understand the questions due to her processing of the language of the test items. Naomi believed the situation put her *"in the lower position than other students"* (Interview, 1/28/2016). She also had a hard time understanding lectures. Thus, she placed her mobile phone on her desk and looked up words via an online dictionary (e.g., Dictionary.Com) to aid her listening comprehension in class. As an outgoing person, Naomi was also worried that language and cultural barriers could affect her social life. For example, she did not know *"how to joke around and like all of that in English"* (Interview, 1/28/2016).

5.2.2 Penny from the Modified FYW Section

Penny, from Beijing, China, was in the second semester of her freshman year in spring 2016. At the time of this study, she was 19 years old. Penny majored in Chemistry with a minor in German. Her motivation in pursuing her college education abroad was to

“experience a different lifestyle ... I want to go to different environment. I have been in China for 18 years studying the same things” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Another reason that motivated Penny to study abroad in America was because of the rigid educational system in her country. The result of a high school entrance exam determined whether students would be placed in either a liberal arts or sciences track, regardless of what their personal interest might be. As a liberal arts student in high school, Penny was restricted to taking courses outside of the sciences, in subjects such as history, geography, and politics. This academic division affected her freedom to choose a major and a career path in college. In other words, she had been confined to the liberal arts category throughout her secondary school education, and would have had been required to continue on that track during her postsecondary education.

Therefore, instead of following that early determined academic path, Penny chose to study in an American university that provided a variety of courses and prepared her for more career choices. Studying in America appeared to be an opportunity that would allow her to develop a new life plan. Looking ahead, she had an interest in pursuing graduate studies and jobs in the United States. I found that Penny was a diligent student who worked very hard and stayed up late at night to complete assignments. For instance, as early as the first week of the semester, she studied the FYW readings late at night. On the whole, Penny rather enjoyed her education at an American university. In fact, while most of the study’s participants went back to their home countries during the winter break, she stayed in America and did not feel nostalgic about life in China after a semester living far away from home.

When she was six years old, Penny started learning English from her mother, who was an English teacher. As a result, she had developed a strong interest and confidence in English. Even though she went to a typical Chinese high school instead of an international English high school in China, she felt “*very confident (of her English) comparing to most Chinese students,*” and added that “*my peers who go to normal school or even go to international high school, I am, at least, better than most of them*” (Interview, 1/21/16). One of our conversations on fluency revealed Penny’s self-confidence in her English proficiency. She discerned an individual’s regional Chinese accent in his or her English accent. Penny inferred that Beijing Mandarin Chinese was defined as the standard form of Chinese, so people in other provinces spoke with regional accents. In the eastern or southern part of China “*they really have accents [and] their Chinese is gonna affect how they speak English*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). In this regard, she did not perceive herself speaking English with an accent given her Beijing Mandarin Chinese heritage, in contrast to Chinese speakers who were from outside of the Beijing metropolitan district (Interview, 1/21/2016). She believed her Mandarin accent was not as recognizable as the accents of her Chinese peers.

Penny’s English education was similar to Naomi’s, in that the curriculum was test-oriented and included a variety of tests on language skills. Students were tested on their English listening comprehension by watching videos and responding to articles. Teachers switched languages between English and Chinese, but the classes were mostly taught in Chinese. Students did not speak English much in class. Penny recalled that “*we have a lot of written work to do. Our writing is not academic writing, more like description*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Typical assignments consisted of writing two

paragraphs to describe pictures or writing a letter to the teacher, aligning with the given scenarios. Among the four language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing), Penny was most confident in her reading and listening skills. She said, “*Comparing to writing, reading is easier for me ... I read pretty fast*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). She read whenever when she was not in class, including in her leisure time. She considered her speaking skills to be not as good as her other language skills, which she ascribed more to her personality than to fluency issues. She reflected that “*shyness is gonna preventing me from socializing and practicing English. I am not gonna be good at that. That is going to be a big problem*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Compared to Naomi, who cared about social interactions, Penny said, “*I don’t need social activities*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Because of her more introverted personality, she wanted to focus only on her studies, and she did not report any difficulties related to her academic performance. The only concern was socializing either inside or outside of classes.

Penny was placed in one ESL Composition course at University X in her first semester. This course was the second in a two course sequence of academic writing classes with a focus on source text use within an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) framework. All L2 participants who took this course reported that they learned about writing research papers in addition to the APA Citation Style and paraphrasing. However, Penny responded that the class was “*easy enough ... The only thing this class taught me is how to cite in a proper form ... including how to cite secondary resources, what is the format, how to do references*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Penny was not satisfied with her learning in that class because there was insignificant improvement reflected in her writing. The course did not successfully help her better understand what academic

English writing was and how to write in college. She explained that, “*The more you write, the better you get ... but what actually taught in the class, besides formatting and citation, I don’t think that’s much helpful*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). In light of her disappointment in that ESL class, Penny expected more from the FYW course to fulfill her needs as a L2 writer; it was supposed to teach her “*real*” college writing.

5.2.3 Anika from an Innovative FYW Section

As pointed out in Chapter 4, five of the study’s participants were recruited from Michelle’s three sections of FYW (Naomi and Penny were the exceptions). These were considered the “innovative” sections in light of Michelle’s experience in teaching FYW and the latitude she was thus given to depart from the standard FYW course syllabus. This section introduces Anika, who was 19 years old and studying in the second semester of her freshman year when participating in this study. She stood out from the study’s other participants in a few ways. First, she grew up in Bangladesh, and second, she immigrated with her family to the United States when she was 16 years old, which was approximately three years before this research was conducted. As such, she had more experience in the USA than the other participants. Anika said, “*Because my parents all want us to get education from really good university, University X is one of the best in the world. It’s a chance for us ... Education starting here is one of the goals*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Like Naomi, Anika aimed to be a medical doctor, so she was majoring in neuroscience on the pre-med track of her undergraduate studies. She also received scholarships from University X and was enrolled in the Honor Programs. After three years in America, she still felt homesick for Bangladesh. Anika shared that:

“It’s been good so far, but obviously not as good as everything was in my home country. I have a lot of friends which I miss a lot here. ... Even if I make good friends, I feel like it was not like my friends I have in my country. That friendship was not that strong” (Interview, 1/21/2016).

Recalling her English education, Anika reported that it started during first grade, but it was not until fourth grade that she took full English courses. The English education in formal school settings was designed “*like second language is taught here (America) ... We first learned translation of some English words of Bangladesh. We learned some of the prepositions, few words, slowly we made sentences*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Anika believed that she could understand and speak English better than most foreigners, including the Bengali people, because when she was in Bangladesh, she “*used to watch a lot of TV shows and movies in English. ... I attributed to watching Hollywood* (laugh)” (Interview, 1/21/2016).

Anika completed her last two years of high school in an American high school. During her first semester of her junior year, she took a daily, hour-long ESL class that emphasized speaking in English. For example, she had to give a one-minute speech in class every two weeks. Anika had been very afraid of speaking even a word because she was concerned about her accent. She became more confident after those numerous one-minute speeches. This is, in part, because “*everyone has an accent and everyone’s accent is different from each other*” (Interview, 1/21/2016), so she did not feel uncomfortable speaking English in the ESL class but still did in other classes. Besides speech practice, reading novels, and learning vocabulary, ESL students learned about topics such as American culture and traditions, “*so that we get used to what things are like we would do things on Thanksgiving or Christmas or things like that*” (Interview, 1/21/2016).

Furthermore, she learned to recognize the different accents associated with different varieties of English. In Bangladesh, she learned British English; thus, she perceived that her accent, when speaking English, included both Bengali and British English. She then learned American spelling as well as pronunciation after moving to the United States. Like Naomi, she experienced confusion in academic situations. She had to guess the words when Americans pronounced them differently from what she had learned in her English classes in Bangladesh.

Regarding her learning experiences in her high school ESL class, Anika reflected that the course was seemingly designed to boost students' confidence "*because when you are in a different country, you have not been speaking that language. Someone is there listening to you. They correct you or help you with that. It makes you more confident when you speak up in class*" (Interview, 1/21/2016). Anika liked her ESL class, which had an enjoyable atmosphere and was filled with many international students. In fact, "*that was the class I made most friends because we were allowed to talk among each other in English,*" said Anika, and "*meet[ing] people who were in the same situation makes you feel like you are not alone in this. You learned to speak better, write better*" (Interview, 1/21/2016). After the ESL course, Anika took a mainstream English Language Arts class in her senior year called Advanced Composition. Unlike a regular English class that was open to for all seniors, the Advanced Composition course was exclusive to students who had an outstanding academic performance in English courses and presumably possessed a relatively large quantity of vocabulary. Students received permission to take the class after sending in their sample essays. Anika got into this course because of her ESL teacher's help with her sample essays. She reflected that it

was ironic that she was an ESL student and “*knew more vocabulary than regular students*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Being the only ESL student in that class was not too stressful, since the teacher knew her ESL background and helped her “*as much as possible. Like I stuck in something, he would tell me to step back and taught me again. He gave me special attention actually*” (Interview, 1/21/2016).

Anika did not take ESL Composition classes at University X in light of her residential status and American high school records of ESL and Advanced Composition classes. In summary, the high school ESL course fulfilled her needs as an ESL student, and she gained more confidence in speaking English as a result. She changed how she spoke and was able to recognize an American accent. On the other hand, Anika attributed her college admission to not only the writing practices in the Advanced Composition class but also to her teacher’s direct help with her papers. This class allowed her to learn more about the writing process. For example, she learned about “*what do you start to do first thing when you start writing*” (Interview, 1/21/2016).

5.2.4 Yenta from an Innovative FYW Section

Like Anika, Yenta was in one of Michelle’s FYW sections. As a 20 year old Economics major, she was the only sophomore participant. Yenta withdrew from a FYW class the semester before the study was conducted and then she took the Michelle’s section the following semester. Because she had not done well in her freshman year, Yenta was worried that her decreasing GPA would impact her academic record as an Economics student. Additionally, she enrolled in a standard FYW section the first time. However, she found that the course themes, which were related to American society, politics, history or culture, required too much cultural knowledge that she did not possess,

and this made the standard version of the course overwhelming for her, especially given her developmental English proficiency. As a result, she withdrew from that class early in the semester. She believed that Michelle's approach to FYW seemed more appropriate for a L2 student.

Yenta started her English education in Beijing China when she was five or six years old. She then attended a foreign language middle and high school. The curriculum emphasized listening and speaking; thus, Yenta was confident about her ability in those language skills. On the other hand, she was concerned about her reading and writing skills because her previous English classes did not include "*much reading and writing*" (Interview, 1/20/2016). Furthermore, her previous writing exams were designed to require only short answers; neither her English classes nor other exams required (long) essay writing.

Yenta decided to study in the United States during her second year of high school, not only because of her interest in English, but also because she wanted to "*have a better life in America*" (Interview, 1/20/2016). Yenta was the only participant who took the full two course ESL Composition sequence at University X. Regarding this situation, she explained that "*I don't want to take ESL. I took both of them. Originally I don't want to take them. I prefer to take the FYW in the beginning, but I have to take them*" (Interview, 1/20/2016). Yenta did not recall much about both ESL classes, besides the fact that those courses focused more on citation practices and format (i.e., organization) than on any other writing skills. Yenta stated that "*I don't know American has citation*" (Interview, 1/20/2016) until she took these ESL courses. Under the educational system of her home country, China, providing attributions for source texts is not emphasized as it is in the

American academic context. She did not anticipate the necessary and complex citation education that she acquired in the ESL classes.

The assignments in the first level ESL class were composed of a personal profile on the university blog site, a Photo Reflection, a Group Project, and a Plagiarism Project, in addition to Discussion Board Participation (Course Materials, 2014). Yenta said, “*They (assignments) ranged from one to two pages. Some of them were very short, even like short answer papers, not real long papers*” (Interview, 1/20/2016). Then, the second-level ESL class included more substantial writing assignments, such as a long research paper and a short research paper, as well as what were called Motivational Narratives, and reading quizzes, in addition to classroom participation and presentations (Course Materials, 2015). Yenta considered the workload to be excessive as well as challenging for her; she put a lot of effort into that class. From Yenta’s point of view, learning how to write a research paper was quite useful, because she had no experience with that in the past. She felt that the assignments, such as reading novels and writing reports about them, helped her learn in other classes. Additionally, grammar lessons on “*how to write in the first paragraph is very like TOEFL writing*” (Interview, 1/20/2016). However, she had not connected her learning in the ESL writing course to other classes, because she had more exams and quizzes than writing assignments in her Economics classes.

Yenta shared an interesting fact concerning those ESL classes; she said that they were “*like the class in China, in high school,*” that is, full of Chinese students. The sequence of the ESL Composition classes to a certain degree fulfilled her needs as a L2 writer, in part because “*everyone is on the same path. Everyone is the same*” (Interview, 1/20/2016). Learning in both classes improved her writing in English in a subtle way,

since she “*did not see an obvious improvement after taking them ... [she] got used to writing*” (Interview, 1/20/2016). As a result, she added that she hoped the FYW class “*helped [her] understand how to write as a journalist, writing for publication. I hope someday I can publish my own articles, like autobiography*” (Interview, 1/20/2016).

5.2.5 Yulia from an Innovative FYW Section

Yulia, Loni, and Sono all enrolled in Michelle’s third section of FYW. They are presented in the order in which they signed up for this study. Yulia was from Hangzhou, China and majored in Finance. At the time of the research, she was 21 years old and in the second semester of her freshman year. Yulia laughed about how choosing University X was “*kind of silly*” (Interview, 1/18/2016). She wanted to follow her father’s career path as a business person. The College of Business at the research site is ranked among the top business schools in the United States, and it is located in the same state where her best friend was studying at another university. Given those reasons, she selected University X to pursue her undergraduate studies. Like Naomi, during the early interviews, Yulia shared her plan of going back to China after finishing her studies in America, in part because she was the only child in her family, but especially because, as a daughter, it would have been difficult for her to remain separate from her parents.

Yulia started her English education in elementary school where she learned simple vocabulary and phrases. I found it was interesting that she responded, “*In general I studied English for ten years,*” which means she really started studying English in middle school. Yulia might have considered her early English learning of the alphabet and vocabulary in elementary school was mainly for fun. By contrast, in middle school and high school, the classes “*only focus on grammar, because we have tests in English*”

(Interview, 1/18/2016). She recalled the classes were formal and strict. Language instruction was targeted primarily on writing. As a result, among the four language skills, she was most confident about her writing. In fact, Yulia was the only participant who liked writing. She used writing as a thinking venue: *“I can express my idea and thinking through writing”* (Interview, 1/18/2016). Compared to writing, she said, *“I don’t like reading. Reading is too boring,”* even though she had started read more English materials when she started attending an American university. She was also worried about her English speaking ability when she arrived in America; however, she perceived herself as having improved her speaking fluency a lot after a semester living in a dormitory with American suitemates. Not only did those friends correct her pronunciation, but also *“since I live here, I have to use English to talk to communicate to others”* (Interview, 1/18/2016). Although she was still afraid of speaking, for example, participating in in-class discussions, she valued her improvement and anticipated that *“I will make more progress in this class (i.e. FYW) because we have a lot of American students. We can discuss. We can talk. It’s good”* (Interview, 1/18/2016).

Like Penny, Yulia took the second-level ESL Composition course at University X in her first semester of the freshman year. She recalled the tasks in the ESL class as follows: *“I wrote a research paper, three motivational narratives, and Carmen Discussion. I wrote a lot last semester”* (Interview, 1/18/2016). Yulia’s learning outcomes from that course were composed of four parts. First, like Penny and Yenta, Yulia pointed out the emphasis on citation practices: *“I think the most important thing is APA style. I have never heard about APA style before, but in that class I learned a lot. I can write academically”* (Interview, 1/18/2016). Secondly, the language instruction *“also*

helped me correct my grammar, enlarge my vocabulary” (Interview, 1/18/2016).

Corresponding to Yenta’s response, both language learners believed they improved their English because of the explicit grammar lessons. Third, Yulia enjoyed the presentation task in the ESL class at the end of the semester, as *“this is good for me to present my thinking and whole structure of my article to the whole class. It will be clearer for me to write” (Interview, 1/18/2016).* Fourth, learning to make an outline changed her writing process, because *“in ESL II I would make outlines, which I never did before. After that class, I will outline, that makes my writing easier than before, I think” (Interview, 1/18/2016).*

Yulia concluded her progress was built via writing research papers in that ESL class. In addition to writing four research papers, she learned how to use the APA Citation Style, external resources⁴, and internal resources (i.e., the textbook). What was challenging for her was to analyze sources, which she understood as *“to focus on main ideas in the resource [sic] and make that idea more connected to my paper, to my idea” (Interview, 1/18/2016).* Searching for and analyzing sources *“is very difficult. Sometimes I just can’t find the exact resources [sic] for my paper. Even when I found them, it is hard to combine resources [sic] with my paper” (Interview, 1/18/2016).*

Although both Yulia and Yenta pointed out that grammar instruction improved their writing, Yulia thought the ESL class was different from her English classes in China. She said:

“It is totally different. In China, we are just taught to memorize fixed sentences or phrases and we need to memorize many sources to write on exams. And focus on grammar mistakes. But in ESL we just write down our mind, what we want

⁴ Here it refers to “sources.” Yulia and Loni mistakenly used “resources” and “sources.”

to write. The topic is what we like. We do not memorize anything. We just create a new paper, no a paper someone has written" (Interview, 1/18/2016).

Yulia recognized her progress after taking the ESL class, as she said, *"I saved all the research papers that I wrote every time. When I open these four research papers, I find I write better and better"* (Interview, 1/18/2016). Similar to Yenta, the ESL Composition class fulfilled Yulia's needs as a L2 writer with respect to learning about numerous writing practices. She also discussed the benefits of the small-class community that was composed of only international students in comparison with the large sized classes in lecture halls that included both domestic and international students. In the ESL class, *"we all know each other, talk to each other, and check each other. I think this is important because we international students are very lonely. We have no parents, no old friends. This is a good way for us to encounter different people, to make good friends with other international students"* (Interview, 1/18/2016).

5.2.6 Loni from an Innovative FYW Section

Loni came from the same hometown as Yulia: Huangzhou, China. They knew each other through social media, but did not meet before coming to University X. They took different ESL composition sections but were in the same FYW class. At the time of the research, Loni was 19 years old. Loni's cousin was studying in an American university, and that had motivated her to study abroad, as did her desire to improve her English. She majored in Business but changed to Actuaries in the middle of the semester because she became more interested in mathematics than finance. Another reason for her change of academic major was related to potential job opportunities in America.

Like the other participants, Loni started her English education in elementary school. Her English classes were focused on reading and writing more than other language skills. Students read short papers and English books. Writing assignments tended to be short descriptive essays that were one to three paragraphs in length. Given her previous focus on reading and writing, when Loni came to the United States, she was concerned about her speaking and listening. She stated that *“I think my speaking skill is not good. Listening skill is bad. Americans speak very quickly. I can’t understand them. The way of teaching class is very different from China”* (Interview, 1/28/2016). Thus, she was especially concerned about her listening comprehension in her classes. However, in the second semester, she indicated that *“it’s better now. I can know what professors are talking about”* (Interview, 1/28/2016).

Before the FYW course, Loni took the second level of ESL Composition. Like the other Chinese participants, she reflected that writing a research paper and using the APA citation style in that course were new to her and helpful, because she had not had those kinds of experiences in the past. She (like Yenta) also formed the impression during this course that the writing of research papers was to be expected during undergraduate study. These practices (i.e., research and citation) in ESL prepared them for their later classes. Regarding the curriculum in her ESL Composition course, a required course textbook, *The Good Food Revolution: Growing Healthy Food, People, and Communities* by Will Allen (2012), was designated to be the primary source for all research papers. From the textbook, *“we need to choose topics at first, and to write a short research paper about it. I remember it’s a very short research paper. The final assignment is a long research paper”* (Interview, 1/28/2016). Loni was overly concerned about the length of the

assignments, as she said that writing a 4-6 page paper was “*a lot*” since she had to “[*find*] a lot of resources [*sic*] to support the topic” (Interview, 1/28/2016). Choosing a topic and finding sources were, in this course and others, very challenging, because “*I always choose very difficult topics and not finding resources [*sic*]. It’s very hard for me to understand resources [*sic*], hard to write*” (Interview, 1/28/2016). Especially when she chose an unfamiliar topic, for example, about biology, she spent a lot of time on reading sources, and even asked friends who were in China and majored in biology to help her understand the subject.

Reflecting on her learning in the ESL writing course, Loni reported that she did not seek extra help but used Dictionary.Com to find the meanings of words. Choosing to use an English dictionary was her attempt to avoid a discrepancy sometimes caused direct translation, since “*some Chinese translation to English is not accurate. By reading English translation helped me understand the words correctly*” (Interview, 1/28/2016). The teacher asked Loni to pay more attention to grammar because “*I always make some mistakes. Now it’s better,*” said Loni (Interview, 1/28/2016). She noted that reading the textbook and sources helped improve her writing, when “*it (the class) has some readings and help me think more about the book, help me too to write the paper ... I think it let me know when next time I read a new book, I know I need to understand every sentence to learn something from it*” (Interview, 1/28/2016). Loni also valued revision opportunities along with the teacher’s feedback, which to some degree improved her writing. For instance, the instructor “*tells us that how to write a paper in details, more in details, how to find resources [*sic*] more logically to write a paper*” (Interview, 1/28/2016). Given her learning experiences in the ESL course, she defined academic writing as a way to write

with more details and with sources. The second level of the ESL Composition course, by and large, fulfilled her needs as an L2 writer. Additionally, learning in a class full of other international students “*is a good experience. We may have the same problem. We can help each other to solve problems too*” (Interview, 1/28/2016).

5.2.7 Sono from an Innovative FYW Section

The only male participant in this study, Sono, was recruited three weeks into the semester. Sono changed from a standard FYW section to Michelle’s class, because “*the previous class is so difficult, highly related to American culture. I am not very familiar with American culture. So for the American students, they feel it’s not challenging*” (Interview, 1/28/2016). The challenges particularly came from the course theme—American government and policy—that “*I am freaking out,*” (Interview, 1/28/2016) said Sono. He was frustrated and felt marginalized in the previous FYW class. Although he was worried about catching up on the assignments that he had missed in Michelle’s section, Sono already liked the class after a few meetings. He reported that “*the class is interesting because of the video*⁵” (Interview, 1/28/2016). Writing a variety of papers in Michelle’s class made it different from a standard FYW class. The latter one heavily pertained to a theme about American oriented social, cultural and political topics. It required students to have prior knowledge of those topics. For an international student who had been in the United States only for five months, this knowledge gap was too overwhelming. Sono swapped the sections as a result.

⁵ The video, *The Lost Thing*, was from Shaun Tan who won an Academy Award for this animated film.

Sono came from China, just like Penny, Yenta, Yulia, and Loni. He was born in the Northeast of China and then the family moved to Shanghai. At the time of the research, he was a 20 year old second semester freshman who was studying Business. His reason for studying in the United States was quite different from the female participants' reasons. He said, "*For men and boys in my country to keep a distance from my parents is training, so I chose to study abroad*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). Instead of choosing other countries, he thought "*the universities in U.S. are hardest to enter, because we need to take one more test SAT. It must be a better education*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). With respect to his plans after he completed his undergraduate degree, he said he did not have any specific goals but "*just want to successfully graduate from the school*" (Interview, 1/28/2016).

Besides the cultural expectations for males in his country, Sono also wanted to improve his English; this was another reason why he came to the United States. He said, "*In my home country, English education did not pay much attention to English. It's a second language, not my home language*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). He started learning English in elementary school; however, even after more than ten years of English education, he was still not confident about his English. The English education primarily emphasized reading and writing the most, and speaking the least. Sono was also the only L2 participant in this study who directly discussed his self-perceived incompetence in English, even though he, as well as other Chinese participants, was able to converse with me in English during the first interview. I complimented him on his English speaking abilities, and he responded, "*Last semester I learned to speak. I didn't have enough*

chance to speak English in my country. I came here for just one semester. Maybe it will take me a long time to improve” (Interview, 1/28/2016). Concerning his reading, he said:

“I don’t mean I can’t understand any of reading materials, but it takes me long time to translate or to catch the point. I can read the article as fast as the local students. That affects how I receive information in class. You know sometimes I think if our textbook in classes is in Chinese, I can get full grades” (Interview, 1/28/2016).

His previous English class assignments were short essays on topics related to the daily life, which was easy; Sono said, “*You just write some easy stuff. The teacher will give us full grades. Focus on grammar. You can just use some you know extraordinary grammar. You can get full grade. They will think you are very good at writing*” (Interview, 1/28/2016).

Sono was also placed in the second level ESL Composition class in his first semester at University X. Reflecting on his learning, he said, “*Our professor taught me a lot about writing skills. You know the some measures [sic] to telling some points*” (Interview, 1/28/2016). He pointed out that there was a lot of writing about the reading (i.e., the textbook), for which “*we need to write about what you thought about each chapter. What the author wants to talk about and why he wrote this book. What is the main point of the book? We should analyze every chapter and write about why wrote this*” (Interview, 1/28/2016). The difficult part was to “*analyze what the author thought. Research is challenging for me to deeply analyze something*” (Interview, 1/28/2016). Additionally, common mistakes for Chinese students that Sono referred to were language level issues. To solve those problems, besides teacher feedback, Sono said he “*read some*

examples mistakes and tried to avoid making the same mistake again” (Interview, 1/28/2016).

Speaking of his learning in the ESL course, Sono indicated he had improved specifically on clarity and speed of writing. He had improved his writing fluency as well as generating structured “*clearer*” sentences. Sono reported that compared to writing a journal entry in the past that might take him an hour, “*it maybe takes me half hour to finish one journal*” (Interview, 1/28/2016) after the writing practice in the ESL course. Furthermore, “*before I take the class, I thought about writing a sentence. I put a subject here. Different parts of a sentence I need to consider again and again. After taking the class I just write it down. Most of them are all correct,*” said Sono (Interview, 1/28/2016). The ESL class taught basic writing skills; that was “*a foundation for my writing and my practices of English*” (Interview, 1/28/2016) and helped Sono prepare for the “*harder*” FYW course. In spite of his improvement, Sono disagreed with the idea that the ESL course changed his understanding of what writing is. The claim “*is exaggeration. It would not change my writing. It just helped my writing skill but basic. I think it doesn’t change me much,*” said Sono (Interview, 1/28/2016). All in all, then, Sono expected more improvement of his writing in the FYW course.

5.3 Summary

As this chapter has shown, the participants brought a range of views and experiences into this study, for most of them, their English writing-related experiences prior to arriving at University X. However, most had taken at least one of the ESL writing courses offered at University X that served as a kind of entry point into their writing-related engagement in the FYW course, and one of the issues of interest in the current

study was how the ESL writing course experiences might impact on their approach to and performance in the FYW course. Hence, as a prelude to the findings presented in Chapter 6, this chapter concludes with a table (Table 5.2) that provides a brief summary of what the participants indicated regarding their participation in the ESL writing coursework.

Participant	Brief Summary of ESL writing course experiences and reflections
Naomi	Naomi went to an international English school in Honduras. English classes, taught by American and Canadian teachers, were structured in line with the drill and practice approach; that is, she learned about grammar, vocabulary memorization and essay development. Given her English education in this kind of curricular design, Naomi expected that the FYW course would be similar to her past English classes that emphasized on sentence structure and writing instruction.
Penny	Coming from Beijing China, Penny was placed in the second level of the ESL Composition courses at University X. According to her, the course was designed for all international students. Penny was confident of her English proficiency, so she was disappointed about the fact that she had to take one ESL course. She also reported the course was not challenging, so she didn't improve her writing or English. Thus, she expected to learn "real" writing in the FYW course and be able to write like a native English speaker.
Anika	Anika emigrated with her family from Bangladesh and took an ESL course in an American high school, wherein she improved her English speaking more than writing. She also took an (Advanced) English Composition course in her senior year. She learned to write research papers in that course. The teacher gave her additional attention, such as more feedback and writing instruction. However, Anika was still not confident of her English writing after taking those classes and nervous about taking the FYW course, because she does not like writing. She also assumed she had to be creative in order to be a good writer.

Table 5. 2 Summary of Participants' Engagement in ESL

Continued

Table 5. 2 Continued

Yenta	<p>From Beijing China, Yenta took two ESL Composition courses at University X. Like Penny, she was reluctant to take ESL classes. According to her, both ESL courses seemed to emphasize formatting and, in particular, the APA Citation Style, which was new to her. She did not know crediting sources was necessary and important. Additionally, learning writing research papers helped her cope with writing tasks in her other courses even though she had not experienced many writing assignments in her major courses.</p>
Yulia	<p>From Hangzhou China, Yulia took the second level of ESL Composition course. Same as Yenta's ESL experience, Yulia learned about the APA Citation Style and writing research papers. Those experiences are not only new to her but also helpful. Yulia also thought learning paraphrasing was substantially helpful that she used the skill whenever she was using sources in her papers. Unlike Penny, Yulia enjoyed the ESL class, in part, because she learned with other international students who shared similar learning experiences and cultural and linguistic backgrounds.</p>
Loni	<p>From the same city of Yulia, Hangzhou China, Loni took the second level of ESL Composition course at University X. She also enjoyed learning with other international students in that class, since everyone had similar (language) problems and helped each other. Besides the APA Citation Style, writing research papers was new to Loni because she had no experiences before taking the class. All in all, Loni did not recognize her improvement in writing and still considered writing was very challenging. For example, she spent a lot of time choosing a topic and forming ideas.</p>
Sono	<p>From Shanghai China, Sono took the second level of ESL Composition course. He recognized his improvement in terms of the speed of his writing and sentence structures. He wrote faster; he constructed grammatically correct sentences because the ESL teacher taught some grammar lessons. From his point of view, the ESL class taught fundamental writing skills as to prepare international students for writing demands in any other classes, instead of only for the FYW course. Moreover, it would be an overstatement that the ESL class changed or improved his writing.</p>

Chapter 6: Participants' Approaches to FYW: How They Wrote

6.1 Introduction

Building on the contextual information provided in Chapters 4 and 5, this chapter focuses on findings related to the participants' writing experiences in the FYW course. Here it is important to remember, as shown in Chapter 4, that there was variation among the different sections of the FYW course, and this variation impacted on the kinds of assignments the participants completed as well as the instructional approaches adopted by different teachers. Thus, in presenting the findings, it was necessary to utilize an analytical lens described in Chapter 3, which is that while one FYW section is treated as an *individual case*, student participants are *embedded cases* inside each FYW case. The relationship between an individual case and its embedded cases implies that there is a connection between the FYW curriculum and participants' learning experiences. In other words, the course design contextualizes participants' responses to the section of FYW they were in. This is why the information presented in Chapter 4 is so important, just as it is necessary to be aware of the relevant experiences and ideas the participations brought with them into FYW, as described in Chapter 5.

FYW was a writing course, and so it is essential to take a close look at *how* the participants actually wrote in that course, especially as second language (L2) writers enrolled in a course that was not designed with the needs and characteristics of L2 writers

accounted for in the course's conceptualization or implementation. This involves an exploration of the writing processes they employed as L2 writers, as well as their explanations of what they were doing, and why. However, because of the number of assignments in the different sections of FYW and the number of participants in the current study, an examination of each participant's approach to every assigned writing task was simply not feasible. Instead, the chapter looks selectively at their writing approaches and experiences. The accounts provided constitute representative samples of their overall writing experiences in FYW.

Investigating the writing processes employed by the participants required a data gathering instrument which would be sensitive to the differentiation found in the various sections of FYW as well as the participants' backgrounds as L2 writers, and think-aloud protocols were deemed suitable for that purpose, since they allowed the participants to tell their individual stories of composing. In other words, the think-aloud protocols capture the nature and extent of each L2 student's experience of learning to write in an introductory writing course. They reveal not only how the students wrote, but also the extent to which students attained course objectives. As such, this chapter relies on think-aloud data. In Chapter 7, where the focus shifts to the participants' responses to the FYW course, other data sources that also provide a window into their FYW experiences as L2 writers are utilized, such as their weekly journals and bi-weekly interviews.

An important note on the collected data is that these L2 undergraduates were taking 16-18 credit hours during the semester in which the study was conducted, and this dynamic impacted on their availability for some forms of data gathering. For example, I was not able to conduct think-aloud sessions with Sono due to his busy schedule and,

perhaps, resistance; I drew from other data sources, such as Sono's interviews and journals, to counterbalance the missing data set.

6.2 Participant Cases

As briefly noted earlier, the case descriptions are not complete explorations of the participants' experiences in the FYW course. Instead, the focus is narrowed to their approach to one or a few of the course assignments in order to provide a closer look at how they dealt with the composing process. These focused analyses are seen as representative samples of how they wrote in the FYW course. Pseudonyms are used for all of the participants.

6.2.1 Case One: Naomi from the Standard FYW Section

In order to understand how Naomi completed her writing assignments, I conducted three think-aloud sessions with her, each of which recorded her writing process for different papers. The first session was for her first major assignment—Primary Source Analysis—as the first component of the Analytical Research Project. Naomi and I met in a study room in the main library on campus. I placed a video recorder facing Naomi's laptop's screen and a voice recorder on the side to record Naomi's verbal articulation. She was asked to constantly verbalize her thoughts and actions. If there were more than 5-10 second pauses during the session, I prompted her to speak. I sat in the corner of the room in order to minimize my presence in the sessions.

Naomi explained this 2-3-page assignment as follows: "*We have to describe our primary source as to someone who has not seen it. We have to be very specific, and we have to focus on details. Then we have to start to speak our argument in the source related to gender*" (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016). Naomi chose to write about Bruce

Jenner's transformation into Caitlyn Jenner. Her analysis of the primary source was on the portrait of Caitlyn Jenner presented by the magazine *Vanity Fair*. One of the reasons that she chose this topic was because she did not know much about transgender issues. After transgender was brought up as a topic by her FYW teacher, Naomi chose Caitlyn Jenner as her topic. She started to think about more specific questions that she wanted to research and used them as "*an array of research topics*" (Naomi's Journal 2) to form her paper. She had many questions about gender, as she was constantly thinking about how she was able to analyze gender in the case of Bruce Jenner as well as Caitlyn Jenner.

She reported that a short paper like the PSA made writing more difficult, because "*there are so many things we can talk about. I have to focus on one the most relevant one, I guess*" (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016). Naomi struggled with developing her ideas and explaining details; she was worried that she was "*not sure if [she] got the analyzing this in the correct*" (Interview, 2/10/2016) when writing the PSA. Naomi prepared notes (Figure 6.1) before coming to the think-aloud session, since she had been thinking about her topic of the PSA "Vanity Fair's short documentary on Caitlyn Jenner's new life." To start writing, she pulled out her draft of the primary source (Figure 6.2) and her analysis.

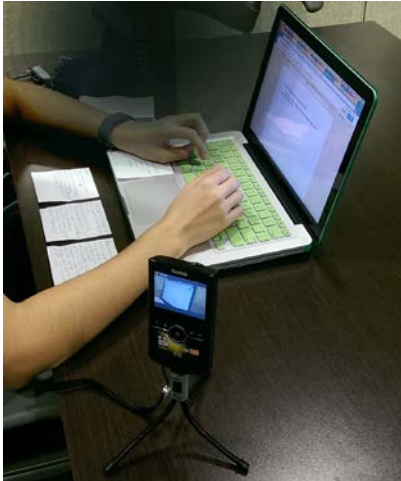


Figure 6. 1 Naomi's notes



Figure 6. 2 Naomi's Primary Source

Below is an excerpt of the session:

(Think-Aloud Protocol, 2/03/2016)

5:20

(The laptop screen shows a word document of the primary source and research questions)

Naomi: The hardest thing is always knowing how to start. I have a list of notes here and questions came up to me after I analyzed my primary source.

(Open a new Google Document)

I will start to describe my primary source. It's always hard to start, because I'm thinking in Spanish right now. Okay, I'm going to use Google Translate.

(20 seconds as Naomi was opening the Google Translate Page and typing words) (Figure 6.3)

(Back to the Google Doc.) I don't think starting with this paper with the focus is not a good start. So first I'm gonna describe that I am gonna focus on a video from Vanity Fair. (Typing, deleting and pausing her first few words) (Figure 6.4)

I'm typing "On July of 2015, Vanity Fair released a," I'm looking for a word like explosive, like something very, that calls the attention of a lot of people, but I'm looking for the word.

"Vanity Fair released a" I'm trying to look for a word like adjective for the video.

(3 seconds pause)

I just put explosive now, or dramatic. No, not dramatic.

(The end of the excerpt)

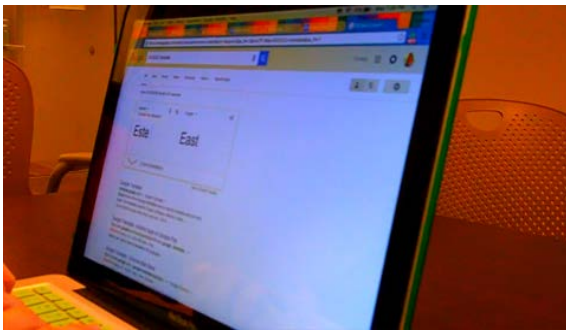


Figure 6. 3 Google Translate

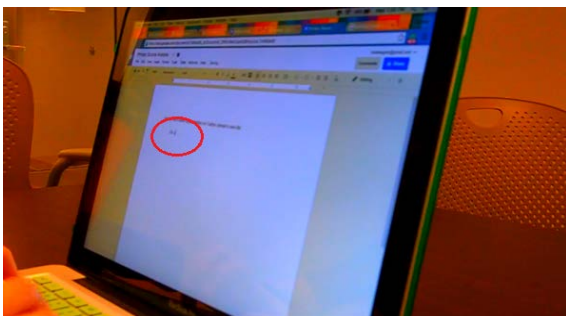


Figure 6. 4 Naomi's First Sentence

Naomi had a hard time writing her first sentence because she was thinking about how to introduce her topic as well as the primary source. She used a thesaurus when she struggled to find appropriate words. For example, she searched for synonyms of the word

“dramatic,” and then she decided to use “historic.” After a few searches, Naomi spent five minutes writing her first sentence “On July of 2015, Vanity Fair released a historic short documentary of Bruce Jenner’s transformation to Caitlyn Jenner.” She then explained more of the video and what the documentary focused on, and connected her analysis to the class lesson on pathos, “*because they explain emotions*” (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016). Naomi stated that writing the introduction was difficult because her mind had been “*already going to details, but I have not introduced what I want to talk about*” (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016).

After writing the passage (Figure 6.5), Naomi read aloud and then paused for a few seconds. During that pause, she was contemplating about how the source (i.e., *Vanity Fair*) portrayed being feminine, her notes about the way Cailyn Jenner dressed, and the colors the source used. Reiterating her arguments, she was thinking carefully about how to construct the next few sentences. When writing, she searched “delicate” (Figure 6.6) on Google Translate, but she was aware that Google Translate did not always translate words correctly. When searching for a synonym for the word “delicate,” she wanted to find an English word similar to “fino” in Spanish. The search result from Google Translate was “fine” in English, which was not the exact word that Naomi was looking for; as she said, “*it’s for another context, something like delicate but high class, like very princessy, but I don’t know the word in English*” (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016). Naomi ultimately used “delicate” since she could not find an ideal translation of “fino.” She was also frustrated when “*I don’t know how to say it*” and used Google Translate to look up how to write “maintain a posture” (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016). These processes are portrayed in the following visuals:

On July of 2015, Vanity Fair released a historic short documentary of Bruce Jenner's transformation to Caitlyn Jenner. This documentary focuses on the pathos of transgender individuals. Vanity Fair uses many gender stereotypes to draw a line between how male and females are expected to look like in the eyes of society.

Figure 6. 5 Naomi's PSA introduction

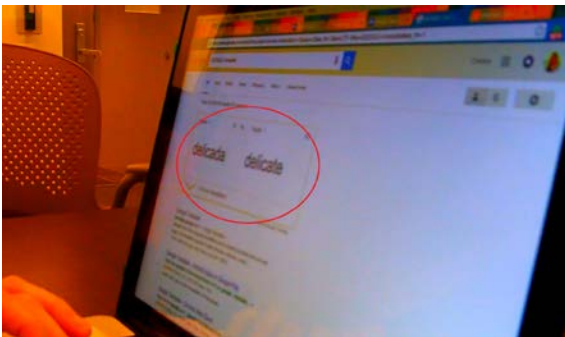


Figure 6. 6 Google Translate of "Delicate"

After approximately 25 minutes spent writing the introduction, Naomi said, "*I think that's a good introduction for now, because I talked about how I will be using my primary source and kind of describe what my main point is even though I will talk about other things. But this would be the main thing I'm trying to say*" (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016). I observed that Naomi's writing process for the PSA was composed of various stages, such as planning (i.e., notes and research questions), writing, revising, and using language tools. First of all, although Naomi did not use an outline, she had been planning for the paper by writing notes and thinking. Secondly, during her actual writing process, pauses within sentences and deletions of words occurred frequently, in addition to those that occurred when she used Google Translate and a thesaurus to search words or

phrases. After the session, I told Naomi that she wrote quickly. She said, *“This is weird. This doesn’t happen usually. The fact is thinking out loud, I’ve never done this before. I never spoke to myself out loud during writing. I do it in my mind”* (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016). She found that thinking aloud *“was very helpful for me because we were in a small room by ourselves, and I got the opportunity to speak out loud to myself as I was starting my writing assignment”* (Naomi’s Journal 4). It is also because *“I am good at speaking in English. If I only read it in my mind, I don’t know how that sounds like. When I read it out loud, I know this doesn’t sound right”* (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016).

Starting was the most difficult during her writing process. During a thinking aloud session, *“I could hear my own writing and imagine a native speaker saying what I had written. Picturing this helped me write more clearly and make less grammatical mistakes”* (Naomi’s Journal 4). After the first think-aloud protocols, Naomi stated that she expected to use thinking out loud more in the future because that strategy could help her writer faster. She later used the strategy for writing a paper for a dance course. The benefits of think-aloud could be rationalized because Naomi identified herself as an aural learner and especially learned to speak English by listening to music, singing, pronouncing the words of the songs, and imitating the accent of native English speakers. Reading-aloud or specifically thinking out loud helped her translate and associate words with the sounds *“that native speakers sound correct.”* She imagined the speakers on TED Talk *“who speak English would say this”* (Interview, 2/10/2016).

An unavoidable drawback of the first think-aloud session was that I did not observe Naomi’s code-switching between Spanish-English. Naomi explained that she would be thinking in Spanish but speaking out loud in English in order to allow me to

understand her. During those pauses in her writing process, she was thinking in Spanish. Furthermore, because her English teachers in high school encouraged her to write in English even though thinking in Spanish, a few pauses during her writing process seemingly were necessary as she translated while composing. Naomi overall felt “*the assignment is difficult although the topic is very open*” (Think-aloud protocol, 2/03/2016), and had to be selective in order to write this 2-3 page short paper. She received an A on her PSA and the teacher commented on her good work (Figure 6.7) as follows:

Excellent work on your PSA. I think you've done a great job balancing details from the video with your own interpretation of those details. You present a clear argument and your analysis is strong. Good job!↵

↵

PSA grade: A↵

Figure 6. 7 Teacher's comment on Naomi's PSA

Naomi and I met in a study room in the library for her second think-aloud session, this time for her Secondary Source Integration (SSI) task. As for this assignment, “*I have to analyze my secondary sources but also revisit my primary source integration and look at the feedback that she (the teacher) gave me and correct it. Then, do the same thing I did for my primary source but for my secondary sources. The final paper has to be about 4-5 pages*” (Think-aloud protocol, 3/15/2016). Naomi was not worried about the length of the paper because she thought her secondary sources “*are very rich*” (Think-aloud

protocol, 3/15/2016), so she was able to integrate them into the paper easily. Naomi also brought out the prepared notes for her secondary sources (Figure 6.8), which were from her Annotated Bibliography (AB) assignment. She reviewed them before pulling out her Primary Source Analysis paper. She used her thesis statement to evaluate its relationship with the PSA, by referring to a strategy that Lisa (her teacher) suggested for writing, which is, according to Naomi, “to highlight the thesis statement and put it in a big font so that when you’re writing, you never forget what your thesis is” (Figure 6.9) (Think-aloud protocol, 3/15/2016). Furthermore, as for the SSI, Naomi mainly incorporated her secondary sources from the PSA. Instead of synthesizing sources, she inserted quotes from her AB in between paragraphs to address her points (Figure 6.10).

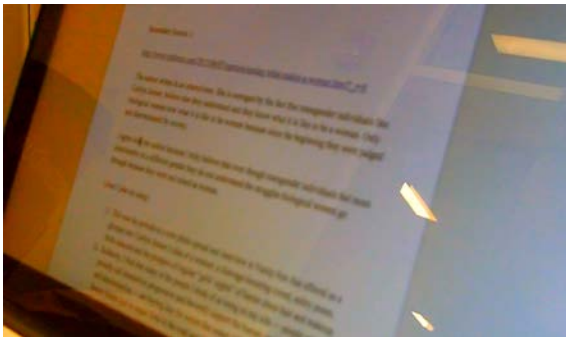


Figure 6. 8 Naomi’s notes for the SSI

underestimates this distinction between males and females, but it is very significant because it controls every aspect of life. The way Caitlyn Jenner decided to unfold herself into the public says a lot about society’s expectations of women and the way they should present themselves. Caitlyn Jenner’s excessive feminine style and behavior challenges biological women to meet the standards of beauty and femininity imposed by society. ↵

Figure 6. 9 Naomi’s writing strategy

“While young “Bruiser,” as Bruce Jenner was called as a child, was being cheered on toward a university athletic scholarship, few female athletes could dare hope for such largess since universities offered little funding for women’s sports. When Mr. Jenner looked for a job to support himself during his training for the 1976 Olympics, he didn’t have to turn to the meager “Help Wanted – Female” ads in the newspapers, and he could get by on the \$9,000 he earned annually, unlike young women whose median pay was little more than half that of men. Tall and strong, he never had to figure out how to walk streets safely at night.” (Burkett, “What makes a Woman?”).”

The field of sports is just one example of the many areas where men have an advantage over women. Young Bruce Jenner did not have to worry about getting raped while walking down a lonely street at night; He did not experience the difficulties women entrepreneurs go through to build their companies from scratch because he was born into a superior position in the gender hierarchy. Therefore, Caitlyn Jenner has no right to say that she knows what it means to be a woman..”

Figure 6. 10 Naomi’s inserting quotes

As noted earlier, Naomi intentionally spoke in English, so that I could understand her, though she may have been thinking first in Spanish. I therefore reminded her to speak Spanish if that was the language she was thinking in. Then, she appeared to switch between Spanish and English frequently in this think-aloud session. She spoke in Spanish to articulate her ideas but wrote in English. Below is an excerpt of Naomi writing her SSI paper.

(Think-aloud protocol, 3/15/2016, continued)

8:45 *Spanish is in italic

(reading sources and speaking in Spanish)

Naomi: **First, I’m going to see what it is about. It’s my first source. Because she is going against the style of people that are transgender I think I’m writing more or less my first paragraph ... but I don’t know how to say it.*

Yes, it sounds better that way. According to Google Translate, it sounds best to say “Caitlyn Jenner has an erroneous idea of what it makes to be a woman.” And then I have to explain.

13:50

Naomi: **She thinks being a woman means painting your nails ... I don't know how to say that.*

21:58

Naomi: Right now I am looking how to do in-text citations because I forgot how to do it. It's kind of hard because all the examples they give are from books and the site the page but since mine is an online article, I can't cite the page. Purdue Owl, in-text citations, other page. Oh, here, perfect.

(The end of the excerpt)

The excerpt below presents Naomi's code-switching when she was writing a sentence.

(Think-aloud protocol, 3/15/2016, continued)

34:32 **speaking in Spanish is in italic*

Naomi: **That women, The difficulties that women face in order to be professional*

That women go through in order to become professionals

**It's just that I don't want to talk only about being professional but talk about in general the difficulties that women go through during their lives*

Throughout his life, this is kind of like contradicting because I'm speaking about how she was born as a man. So I like wrote throughout his life. But I have to change that, because now she's a she. About her life, I keep messing up. He did not face the struggles that women go through but that doesn't that. Okay, I hope she understands or should I leave it as he? I'll leave it as she because now she's a she.

(The end of the excerpt)

The think-aloud revealed that Naomi seemed to rely on Spanish as a means to think and form ideas, even though she was writing an English paper. She switched between two languages when writing and reading out loud her texts. For example, she read a passage in Spanish first and then changed to English. She also used language tools,

such as Google Translate, Thesaurus.Com and Dictionary.Com to look up uncertain words during the session. She used Google Translate to translate a phrase (Figure 6.11) from Spanish to English, “*because it’s faster*” (Think-aloud protocol, 3/15/2016).

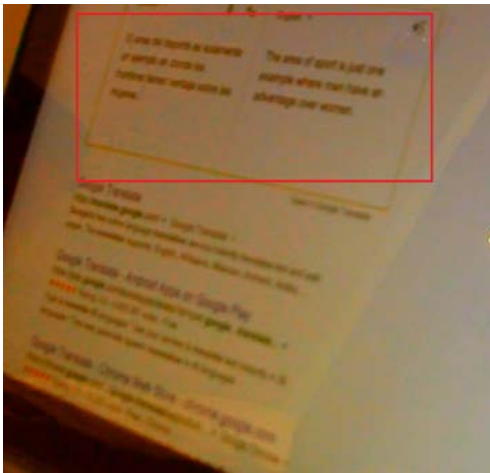


Figure 6. 11 Google Translate

Concerned about her grammar, she wanted to send the draft of the SSI to the teacher for feedback, but instead asked her roommate to review her paper. Naomi turned in her final product to Grammarly, which is a paid online editing service that provided language support. For example, Grammarly can identify active versus passive voices and check grammar (Figure 6.12). Naomi reviewed the comments from Grammarly and corrected her paper, as this was her proofreading and editing process.



Figure 6. 12 Grammarly

The third think-aloud session took place for Naomi's final Analytical Research Project (ARP), which was "*the most serious and longest English paper*" (Interview, 5/04/2016). Even though she wrote comparable research papers in high school, writing the ARP seemed more challenging for Naomi in part because writing in college is "*harder*" (Interview, 5/04/2016). Naomi had finished the first draft for an in-class peer-review activity. She also received feedback from Lisa, her teacher. Compared to peer feedback, Naomi stated that Lisa's feedback, such as "good job" and "good analysis," was not helpful. Therefore, in this think-aloud session she focused on reviewing her peer's comments. First, the peer suggested "a historical documentary *on* or *about* Bruce Jenner's transformation to Caitlyn Jenner" instead of *of* that Naomi used. She decided to continue using *of* because she thought both words (e.g. *on* and *of*) were acceptable. Secondly, the peer also helped to point out unclear meanings of sentences and identify unknown sources. One instance of this was that when Naomi incorporated her secondary sources, she embedded them between sentences but neglected to include reference

information. She then reviewed her Annotated Bibliography and revised her use of quotes from those particular sources.

As noted earlier, in revising the draft, Naomi did not comply with all of the peer feedback. In addition to examples already shown, the peer also suggested adding an example to explain a particular argument that Naomi brought up, but she was reluctant to accept that comment, considering her paper was very close to the page limit. In the final analysis, Naomi was surprised about that her peer “*likes the paper a lot.*” (Think-aloud protocol, 4/26/2016).

Naomi apparently used this third think-aloud session during the proofreading stage of her writing process to complete the ARP. She looked more relaxed in this session than in the previous two sessions. While proofreading the paper, she read aloud to herself and paused at several places where ideas seemed unclear. She inspected the MLA citation format, including how to add page numbers (Figure 6.13) and a cover page. She checked on word choices by looking up words on Thesaurus.Com or on Google Translate. In this session, language-switching also occurred. Spanish still seemed to be her dominant language for thinking. The excerpt below contains the ideas in Spanish that Naomi intended to translate to English when writing her conclusion.

(Think-aloud protocols, 4/24/2016, continued)

36:50

Naomi: How can I say, like, transgender individuals do not have the right to like, I don't think there is a translation because in Spanish is like they don't have the right to make their opinions about this. It doesn't translate. I'm trying to say transgender individuals shape a lot of how femininity looks like.

(The end of the excerpt)

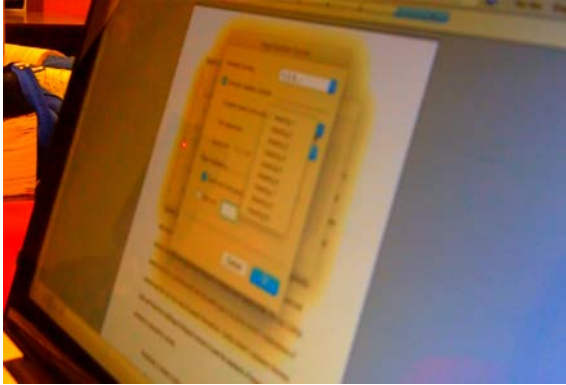


Figure 6. 13 Setting up the format

In terms of writing, Naomi's primary difficulty was in her ability to articulate ideas clearly. Often, she wanted to write but was concerned that "*this sentence doesn't sound well*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). It could take her an hour to write one paragraph, "*just for the sound nice to find the right words*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). Naomi used a thesaurus and Google Translate to search for the "*right words*" by choosing the word that "*sounds good in Spanish,*" then translating it into English, and finally, using a thesaurus to confirm if the word is appropriate, which "*would take [her] forever*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). She also indicated that "*starting is my biggest challenge*" and separating ideas is difficult (Interview, 1/28/2016).

Overall, Naomi felt confident about the final draft of the ARP paper, as she had good sources to support her argument. Even with that, she still wanted to ask her roommate to proofread the paper again before submitting it. Overall, she reported that she was glad the ARP was scaffolded, so that she was guided through the process of writing a research paper. Completing the ARP, for her, was an accomplishment. She worked hard, so she anticipated an A for the paper. However, she earned an A- as her final grade for both the ARP and the course. Naomi was very disappointed about this, since she thought

she had put a lot of effort into the course throughout the semester and had done well on her other major papers. Lisa did not provide any feedback on the final draft of the ARP but only posted the grade on the course shell. After grades were posted, Naomi was too discouraged to communicate with Lisa regarding a grade appeal.

6.2.2 Case Two: Penny from the Modified FYW Section

Here, as with Naomi, Penny's writing process was revealed through the think-aloud protocols. The first think-aloud session was held in a study room at the main library. The assignment was a preparatory paper for the PSA, which was an additional paper to the ARP sequence that Briana added. She wanted to ensure students selected primary sources carefully from readings. As for this assignment, Penny said, "*We are supposed to read five stories (of the short stories) and pick three on the five [sic] to write three, one-page, summaries, one paragraph summary*" (Think-aloud protocol, 1/30/2016). Before this think-aloud session, Penny had already read half of the book and selected a few stories to summarize. Penny chose three "non-violent" stories because she did not "*like typical American stories,*" which she described as "*those involving a lot of contemporary teenager American culture, like drug, sex, violence, gangster thing. I am not very familiar with that. It's not a really good idea to analyze this kind of symbol, which I am not familiar with*" (Think-aloud 1/30/2016).

Her first story, "The Siege at Whale Cay," by Megan Mayhew Bergman was about lesbians and focused on women. Her second story was Diane Cook's "Moving On" about a widow who was placed in a prisonlike shelter and prepared for her next husband. Penny said that story was also "*culture free*" (Think-aloud 1/30/2016). In her high school, she had read articles about dystopias, so she could apply a similar understanding about

utopias to analyze this short story. The third story was Colum McCann's "Sh'khol" about a Jewish Scottish woman's relationship with her adopted deaf child. Penny selected these stories because the main characters were all women and she felt she could relate to; "*from a woman's point of view, it is possible for me to analyze another woman. And the focus is on woman relationship itself, so it contains less cultural influence. Even though I am not familiar with whatever cultural symbol is, it won't be much different when I analyze it,*" Penny said (Think-aloud 1/30/2016).

Regarding the summary writing component of this task, Penny tried to "*capture the author's main theme, elements present in the story*" (Think-aloud protocol, 1/30/2016), for which she used one of the available analytic methods—binary—as to create opposing categories to define things (Writing Analytically, 2015). Writing summaries was not as easy as Penny expected, because "*a summary had to capture the main idea of an article*" (Think-aloud protocol, 1/30/2016). Her preparation for this assignment was, at first, to write a few phrases about the selected stories. These key notes (Figure 6.14) about her first story, "The Siege at Whale Cay," were then developed into a complete summary (Figure 6.15). In other words, those notes functioned as an outline of a summary. She called this session a brainstorming session in which she was forming her ideas by writing notes and then "*put[ting] them to paragraphs*" (Think-aloud protocol, 2/06/2016).

The siege at Whale Cay.

Competition for intimacy. Same sex relationship.

sense of lost of power. A attempt to regain that power.

Feeling about home. Parents. Lack o sense of belonging (present). Also don't feel like being back.

Figure 6. 14 Penny's reading Notes

The Siege at Whale Cay.

Georgie is on a Caribbean island with her girlfriend Joe, a muscular woman and the owner of the island who was about to welcome another group of important guests, including Joe's acquaintance and a famous actress Marlene. At the same time, one of the women among the original inhabitants of the island was at the end of her pregnancy and suffering to give birth, an act not encouraged under Joe's authority over the island. The presence of the guests, especially Marlene, made Georgie feel being ignored and jealous, yet from experience of Joe's short relationships with numerous ex-girlfriends and her gut as a competitor, Georgie also knew that competition for Joe's attention with Marlene was likely to ended up failing. While considering her relationship with Joe, Georgie's innate character of demanding and enjoying attention triggered, on the one hand, a series of her acts in an attempt to reestablish her position on the island and worthiness among against the guests, and on the other, a realization of sense of self. At last, hearing about the pregnant woman's suffering, Georgie made another attempt to stand against Joe's authority and help the pregnant woman.

Figure 6. 15 Penny's complete summary

This think-aloud session did not involve much writing, but it did involve a lot of planning. While Penny was speaking out loud to herself about what she understood about the stories, she jotted down key ideas as part of her preparation for writing the summary of each story. I did not observe her to use any language tools, such as a dictionary or online translator, in this session. It was important to note that Penny spoke in English throughout the session even though I reminded her that she could speak in her first language—Mandarin—if she needed or preferred to do so. She did not complete writing this paper during this think-aloud session. This session, in a sense, demonstrated the planning stage of her writing process for this summary assignment.

The second think-aloud session was for the Primary Source Analysis (PSA) paper, which was “*the first part of our final paper. We are supposed to analyze a story that we pick from this book. Write a 2-3 pages long, to show analysis about this*” (Think-aloud protocol, 2/06/2016). Penny selected the already discussed short story, “The Siege at Whale Cay,” as her primary source and focused on analyzing how religion was presented in the story to readers. She had written the introduction before the session. In the session, she continued this paper by writing a few independent sentences (Figure 6.16) about her points of analysis. Below is an excerpt of Penny’s response when I prompted her to speak after a short pause during the session.

(Think-aloud protocol, 2/06/2016, continued)

CL: What are you thinking?

Penny: I’m trying to put a kind of language into sentences, because I’m trying to work on this (pause) Okay, so, for this part, maybe I will put this later, because this is not as important as, not as an intent show [*sic*]. (She spaced those sentences to the bottom of the page) (Figure 6.17).

(The end of the excerpt)

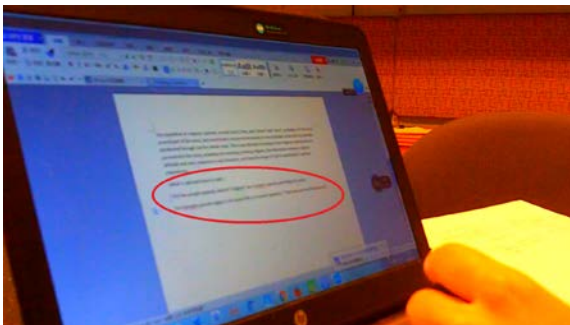


Figure 6. 16 Independent Sentences

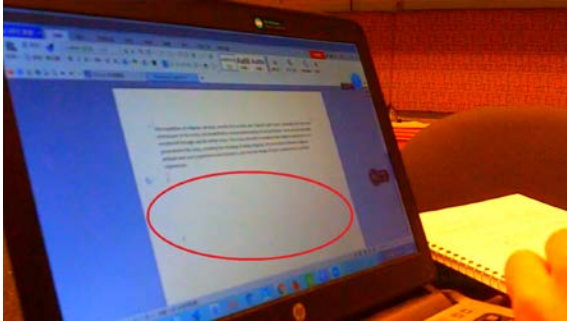


Figure 6. 17 Planning Writing

Penny then wrote key words and sentences while analyzing the story. It is interesting to note that these sentences were incomplete and had some space between them. It was similar to the outline of her summary paper, in that she wrote out phrases and key notes before writing the paper. She then incorporated them into her paragraphs (Figure 6.18). Unexpectedly, Penny's computer stopped working during the session, so she decided to hand-write her rough draft (Figure 6.19). This draft showed Penny's thorough analysis (Figure 6.20), which mapped out her PSA paper, as a detailed plan that later was developed into her first draft of the PSA paper. It is also important to note that I did not prompt her to language switch this time in order to minimize intervention during the think-aloud protocols. However, Penny again did not use any language tools, and she spoke in English throughout the session. She received an A- for the first draft, but she was able to revise and improve the grade.

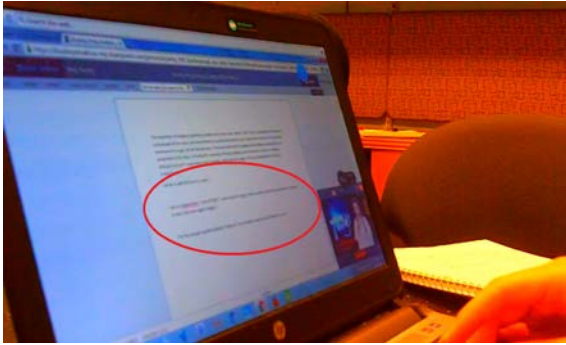


Figure 6. 18 Key Phrases



Figure 6. 19 Penny's hand-writing the draft

A Siege at the White City

To parents: God & convention, the right way of life,
moral regulation.
"God-fearing" → disapproving of gay relationship
"going to church", small town, South
→ "traditional value"
or the natural part of life

To (be) Mattene: Doubt-believer, "CRISIS of faith"
how can you feel another way
despair abandoned → turned angry
"pushed to limits"
→ angry, not at all no compassion/
empathy
It no shame of being faithless.
God guarantee good things.

Figure 6. 20 Penny's Analysis

When we met for the third think-aloud session, Penny was working on her Annotated Bibliography (AB) assignment, for which she had to read and annotate five journal articles. She had printed these articles out. To start this session, she searched the term “Existentialism” on Wikipedia (Figure 6.21) and then associated it with a concept in the article, “The Many Faces Of Jesus In Steinbeck's *The Grapes Of Wrath*,” by Rachel McCoppin. She then wrote the summary. Below is an excerpt from the transcription of her writing process for this particular annotation.

(Think-aloud protocol, 2/28/2016, continued)

Penny: The central claim, central claim of the article is that (hmm) in *The Grapes of Wrath* and as in many other (reading the article)

in many, more than American literature, other modern literary works, individuals, responsibility and altruism (hmm), individuals can attain a sense of, a Christ like, can attain certain level of divinity through responsibility, through their personal, personal, personally realized responsibility and altruism. The author (reading the Wikipedia page of Existentialism)

Two 19th century philosophical concepts were introduced as both influencing this trend and ways to interpret the, the, the acts of characters in the novels.

The central claim of the article is that in the grapes of wrath as in many other modern literary works, individuals can attain certain level of divinity through their personally realized responsibility and altruism. Two 19th century philosophical concepts, transcendentalism and existentialism, are introduced. Were introduced as both influencing this trend and ways to interpret the acts of characters, interpret the acts of characters (hmm) in the novel.

(The end of the excerpt)

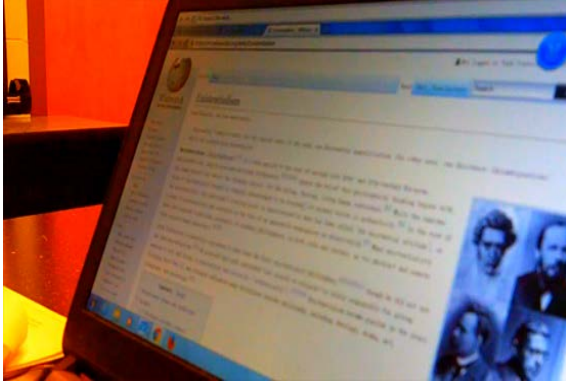


Figure 6. 21 Wikipedia Page

As part of her reading process in preparation for her later writing about the articles, Penny marked the articles and wrote notes in the margins (Figure 6.22). As before, I was especially interested in observing Penny's use of language tools and language-switching. During this think-aloud session, in order to comprehend the readings, Penny not only used Wikipedia to look up terms that appeared in the articles, but also used her phone to look up words, such as "preemptive" (Figure 6.23). Even with her use of language tools, Penny did not speak in her first language unless I used Mandarin to ask her to continue saying whatever came into her mind (and then she responded to it in Mandarin). Then she switched back to speaking English while she was writing.

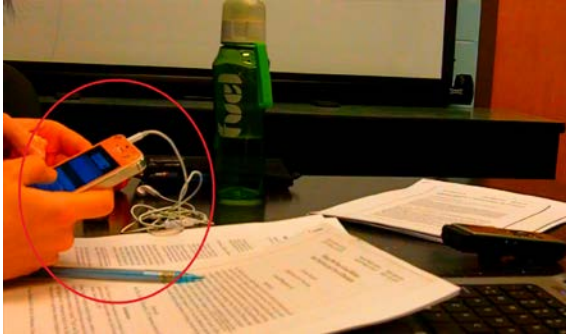


Figure 6.22 Penny's notes in the margins

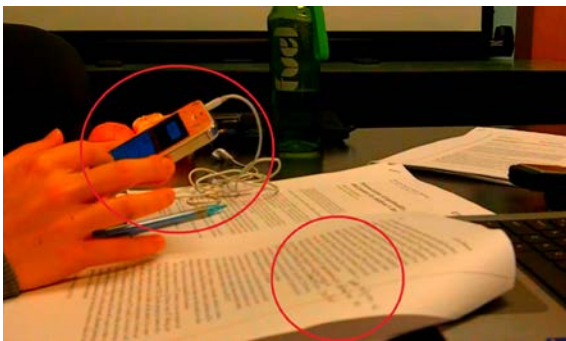


Figure 6.23 Penny was looking up words on the phone

I conducted an additional think-aloud protocol with Penny because I wanted to understand how she wrote the final ARP paper. Before the session, Penny had completed most of the paper except for the introduction and the conclusion. She reported that she had been struggling with writing those two components. First of all, she was concerned that her conclusion might become overly critical of religion, even though that was her argument. Second, writing an introduction was the most difficult part of academic writing for her. In fact, in light of this challenge, she often wrote her introductions after finishing the other parts of her papers. Reviewing the journal articles that served as her secondary sources prompted her to synthesize the main ideas of each source, so that she could integrate them into the introduction. She decided to use a quote relating to her three

secondary sources in the introduction; however, this added a layer of complexity, as she was required to provide reference information about these sources. She was worried that the introduction (Figure 6.24) could become lengthy as a result.

— "In the end is the word, and the word is man, and the word is with man." Thus uttered John Steinbeck in his 1962 Nobel Prize address countering the commentary of St. John the Apostle. In other words, as Steinbeck views it, the future of human beings lies not in the hand of "deity", but in man itself. Faith, if exist, should no longer be about God; rather, faith is the belief that man is ultimately capable and responsible for society and humanity. Deeply influenced by existentialism philosophy, Steinbeck's view of the relationship between religion and society is celebrated not only at his time, but also in currently American culture as individualism still prevails. In modern American culture, people believe that religion is existential. On the one hand, there's no universal truth in terms of religious belief and religious understanding is purely on account of the individual. On the other hand, religion can only survive in the modern society by subscribing to the sim 英 moral principles the society ask for its members. 。

Figure 6. 24 Penny's Introduction of the ARP

Penny reported that she thought that the ARP assignment was difficult. The PSA and SSI, in her opinion, were scaffolding components that helped her prepare for the ARP. Nevertheless, she used only some parts of her analyses and ideas from those papers. She even interpreted her secondary sources differently when using them for the ARP. The ARP, in a sense, was a new and independent paper; she wrote most of this paper from scratch, instead of “directly” inserting the writing from the PSA and SSI into the ARP. The sequence of the ARP was scaffolded in terms of analysis and idea development; however, writing the earlier components was not an accumulative way to complete the ARP. Strictly speaking, she used 30-40 percent of the PSA and SSI for writing the ARP.

Although writing the ARP took Penny a lot of time, she reported that the Personal Essay (PE) was even more challenging because it was not an academic paper, and she

believed she was not good at writing about personal stories. In addition, she needed to include her individual reflections on religion, but she was not religious, and because of her cultural background (i.e., being from China, where there are prohibitions regarding religion) and limited experiences, she did not have personal reflections. She would rather have written an academic paper to discuss a subject from a neutral analytical perspective apart from her own experiences than integrating her own narratives into the paper. However, Briana, her instructor, was very impressed by Penny's performance, as she said that Penny's writing was very sophisticated. In this regard, Briana even suggested nominating Penny for an undergraduate writing award in the Department of English. Briana's confidence was reflected in her formal assessments, as Penny received an A as the final grade for both the ARP assignment and the course itself.

6.2.3 Case Three: Anika from an Innovative FYW Section

I was only able to schedule two think-aloud sessions given Anika's heavy academic schedule. The first think-aloud session was for the "Dilsey" paper (based on Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*), which was a two-three paragraph (less than a page) analysis of the main character in the assigned reading. Anika said, "*I have to read and find supporting segments. I think I will write a thesis statement, which I am not sure what it is. I'll figure that out*" (Think-aloud protocol, 2/08/2016). Below is an excerpt of how she started to write this paper.

(Think-aloud protocol, 2/08/2016)

2:55

Anika: I'm going to first read what the assignment is. Draw a position statement, a position statement, I'm not sure what that is. I'll google it. A position statement means what your position is about what's your position on this per se or this paragraph. (Reading the assignment prompt)

5:40

Anika: Google what is thesis statement (Figure 6.25). It's in the beginning.
(Reading the search result)

(The end of the excerpt)

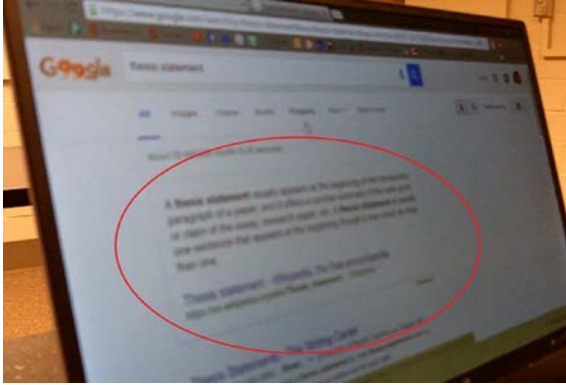


Figure 6. 25 Thesis Statement

Anika read the assignment prompt carefully and pointed out the important requirements, such as including a position statement. As her understanding of the assignment grew, she proceeded to open a Word document to set up the format of the paper (Figure 6.26), for example, with a course title and her name. After these logistical procedures, Anika read the story. Instead of using any particular language tools, she looked up words or terminology on Google, such as “bleak” (Figure 6.27) and “cabin” to learn how it was different from a house (Figure 6.28). She also googled when the Civil War happened (Figure 6.29) as that was the time period in which the story was set.

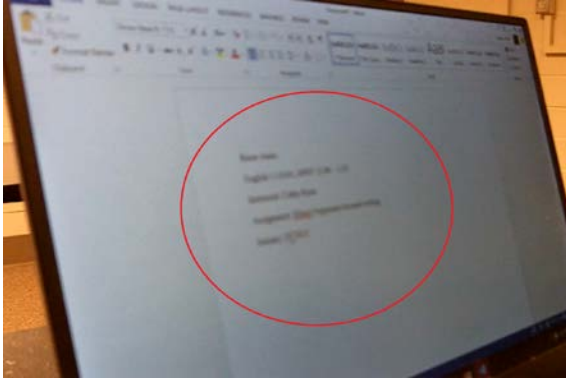


Figure 6. 26 Anika was setting up the format

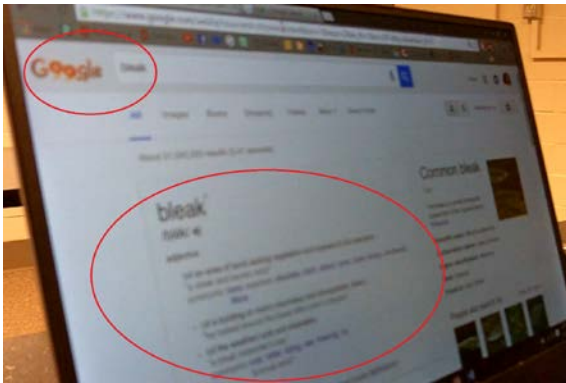


Figure 6. 27 Anika was looking up words on Google

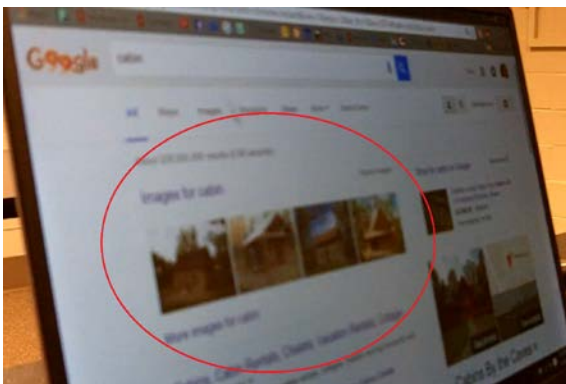


Figure 6. 28 Anika was looking up "Cabin"



Figure 6. 29 Anika was looking up the Civil War on Google

After reading the story, Anika planned to start her writing with her thesis statement; however, she looked up “Dilsey” for more information about the story (Figure 6.30). Reading through it seemingly helped her analyze the character and led her to believe, *“I don’t think she judges, especially based on that”* (Think-aloud protocol, 2/08/2016). After understanding more about the text, she started to write, but did not speak out loud about how she would start to write. That is, she did not articulate a planning process that she would follow, and it may be that she did not engage in such a process in a more formal or systematic way. For example, compared to Naomi and Penny, Anika did not prepare notes or use outlines to plan her paper. In other words, while carefully reading the story and looking up unknown vocabulary, as well as related information, she was also planning the paper and forming ideas in her mind. This suggests an ongoing and informal composing process that allowed her to sort through her emerging ideas.

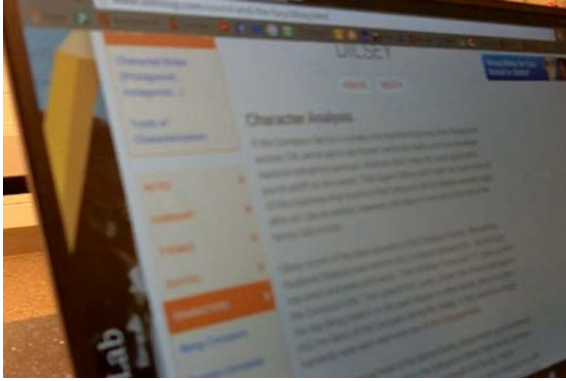


Figure 6. 30 Anika was looking up Dilsey

There was a long pause after she wrote the first two sentences of the introduction: “Disley is one of the Character of William Faulkner’s novel *The Sound and the Fury*. From reading about Dilsey, it can be concluded that Dilsey is not a judgmental person and she does not pass any judgement in the passage” (Anika’s Writing Sample, 2/08/2016). Then, she said, “*How should I start the next topic? Should I start writing about her personality or action? Maybe. Okay, let’s try to describe it*” (Think-aloud protocol, 2/08/2016). While writing, then, Anika was planning as well. That is, rather than spending time on setting up the organization of the paper beforehand, she combined the stages of planning and writing. The planning process took place in Anika’s mind; she was organizing the paper at the same time she was writing.

The second think-aloud session was for Anika’s “The American Scholar” paper, for which she read the text of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s speech to the Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1837 and wrote a 2-3 page reflection. This assignment was composed of group work and individual writing. In class, students were grouped to discuss what the key components of being an American scholar were, according to Emerson. Some groups generated their notes on a Google Doc so that everyone could participate in

collaboratively writing the same document. Anika’s group commented on four categories of the speech (Figure 6.31), which were “self-directed life,” “one man,” “nature,” and “knowledge.” These categories apparently shaped Anika’s brainstorming process that established the framework for this paper. Anika reviewed those categories and group-composed notes related to them (Figure 6.32) and said, “*I should start with an introduction*” (Think-aloud protocol, 3/05/2016). She also looked up words (e.g., transcendentalism) as she did in the first think-aloud session. Before writing, she retrieved the assignment prompt from the emails that Michelle sent to the class via the online classroom management system a week earlier.

Big Ideas^⓪

- **Self-Directed Life:** Originality is crucial in scholarship. Choosing one’s own creative ways of thinking or perceiving things is important. However, often times people tend to follow the footsteps of successful people and think that innovative thinking is risky. This kills the creativity and originality of the thinker. In Ralph Waldo Emerson’s speech, *The American Scholar*, he said, “Genius is always sufficiently the enemy of genius by over influence.” (par 16) He pointed out that American thinkers and scholars are still feeding off of the intellectual properties of European thinkers. ^⓪
- **One Man:** All individuals are part of one complete man. Every man of every profession is actually serving a greater purpose than it is perceived to be. One of the body parts of the complete man (society) is an American scholar. However, Emerson said, “The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters, — a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man.” ^⓪
- **Nature:** Nature is the most influential influence on human thinking. Pattern and order in the nature and the soul should be recognized first to know the world. ^⓪
- **Knowledge:** Books and knowledge of history and science are important to be a scholar. However, they should not be considered a model. Thinker’s ideas should not be confined within what is expected or accepted in the society. Past learnings can however sometimes influence thinking, create bias and obstruct free thinking. ^⓪

Figure 6. 31 Anika’s group’s “Big Ideas”

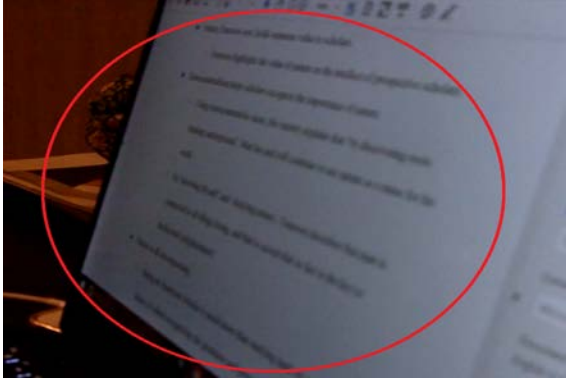


Figure 6. 32 Anika's notes

As mentioned earlier, I did not observe Anika's planning process in her previous think-aloud session. In this case, though, she was seen spending some time on planning the paper. While reviewing the notes, she was also setting up the structure of the paper (Figure 6.33); that is, an outline was composed of a few quotes from the text and her annotations. After her planning stage, she started writing the introduction. The outline seemed to help Anika write this paper. She was able to articulate ideas according to the quotes from the text or the group's notes. In her previous think-aloud session, writing the first two sentences took her some time because she was planning while she was writing. Without an outline, it seemed Anika increased her cognitive processing load, which included planning, translating, and generating ideas all together. By contrast, she set up the structure of the paper before actually writing this time. Perhaps as a result of this approach, her writing speed was substantially faster in this session than it was in the first think-aloud session.

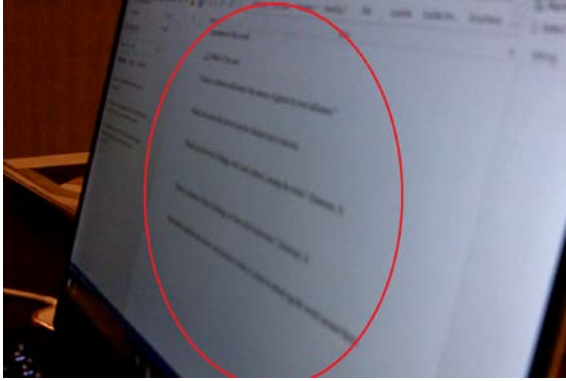


Figure 6. 33 The structure of the paper

Anika's writing process, similar to Naomi's, included looking up words in the dictionary and using a thesaurus and Google. Additionally, Anika also reviewed the assignment prompt (Figure 6.34) and re-read the source text while writing, so that she could reference the information correctly. Rewriting sentences took place frequently. Rather than writing without pauses, Anika stopped to read the paragraph and rewrite sentences. She particularly re-wrote the last sentence of the introduction as "This speech was targeted to the scholars of that time period but the ideas he delivered back then are still relevant and applicable to the modern thinkers" (Writing Sample, 3/05/2016), which she seemed happy about and said, "*I think it's a good introduction*" (Think-aloud protocol, 3/05/2016). She also arranged sentences by moving them within or to other paragraphs in order to organize the flow of the ideas coherently. She not only revised sentences but also checked her word choices by highlighting the words (Figure 6.35) or looking up synonyms (of words such as "characteristic") on an online thesaurus (Picture 6.36). She then replaced words. These kinds of decision-making acts occurred a lot during Anika's think-aloud session and represented a significant departure from her

approach to the previous assignment, that is, from more spontaneous to more structured or strategic composing.

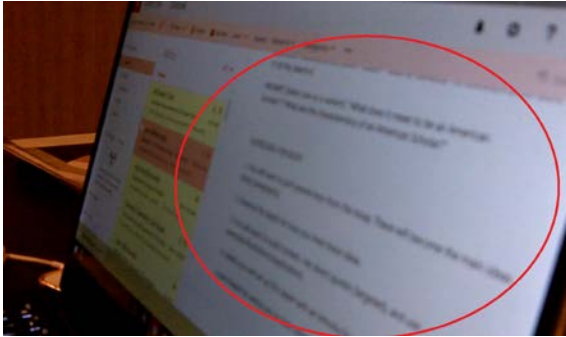


Figure 6. 34 Anika was reviewing the assignment prompt

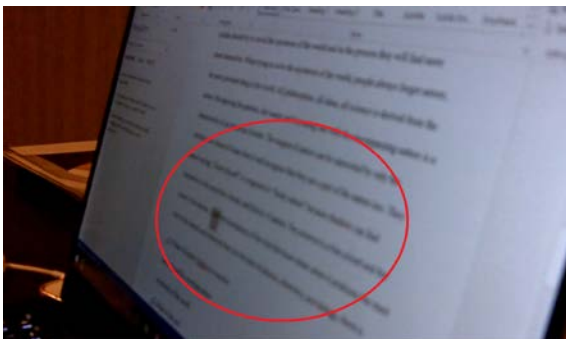


Figure 6. 35 Anika highlighted words

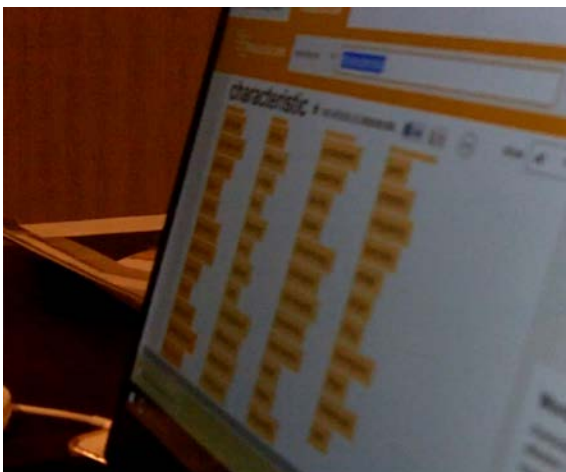


Figure 6. 36 Looking up words in Thesaurus

Also noteworthy during composing was the fact that Anika was constantly concerned about grammar. When writing, she “*used online grammar checker and looked up synonyms of different words to make [her] essay richer in vocabulary*” (Journal, 1/16/2016). Although she did use language tools, Anika did not language switch between English and her first language (i.e., Bengali). She spoke English throughout the session and used English-based resources (e.g., Google, Dictionary.Com, etc.), which could be because she intended to help me avoid translation problems. To minimize the intervention, I also did not remind her to speak Bengali. Therefore, whether or not language-switching actually took place in Anika’s writing process was not observed in her think-aloud sessions. Anika became gradually accustomed to the English language, since she had been living in the United States longer than other L2 participants and had experienced formal schooling in English through her American high school years. In this regard, her reliance on Bengali was decreasing. She said in the interviews that language-switching might take place sometimes when she was writing. It occurred “*if that [came] naturally to [her],*” which referred to, for example, “*an easy sentence ... in everyday talking I can probably say it in English instantly. The words you don’t use everyday, I have to think about it and then try to find a word for it*” (Interview, 2/04/2016).

Anika received an A for the course grade, which she was very happy about and shared it with I after the semester ended. Michelle was not concerned about problems in Anika’s learning but provided a few comments during the semester. She suggested to her that she participate in her classes more often because Anika had been quiet in class. Michelle was impressed by Anika’s active role in representing her team in the Columbus

debate, which indicated her notable growth over the semester. The debate was also helpful to her as it helped her to review her arguments and integrate her peer's opinions on the Christopher Columbus research paper.

6.2.4 Case Four: Yenta from an Innovative FYW Course

As with Anika, for Yenta there were only two think-aloud sessions due to constraints imposed by her academic schedule. Yenta was writing the Dilsey paper when we met for the first think-aloud session in a study room at the main campus library. According to her understanding of the assignment, she had to analyze the article. It is important to note that when we started the session, Yenta specifically asked if she could speak in Mandarin Chinese. I then translated the script of the session; there may be discrepancies as a result of that language translation.

The first step Yenta took was to open the Dilsey article on the one side and a new word document on the other side of the computer screen (Figure 6.37). Yenta had read the article before the session; therefore, she started writing without reading the text again. When opening a new word document, she did not set up the format or plan an outline; instead, she did not hesitate when writing the first sentence "First, the weather which the author wrote about is seems different from the normal day. It is downed and bleak" (Writing Sample, 2/08/2016). It is also interesting to observe that Yenta spoke in Mandarin when writing in English. In other words, she was translating ideas from one language to another in her writing process. Below is an excerpt of her simultaneous translating and writing.

(Think-aloud protocol, 2/08/2016)

18:45 **Mandarin is in italic*; writing is underlined

Yenta: **I think he wants to say*

Writing: I think the author want to present

**want to set up a not very happy atmosphere*

Writing: a not very happy mode

**no one likes this kind of weather*

Writing: no one will like this kind of weather

**it is normal if it is this kind of weather, normally it is a kind of a depressing atmosphere*

Writing: normally it will be

**look up how to say 'ya yi' (depressing)*

(using a Chinese dictionary software (i.e. youdao dictionary) (Figure 6.38) to look up the 'ya yi')

ah, depress

Writing: depressed

**after talking about the weather, characters appear*

Writing: After describing the weather the author wrote about the Dilsey.

**Now the author said the main character Dilsey*

Writing: In authors writing, Dilsey

**Dilsey's wearing, Disley wears a very dark blue cloth*

Writing: wear dress and coat with deep color and the black straw hat

(The end of the excerpt)

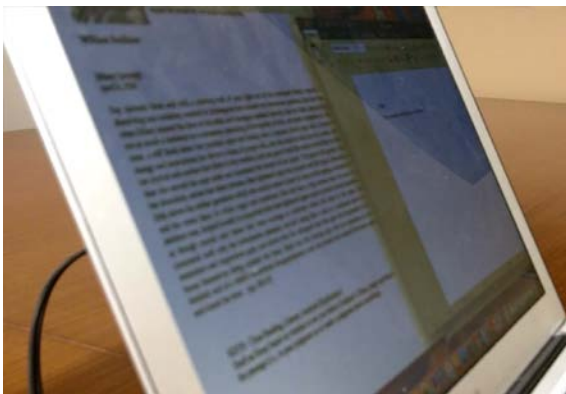


Figure 6. 37 Yenta's computer screen

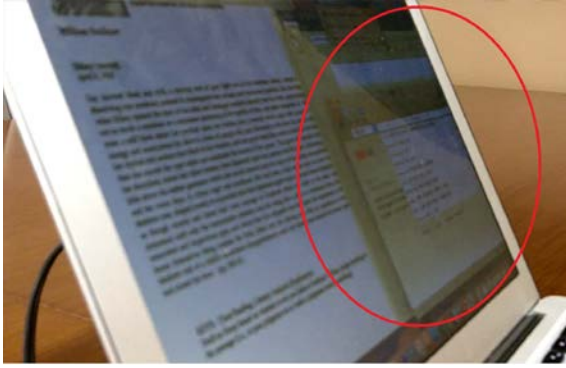


Figure 6. 38 Youdao Dictionary

Yenta translated her ideas from Mandarin Chinese to English while she analyzed the article along with her writing. There were no long pauses. Although she looked up words in the dictionary a few times during the session, she finished this paper within 30-40 minutes. She reported that she knew how to write the paper, but expressing her ideas was not as easy as just having thoughts about the text. The difficulty she experienced was because of her limited vocabulary; she could not translate from Chinese to English fully.

Like Naomi, Yenta used her first language to look up the words in the dictionary or on Google Translate. The meanings of the searched words were obtained via direct-translation, which can render an inappropriate or inequivalent expression. For example, she looked up “cù zǎ” (frustrate) in the dictionary, and the finding was “defeat,” which she wanted to use in the sentence “the difference between her present life and her past is huge and now she felt defeated” (Yenta’s Writing Sample, 2/08/2016). Another instance occurred when she wanted to use the word “shù zhào,” which means to establish or create the character’s appearance. Given the dictionary search result, Yenta used “mold” to structure the sentence “I believe the author want to mould [*sic*] a fastreated [*sic*] lady who do not have fate to walk out of the door” (Yenta’s Writing Sample, 2/08/2016).

When we recapped the protocol, Yenta shared that because she had studied on the Humanities track in high school, she had experiences writing this kind of analysis paper. Thus, she applied comparable strategies to write this paper. When discussing her previous writing experiences, she reported that she used a brief outline to plan the structure of a paper. Compared to that approach, writing this analysis paper (about Dilsey) involved describing the author's viewpoints, which was direct and descriptive. Another reason that she finished this paper so quickly was because she did not need to find a topic for the paper, a process which could take her a lot of time. Regarding language switching, she reported that "*I think in Chinese when I start writing, and then changed to English more*" (Think-aloud protocol, 2/08/2016). The switch occurred when she had not formed her ideas or was uncertain about what to write; she relied on her first language to plan and develop ideas. Once she started writing, she was thinking primarily in English.

The second think-aloud session was for Yenta's Christopher Columbus research paper. This was her second draft, and she changed her position that Columbus was not a hero. In light of changing her position, she was thinking about how to use her sources to support her new argument, since her sources mostly contained evidence that supported the idea that Columbus was a hero. Instead of rewriting the whole paper, she retained the introduction of her first draft but revised it. She did this by adding what she thought a hero should be like, and she used some sentences from the previous draft in this new introduction (Figure 6.39). Then, her new arguments (Figure 6.40) supported the statement that Columbus was perceived as a hero.

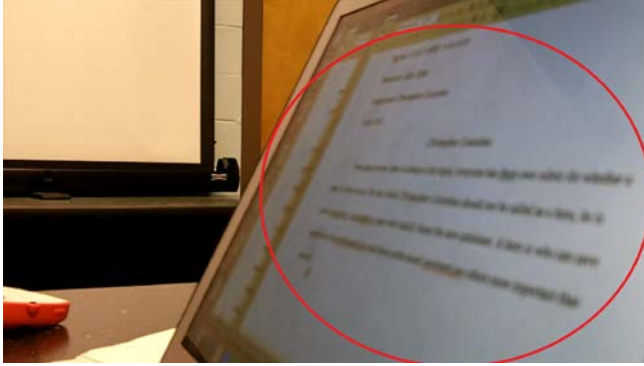


Figure 6. 39 Yenta's introduction

Christopher Columbus

From past to now, hero is always a hot topic, everyone has their own rubric for whether a man is a hero or not. For me, I think Christopher Columbus shouldn't be called as a hero, he is more a explorer, a navigator, a man who luckily found the new continent. A hero is who can save people from the predicament, he must have noble moral sentiment, and see others more important than himself. Christopher Columbus sounds like a villain for me, because although he found the North America and improve the development of the world, however, he did terrible things to the local people. His bad behavior and poor ethics shows the evil in his heart. This kind of person can not be called as a hero even if he made a great achievement.

Figure 6. 40 Yenta's new arguments in the introduction

Although Yenta wrote this draft as a new paper, she did not plan its organizational structure. After writing a new introduction, she reviewed her annotated bibliography and decided to change the order of her supporting arguments. She used the claims of Columbus as a hero as signposts in each paragraph, so that she could insert her new points (Figure 6.41). Yenta also used these sentences as topic sentences for the relevant paragraphs, which functioned to refute her claim that Columbus was a villain. To support her new arguments, she planned to add more examples (from her sources) and made a

note for herself (Figure 6.42). Similar to what she did during her first think-aloud session, Yenta used a dictionary (youdao.com) to look up words.

Christopher Columbus was known by people due to his act of setting sail and finally reached the new continent that was know as the North America. However, his achievement was by chance. First, his goal of setting sail is not exploring the world and finding a new continent. His original goal was to enter India and gathered the recourses and start colonialization.>>>例子 (Kids in school have long been taught that when Columbus set sail in 1492 to find a new route to the East Indies)Despite his luckiness, he even never set foot in North America, so that Columbus can not be praised by discovering the North America. During four separate trips that started with the one in 1492, Columbus landed on various Caribbean islands that are now the Bahamas as 英 as the island later called Hispaniola. He also explored the Central and South American

Figure 6. 41 Yenta's new points

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Figure 6. 42 Yenta's notes on adding examples

A point worth noting is that she used only electronic devices for writing. Like Anika and Naomi, she not only relied on online language tools, such as Google Translate, online dictionaries, and the Google search engine, but she also frequently switched

different screen pages. Besides the Word document in which she was writing the paper, Yenta kept her annotated bibliography, first draft of the Columbus paper, and the dictionary application open on her computer screen (Figure 6.43). The annotated bibliography and the first draft Word files became sources that Yenta was going to integrate in her writing. While she was writing, shifting between these screen pages seemed effortless and did not impede her writing process. She did not use the same pen and paper procedures that Naomi and Penny did in their writing process.

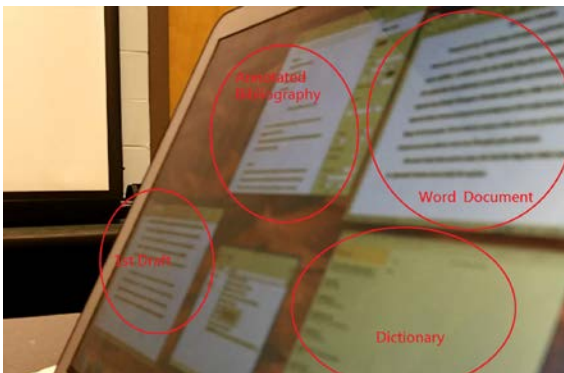


Figure 6. 43 Yenta's composing environment

In summary, relying on her past writing experiences in high school and the ESL writing courses, Yenta applied a comparable approach to her writing in FYW. For example, she wrote out her ideas without planning; she credited sources properly. Additionally, because she paid little attention to writing conventions, Michelle suggested that Yenta use the Writing Center services to get support for her writing. She then visited the Writing Center a few times to receive language help. Yenta reported in interviews that she did not check the grammar in her writing. When using language tools (e.g.,

dictionary), she paid attention to translated meanings of vocabulary instead of the contexts in which those words were typically used.

Additionally, I observed that unlike the other participants, Yenta rarely paused to review and revise sentences. Her writing process was rather linear. The whole paper was written in order: first the introduction, then the body paragraphs, and then the conclusion. However, she did later rearrange the organization of key points after she changed her arguments. She inserted new examples within her extant paragraphs and was able to put her thoughts into words. Naomi, Penny and Anika wrote multiples drafts and experienced difficulties in writing, at least for the opening paragraph. Writing the first sentence of an introduction could take them some time. By contrast, Yenta's writing process was smooth, including switching between different screen tabs. Yenta received a B+ as her final grade for the course, in part, because of her writing performance and a few absences.

6.2.5 Case Five: Yulia from an Innovative FYW Section

Yulia and Loni were close friends. Thus, they often worked together. In part because Yulia was two years older than Loni, Yulia acted as an older sister to Loni. When I scheduled a think-aloud session with Yulia, and because Loni was too timid to do it alone, they conducted the session together in a quiet room on campus. Thus, some findings for both of them are presented here, though Loni also her own section in this chapter (following this one). They sat next to each other with their own laptops (Figure 6.44). Like Yenta, Yulia and Loni particularly asked me if they could speak in Mandarin. Yulia and Loni conversed in their first language (i.e. Mandarin Chinese) during the session. In this session, they were writing the Common Sense paper. Yulia said, "*I think*

it's the most difficult assignment in FYW, comparing to the past assignments, because common sense, we all know what is common sense, but it is hard to find a specific topic in common sense" (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016). Loni thought this assignment was difficult too, *"because I don't know which topic I should choose to write. I have no idea about it"* (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016).

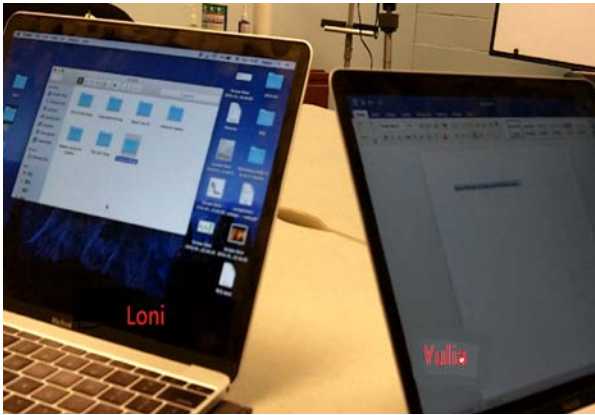


Figure 6. 44 Yulia's and Loni's computer screens

Before coming to the session, Yulia had asked her suitemate about how common sense was defined, so she searched the definition of common sense on the Google search engine. She then read the search result from Wikipedia (Figure 6.45) and continued to search for more information. On the other hand, Loni was reading the writing samples in the textbook that Michelle compiled a selection of students' writing from previous classes and tried to *"find how to write the paper"* (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016). Both started their writing by researching ideas but in different ways. Yulia relied on a web search; Loni read sample essays. Below is an excerpt about Yulia and Loni's discussion:

(Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016, continued)

5:10 **Mandarin is in italic*

Yulia: I have taken Geography XXXX. I remember one topic

**I remember one topic in class*

Advertisement caused impact on children, so I want to focus on this aspect. I wanna say advertisement can cause negative impact on children. I think this is kind of common sense. I am not sure. I am just going to write this topic.

Loni: Are you going to find some resources about it?

Yulia: I don't know whether we need to find resources about the topic. I think because the teacher said we just wrote our own opinion toward the (??). I am not sure. You can look at the book. (pointing to Loni's book)

Yulia: I don't think this is the real paper

Loni: this is the real paper

Yulia: really? I read the power of language. It is common sense. ... I think we don't need examples, just our opinions.

Loni: **What do you think I should write?*

Yulia: It's hard to decide.

Loni: I'm going to find resources about vitamin D
(searching on Google and read the Wikipedia page of vitamin D)

Yulia: I'm starting the first paragraph to introduce my topic.

(The end of the excerpt)

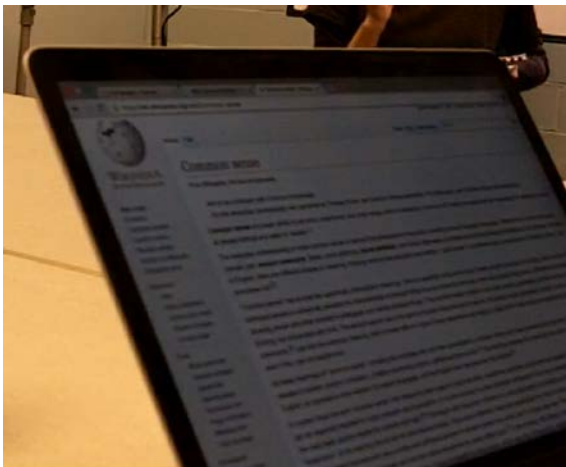


Figure 6. 45 Yulia searched on a Wikipedia page

Loni spent some time deciding what topic to choose. She accepted Yulia's suggestion to write about why people need vitamins and then searched more information. For example, she found and read an article about vitamin D deficiency. Yulia's topic was "Advertisements cause negative impact on children" and she had started writing while Loni was still gathering information about her topic.

Yulia did not plan the organization of the paper; instead, she wrote the introduction very quickly. She paused at the last sentence as she was thinking about how to conclude the introduction. After writing the introduction, she went to the FYW online course shell "*to add the example of common sense and get some ideas about how to continue my paper*" (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016). On the other hand, Loni was struggling with how to start writing. Both were confused about the assignment and what common sense meant. Yulia tried to help Loni in the following dialogue.

(Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016, continued)

15:00 *Mandarin is in italic

Yulia: *you don't know how to write?*

Loni: *I'm thinking how to write vitamin D* (Figure 6.46)

Yulia: *you see this article is an example* (Figure 6.46). *It keeps saying I and what*

Loni: *On Carmen there are examples?*

Yulia: *same things in that book. I didn't bring that book.*

Loni: *How do you think about Vitamin D?*

Yulia: *What did you write about it last semester?*

Loni: *I just wrote about vitamin D deficiency is a result of insufficient sunshine*

Yulia: *Is this common sense?*

Loni: *It should not be common sense*

Yulia: *but I don't think mine is common sense either*

Loni: *or I changed a topic again*

Yulia: (referring to the sample essay) *but I think that person's essay is not about common sense either*

Loni: *then what really is common sense?*

Yulia: *honest*

(The end of the excerpt)

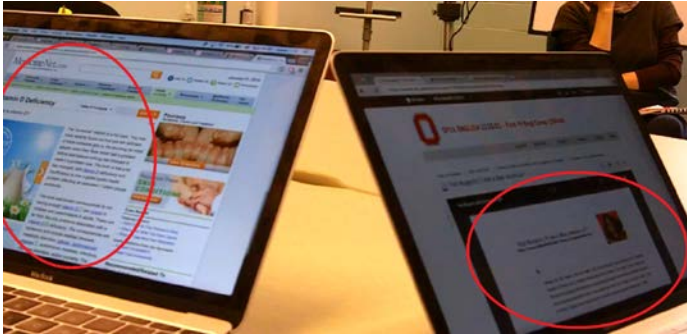


Figure 6.46 Web search (left) and the course shell (right)

Even though Yulia finished her first paragraph, which was approximately 100 words in length, she was not sure if her topic was appropriate in terms of how common sense is defined. She then continued to write her “body paragraph” and said, “*because my topic is advertisements cause negative impact on children, I have to write why, I say, the reasons why advertisements cause negative impact on children. I’m going to search some examples*” (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016). She used Google to search for information. Loni was still thinking about her topic and asked Yulia about what caused vitamin D deficiency as well as other related questions. Loni spent a lot of time on choosing a topic and brainstorming her ideas. She even seemed to rely on Yulia’s help and validation for her topic, as Yulia said, “*Nǐ jiù xiě zhè ge ba! (You can write it!)*.” Both continued discussing (in Mandarin) how to organize the paper, including whether they needed to

provide examples to support what counted as common sense. They referenced sample essays in the Michelle's textbook and decided to imitate those samples.

Yulia decided to address her topic of how "Advertisements cause negative impact on children" from two perspectives, and this approach served as initial planning for her. One was from an anti-violence perspective, and the other perspective was about how food advertisements result in children obesity. She was going to search for a McDonald's advertisement to use as an example. By using Google, Yulia found many results and needed to go through those findings. On the other hand, Loni was reading information about how to obtain vitamin D on Wikipedia. She asked Yulia how to start an opening paragraph. Below is an excerpt of their discussion on Loni's introduction paragraph:

(Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016, continued)

24:05 *Mandarin is in italic

Loni: *How to write?*

Yulia: *vitamin E. People should take vitamin E? just say*

Loni: *writing many people are sick*

Yulia: *just say not eating, yes, people all know, yes*

Loni: *just first to write many diseases are results of vitamin deficiency*

Yulia: *yes, yes, yes. You can*

Loni: *so people know*

Yulia: *yes, then give an example*

Loni: *what kind of disease? find them*

(The end of the excerpt)

What emerges here is that Loni received Yulia's "validation" and then intended to find examples of sickness that were a result of a vitamin deficiency. She was using Google, but then changed to Baidu (Figure 6.47), which is the most popular search

engine used in China (it is comparable to Google). When starting to write, Loni asked Yulia, “*wǒ shì bú shì yīng kāi xiān xiě xiàn zài rén dé hěn duō bìng (Should I first write many people are sick?)*.” Upon Yulia’s confirmation, Loni was ready to write.

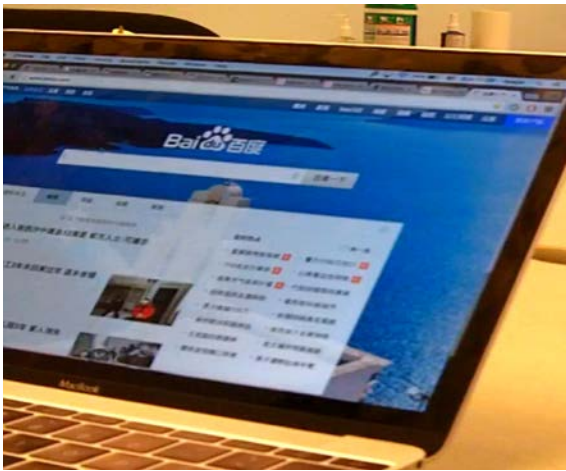


Figure 6. 47 Baidu search engine

Meanwhile, Yulia was still searching for examples through Google. Because the search results were not relevant to what she intended to use as supporting evidence in proving advertisements could negatively impact children, she changed her search terms to look for more examples. Loni suggested McDonald’s official website to Yulia. After finding a few sources that would provide supporting evidence, Yulia resumed writing the second paragraph. She not only inserted examples of McDonald’s advertisements in the paragraph (Figure 6.48), but she also planned to include statistics as other examples in a later paragraph.

Being the world's largest fast food restaurant, McDonald's changes its strategy of advertising and puts its focus on children. It pushes out new types of advertisements that if children buy its happy meals, they will be rewarded for a toy which attracts lots of children. According to Study: Fast-Food Ads Target kids with unhealthy Food, and It Works, McDonald's owns 13 different websites targeted at different age groups. Through social media, the ads of fast food are widely spread to teens. These ads exist in all kinds of website that is intended for children. Children

Figure 6. 48 Yulia incorporated the source

On the other hand, Loni seemed to have a difficult time writing, especially her introduction. She was silent for a few seconds, as she was thinking about how to write the introduction to include the fact that vitamin deficiencies were related to a specific illness or that people are sick due to their diet. Like other participants, Loni, to some degree, struggled in the beginning of her writing process. She switched the screen pages between the Word document and the source page (i.e., Wikipedia) a few times when starting to write the first sentence of the introduction. She spent some more time on understanding the particular illness as a result of vitamin deficiency, which also required looking up disease terminology in the dictionary.

Yulia and Loni spent quite some time on choosing their topics, searching for sources, and conversing about the papers, and yet neither of them created an outline. Forming ideas and the structure of their papers took place during their conversation. They progressed in their writing despite the fact that neither of them used notes nor outlines. They were engaged in multitasking, such as planning, writing, and searching sources simultaneously. For example, in writing the second paragraph, Yulia went on to look for

more examples. She then made decisions quickly on selecting an online article, paraphrasing the quote, and crediting the source in the references section. Paraphrasing seemed difficult, though. Yulia pondered which points from her source were best to support her argument in her paper. She highlighted and rewrote a passage (Figure 6.49).

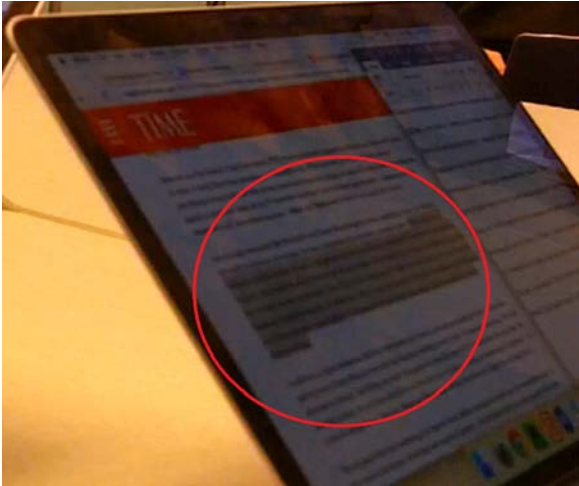


Figure 6. 49 Yulia highlighted a passage

To credit the source, Yulia used the APA Citation Style, not knowing the course requirement was to use the MLA format. Below is the excerpt about how she incorporated the source:

(Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016, continued)

43:45 (speaking in Mandarin)

Yulia: first to copy the address. I'm going to a website of using the APA Citation, which is Citation Machine (Figure 6.50). Because this is an online article, I need to enter its web address. Find the website and select it. And then enter into the final step. The article title, I need to enter the author's name, but I have the article title. It came out with the author's name, also year and date. Because the article was published six years ago, not too old yet, it's more credible, so I decided to use this one. I already made the citation. I am going to copy and paste. But, because I have not finished writing, I put it aside first. And then, I remember the format is double space (Figure 6.51).

(The end of the excerpt)

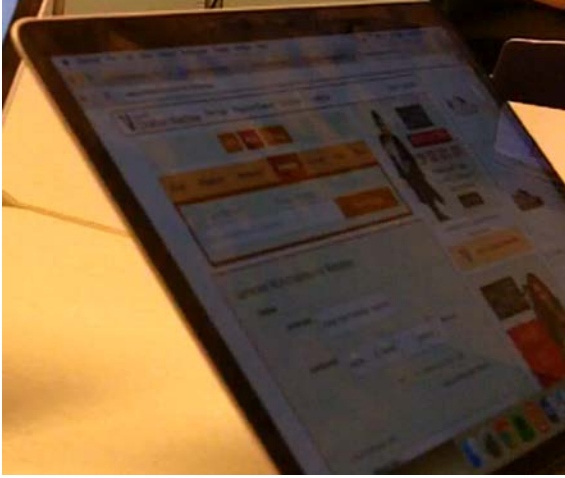


Figure 6. 50 Citation Machine.Net

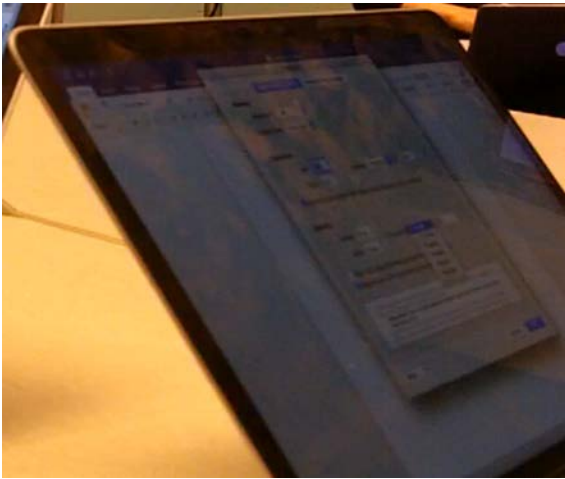


Figure 6. 51 Yulia reviewed the format of the citation

Yulia was uncertain whether she referenced the source correctly, particularly in terms of spacing and punctuation. Loni brought up the sample essays to show her the expected format. Yulia decided to access the ESL online course shell from a course she took the previous semester. She downloaded her final paper to review the format. After

cross-referencing the formats, she still questioned the correctness of the citation for the source that was retrieved from Citation Machine.Net. Then she realized she made an error, which involved her failing to choose a citation style. She re-tried the procedures by choosing the APA style first and then entering the source information. Yulia said that “*I didn’t learn referencing in the ESL class well enough. I don’t know if it is correct, but I think it’s correct*” (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016).

After putting a lot of effort into crediting the source, Yulia resumed writing the next paragraph. As reviewing her first two paragraphs, she thought her essay had become sidetracked from her argument. The focus had shifted to a discussion on marketing rather than advertisements. In light of that, she decided to find another “*resource*” (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016), and her topic was derived from her Geography class from the previous semester, she tried to access that online course shell in order to retrieve materials to support her ideas in this paper. Unfortunately, the course shell had expired. She then chose to search on Google.

Yulia looked into articles about video games, which became the main idea of the third paragraph (Figure 6.52). The source (advertisement) she selected was not directly about children; Yulia was thinking about how to incorporate it into her argument—the negative impact on children from advertisements. Another instance of incorporating sources was when she found an article that presented an opposing argument to her position. Loni suggested using it as a counterexample, but Yulia passed on this idea and went on to select another article that she then incorporated into the paragraph. At the end, she decided to just use two examples. After writing two body paragraphs in support of her topic, she read the paper and revised the introduction by adding a sentence about

marketing aimed at children. It functioned as contextual information for Yulia's key point about the impact of advertisements on children that strengthened the two incorporated examples in later paragraphs.

Not only in the aspect of food advertising, the advertisements of video games also express wrong values to children. In today's video games' market, more and more themes are becoming wars and battles. These games including violent factors advertise during prime time in a children's show or website that make children more familiar with the games. According to *Can violent video games make kids more aggressive*, researchers find that if children are exposed to brutality, the likelihood of aggressive behavior will be increased both in a short- and long-term. That is to say, if the children are attracted by the ads of games, they will also play the game and become more aggressive. ↵

Figure 6. 52 Yulia's third paragraph

Loni followed the same steps that Yulia did; she also incorporated sources in the paper, including also using her own experience as an example. As she was finishing her introduction, she planned to discuss a specific illness that occurs as a result of vitamin deficiency; she wrote about Nyctalopia and described her own experiences with it (Figure 6.53). During the session, both also discussed each other's writing and provided advice during this think-aloud session.

Nyctalopia, also called night blindness, is the condition making it uncomfortable when people be in the dark or in low light. Actually, I am the person who suffer from night blindness. Some years ago, I was diagnosed as suffering from night blindness because I was a completely picky-eater. However, I still rejected to change my habits of eating so my doctor suggested me to take some supplements of vitamin A daily to supply my unhealthy dietary. After taking supplements everyday for some years, it has a very obvious improvement on my eyesight at night. Many people today choose the same ways as me to take supplements to keep healthy rather than change their habits.

Figure 6. 53 Loni's second paragraph

Loni asked Yulia questions frequently, and Yulia seemed to play a leading role in guiding Loni in her writing. Loni asked whether or not she needed to credit the example if it was about her mother's experience, and Yulia responded she did not know. Loni asked for Yulia's approval of the organization of her paper, while she planned discussing potential disorders that result from vitamin deficiencies and adding suggestions in the following paragraph. Yulia agreed with Loni's approach to structuring her paper; she said, "*That's the right way to do it*" (Think-aloud protocols, 1/31/2016). Questions they asked each other were also about language, such as how to say "picky eater" and "news report" in English. Yulia suggested using "from" after the word "suffer".

Loni seemed to have difficulty writing the second paragraph; she was baffled about how to integrate Nyctalopia as an example. She paused and re-read sentences, and likewise she was worried the paragraph was too short. Therefore, she searched for more information on Baidu (Figure 6.54) to understand what other disorders occurred as a result of vitamin deficiency. She also used Baidu to enhance her comprehension of medical terminology (e.g. Scurvy). Yulia responded to Loni that "*it is really hard!*"

(Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016). Loni spent a lot of time on writing the second paragraph, including finding sources on Baidu, Wikipedia, and Google, and re-writing. Similar to Yulia, Loni found she was straying from the topic. The structure of her paper became disorganized after she discussed her experience having a disorder as a picky eater. The transition from the second paragraph to the next one was not smooth. She was also confused about the rationale of providing examples in relation to common sense. At these moments, Yulia advised her, for example, “*using the examples to approve what common sense is*” and “*you should say after taking vitamins, you became healthy*” (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016).



Figure 6. 54 Baidu search results

As is mentioned above, an outline or a plan was absent in Yulia’s and Loni’s writing processes. They were planning their papers while they were writing them, which included trying to understand sources and think about how to use them effectively. For example, Yulia re-read the McDonald’s article from *Time* magazine. Loni switched

frequently between Wikipedia and the Word document. Structuring the paper was happening through the progress of writing. Instead of outlining the whole paper, Yulia and Loni planned each paragraph individually. Revising took place during the writing process as well. Yulia revised her introduction a few times since she found it was too general to coherently connect other paragraphs. They also looked up words in a dictionary, which was similar to the Chinese-English dictionary software that Yenta used (Figure 6.55). Yulia reported that she usually formed ideas and structure in Chinese and then translated, which was easier than if she used English throughout the process.

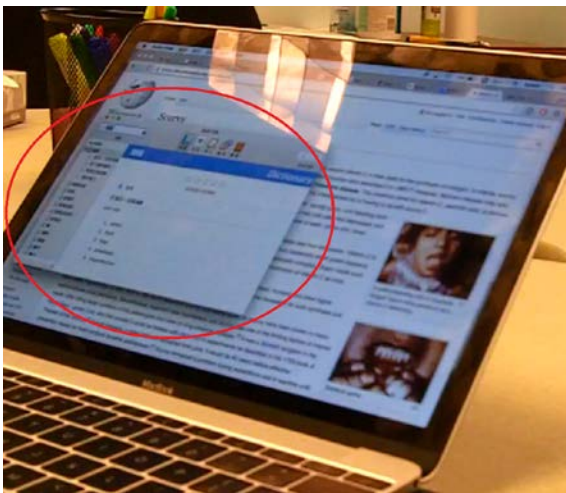


Figure 6. 55 The Chinese-English Dictionary

Both Yulia and Loni said this assignment was challenging, compared to previous assignments. Yulia reported that she had to “*narrow down to a topic sentence, to find resources to support my ideas*” (Think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016). They first tried to understand what “common sense” meant and choose a topic. Once they chose a topic, they started to generate ideas. They read sample essays and searched for information.

Their difficulties included where to find good sources and how to incorporate examples into their papers. Writing became easier for Yulia after she gathered sources. She also reflected that while writing, she “*typed down what [she] wanted to express*” (think-aloud protocol, 1/31/2016). Then she revised and added new sources. On the other hand, Loni seemed to be less confident in writing, so she consulted Yulia during the session.

The second think-aloud session was canceled because of inclement weather. Instead, Yulia recorded the session in her dormitory room. She was working on the Christopher Columbus paper. In fact, she had already finished the first draft, but when doing this think-aloud session, she decided to rewrite the paper. She selected an MLA template in Microsoft Word to create a new document (Figure 6.56). Her position for this paper was to argue that Christopher Columbus was a villain. She planned the opening to address the idea that Columbus was generally considered to be a hero and then transition to her position later in the paragraph. Yulia seemed content about this organizational plan.

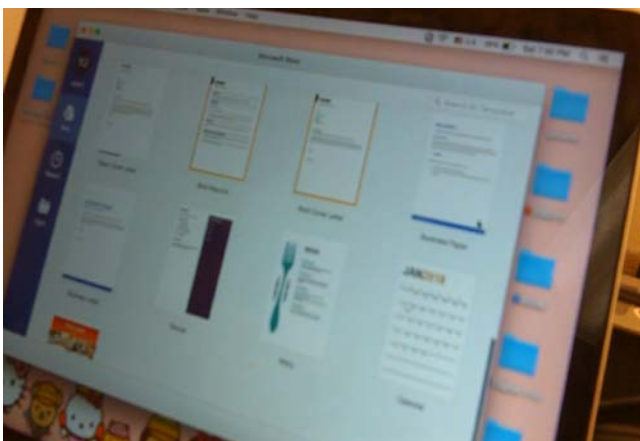


Figure 6. 56 Yulia was choosing a MLA Template

However, as in her previous think-aloud session, an outline or other planning tools were absent. Rather, she planned the paper in her mind. She spoke out loud about how she would structure the paper by focusing on three main points. She addressed his historical contribution that people respected him for because he found a new land. Then, a national holiday was named for him, Columbus Day. The third fact was the existence of a nursery rhyme that praises Columbus' triumph (Figure 6.57). After stating these facts, Yulia posed her thesis statement that argued Columbus was a villain.

Christopher Columbus: Not a Real Hero

In history books, Christopher Columbus is always considered as a brave navigator who discovered new land from his voyages. His achievements were recognized by the government officially. Therefore, in the United States, governors set up Columbus Day to remember the Italian explorer and to celebrate his discovery. Furthermore, children in kindergartens are taught to sing "Oh, Columbus; Oh Columbus; Sailed the ocean wide and blue. He landed in America in fourteen ninety-two." People respect Columbus and regard him as a hero. However, there are different voices which indicate that Columbus is a villain. By analyzing Columbus's purpose and historical problems brought by him, he is absolutely not a great hero as people thought of before. Indeed, Columbus is an evildoer despite the contribution he made to human's history.

Figure 6. 57 Yulia included a nursery song in the paper

While writing the first sentence, she stopped and searched Christopher Columbus on Wikipedia (Figure 6.58). She said "*I don't know much about the history of Columbus*" (Think-aloud protocol, 4/02/2016). She planned not to cite any sources in the introduction but researched relevant facts about Columbus to be included in the introduction. In writing the introduction, decision-making occurred. First of all, she added a sentence about Columbus' influence in front of the thesis statement, but deleted it because "*I think*

the introduction is to summarize his sins” (Think-aloud protocol, 4/02/2016). Secondly, she looked up the term “indigenous people” in the dictionary to state the fact that Columbus abused those people. He was also greedy and traded slaves. Yulia removed those sentences in her final draft in this think-aloud protocol. She intended the introduction to be brief; she wanted to keep it at fewer than 100 words.

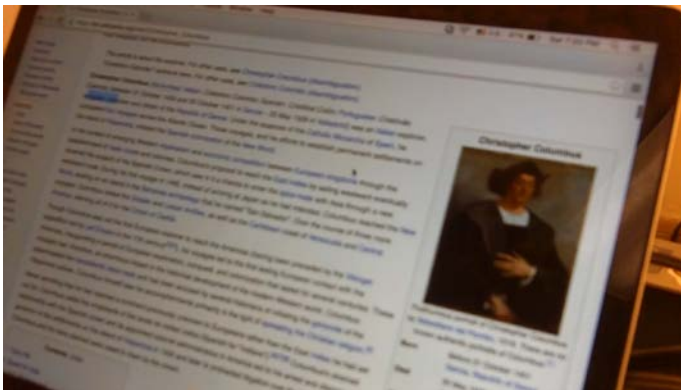


Figure 6. 58 A Wikipedia page

She then incorporated information from sources that indicated Columbus was a villain in the following paragraph. These procedures, as Yulia said, were from her learning in the ESL Composition class. In particular, she used the phrase “according to” to reference a source. However, she noted that that formula might be appropriate for citing sources in APA; she was uncertain about the MLA Style. Yet she still started sentences with “according to” to integrate sources as she had done in the past. With respect to the selected sources, Yulia reported, *“When I was researching, I already fetched the statement, the key points of the articles. I also concluded the ideas of each article. So, it’s easy now when I need to incorporate them in writing”* (Think-aloud protocol, 4/02/2016). She copied and pasted her summary and direct quote from the

Annotated Bibliography into the paper and then added explanations. Instead of revising this paragraph, she then started writing the next paragraph. She planned to complete a general organizational plan for the paper before doing any revisions.

The following paragraph, as she called it, was a transition, because “*it is not good if the whole paper all discusses he is a villain*” (Think-aloud protocol, 4/02/2016); thus, she was going to include one of her sources stating that Columbus is a hero because of his courage and dreams (Figure 6.59). She then planned counterexamples to argue that his contributions were not greater than his malevolent deeds. Upon finishing this paragraph, Yulia reported the organization of the paper, which was composed of five paragraphs. Besides an introduction and a conclusion, two body paragraphs argued that Columbus was a villain, and one paragraph was in favor of the proposition that Columbus was a good person. And yet, she was planning to add a statement that Columbus was a villain in the end of the proponent paragraph to support her claim.

3. Hager, Anthony H. "Blog: Christopher Columbus: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly." *Blog: Christopher Columbus: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. 11 Oct. 2010. Web. 21 Feb. 2016. <http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2010/10/christopher_columbus_the_good.html>.

Statement (A and B position):

“Columbus was an excellent navigator, a courageous explorer and an able captain. He discovered a land unknown in his world and returned home across a trackless ocean. Christopher Columbus' accomplishments were remarkable considering the obstacles he faced.” However, there's the other portrayal of Columbus, that of the murderous,

Figure 6. 59 Yulia’s sources

In summary, Yulia's writing process resembled other L2 participants' process in some ways. For example, she used L1-L2 translation. She, as well as Penny, was seemingly already accustomed to searching for sources via English-based platforms, such as Google and Wikipedia. With the exception of using a Chinese-English dictionary, I did not observe her using Baidu or other Chinese tools during those two think-aloud protocols. Her writing fluency displayed in the protocols affirmed her final grade in the course, an A. Michelle complimented Yulia's performance with respect to her active role in group activities, projects, and writing. Regardless of her dependency on translation in her writing process, Yulia demonstrated her ability to apply various strategies to solve problems. She retrieved materials through the course management systems to review the citation format, she used the "formula" that she learned in the ESL Composition course to structure her FYW papers, and she selected a topic that was discussed in her other courses. In addition, she visited the Writing Center a few times. Yulia, who was proactive in her learning, all-in-all possessed and used excellent problem-solving skills to complete her writing tasks.

6.2.6 Case Six: Loni from an Innovative FYW Section

Loni conducted the first think-aloud session with Yulia, and so much has already been written about her writing process. As for the second session, she recorded it in her dormitory room due to the unexpected inclement weather on the scheduled day. Loni was feeling under the weather because of the stomach flu. In this regard, the recorded session was rather short, approximately five minutes about writing her second draft of the Christopher Columbus paper. She pulled out the draft that was marked with many tracked changes and comments, which were mainly comments about errors of grammar and

structure (Figure 6.60). It was unclear who provided that feedback. Loni focused on revising her latest draft according to those tracked changes, and then, she read through the paper as a way to review whether the flow of ideas and organization was coherent.

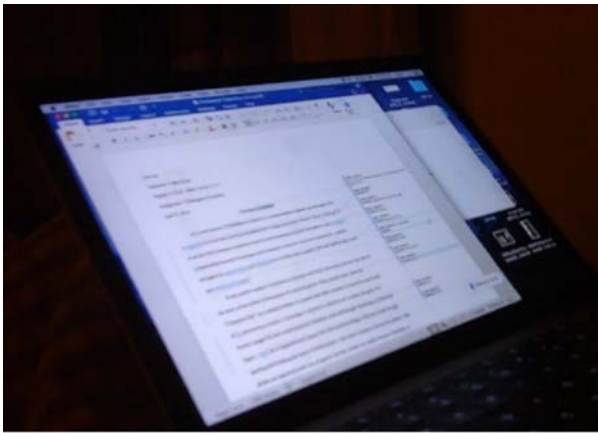


Figure 6. 60 Loni's comment tracking

I understood Loni's writing process by referencing her first think-aloud session and interviews. She seemed to struggle with her writing in regard to organizing her ideas and choosing a topic. This kind of difficulty, according to her, was, in part, because the teacher's expectations or assignment instructions were not clear. For example, as for the Common Sense paper, "*I don't understand what she (the teacher) wanted me to write the meaning of common sense ... I don't understand her requirements,*" Loni said (Interview, 2/11/2016). After the first think-aloud session, she was going to revise the short paragraphs by, perhaps, incorporating more examples, and visited the Writing Center to get feedback on correcting her grammar.

She sometimes had to simplify her sentence structures, which referred to the situations wherein she could not express her ideas in writing. Also, to avoid grammatical

errors, she intentionally refrained from writing complex sentences. Like other L2 participants, Loni was dependent on various resources to support her writing, from language translation tools and peer feedback to the Writing Center services. She relied on sources from English websites (e.g., Wikipedia, Google) when it a difficult topic to find information in Chinese. All in all, with respect to how Loni usually composed an English paper, she reported she used Chinese to form her ideas. Loni received an A- for the course. Although she tried to discuss the grade with Michelle, she was unsuccessful in having it upgraded to the A which she yearned for.

6.2.7 Case Seven: Sono from an Innovative FYW Section

As noted earlier, I was not able to schedule think-aloud sessions with Sono. However, some information about Sono's writing process was gleaned from other data sources, mainly from the interviews, which are presented here. When writing the Christopher Columbus research paper, "*I don't know whether I could write six pages because not many points about the topic I can write about,*" said Sono (Interview, 3/02/2016). Sono also reported that writing a response to literature (i.e., "Dilsey" assignment) was very difficult, not only because of the level of language complexity but also because of the cultural and rhetorical knowledge related to the texts. For him, "*expressing personal opinions is not hard, better than the one you need to refer to what the author said in the article. To reflect the character's personalities is more difficult. Talking about personal opinions is still easier*" (Interview, 2/11/2016). Besides those frustrations, he shared in his journal that peer-review improved his thinking mode. It helped him with the flow of ideas and content. He stated, "*We read each other's paper, giving feedback on how to write, what you can improve, how the flow of ideas should be*

like. If you take their feedback, you could have different thoughts of writing” (Sono’s Journal 3). Sono also asked for his friends’ help, as *“if there is a mistake, they will tell me why it is not appropriate and what you can improve”* (Interview, 1/18/2016).

6.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has shown that there was considerable variation among the participants in how they approached the FYW course assignments, at least with respect to what their think-alouds revealed. This variation included how they understood the assigned writing tasks, and, in their writing process, how they handled vocabulary-related matters and consulted sources that provide vocabulary knowledge. There was also variation in terms of their use of their L1 and L2 and how they planned and drafted their papers, in addition to the use of various resources. What the chapter appears to show, on the whole, is that, while the L2 writers may have shared certain characteristics in light of their L2 backgrounds, individual factors were also very much in play as they composed their papers. As such, it is difficult to comment on them definitively as a group. Their individual accounts carry far more weight.

This variability issue is an important one because there is a tendency in L2 writing research to rely on the notion of “L2 writers” as if they are a unified group. However, as Ann Raimes (1991, p. 420), one of the pioneers in L2 writing research, observed as the L2 writing field was establishing an identity as a scholarly domain in its own right, “There is no such thing as a generalized ESL student.” The findings presented in this chapter support that statement. For example, the participants from Honduras and Bangladesh could not be expected to have the same writing-related characteristics or needs as the Chinese participants. Likewise, while the Chinese participants shared the

same native language and L1 educational background, they had different personalities and wide-ranging views as well as needs as L2 writers. They were not identical in how they responded to the FYW course, as this study has shown.

Part of the value of the think-aloud protocols, then, is how they revealed the individual stories of composing that played out during the current study. This is important not only for L2 writing research, but also for those involved in courses like FYW, where there might be a tendency to treat L2 writers strictly as a group during the course design process. This chapter shows that they need to be treated as individual writers, just like their L1 counterparts. Meanwhile, the variation displayed in the participants' writing processes demonstrates the value of examining such processes and helps validate the use of think-alouds as a research tool, as some researchers question their value. This research method reveals the nuances of each individual's writing behavior, and that is the kind of information both L1 and L2 writing researchers need, especially when evaluating and designing ESL writing courses and FYW.

Chapter 7: Participants' Responses to FYW: Their Attitudes and What They Learned

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 showed how the participants approached the kinds of writing tasks they encountered in the FYW course. Learning about their actual engagement with FYW, especially as L2 writers, was a key focus of the current study. However, because FYW is what is thought of as a 'mainstream' writing course aimed at all first year undergraduates at University X, another important focus of this study was how the participants responded to, and what they felt they learned from, that instructional environment, especially in contrast to what might be seen as the more 'protective' environment of the ESL writing courses. The ESL writing courses are offered only to L2 writers and are designed specifically with their needs and characteristics in mind. Furthermore, they are taught by individuals trained to teach L2 writers. Thus, those courses can provide a kind of comfort zone for L2 writers, whereas they usually represent a small minority of the student population in the FYW course sections. In addition, FYW course content is aimed at the broader student population in those sections. As such, it is important to know how L2 writers respond to this instructional setting, especially if they have already experienced ESL writing courses. That is what this chapter is about.

An important introductory note is that this chapter shifts the focus to different data sources from the think-aloud protocols used in Chapter 6: mainly interviews and

journal entries. Given the nature of these data sources, the chapter relies heavily on direct quotes from the participants, and here the language used is an important factor. Naomi and Anika used English throughout their participation in the study. On the other hand, I reminded the Chinese participants that they could use Mandarin in interviews or when writing journals if they felt more comfortable expressing themselves in that way, since I shared their native language and would understand what they said or wrote. I then translated those interviews and journal entries. While striving for accuracy in the translations, slight differences in connotation could not be avoided due to differences between Chinese and English.

An important note about my decision-making with respect to allowing the Chinese participants to use their first language in interviews and/or journals is that I understood how this could render inequity in the research design, since the other two participants (Naomi and Anika) could not use their first language in those research instruments. The rationale underlying this decision was not only simply because I shared the same native language (i.e. Mandarin) as those Chinese participants. From a research perspective, it was rather a decision I as a (ethnographic) researcher arrived at from my extensive interactions with the participants and the knowledge of them that I gained. It also had to do with establishing trusting relationships with my participants, as it was important for them to share their inner feelings regarding writing and FYW with me.

After the first interviews with Naomi and Anika, I was strongly aware that they possessed high speaking fluency in English. Anika had lived in the United States longer than the other participants of this current study, and her fluency was nearly like a native English speaker, from my point of view. As for Naomi, it was quite evident that she had a

high degree of confidence in her spoken English, and in fact also seemed almost native-like in her use of the language. Although each of them might have preferred speaking in their first language (i.e., Spanish and Bengali) to me in interviews, which could be difficult for me to translate, it was clear that this was unnecessary in their cases. Also, I remaindered them to write their journals in their first language if they so desired. Neither of them did so. Thus, I felt confident that their reliance only on English during the study did not in any way compromise the integrity of the study.

On the other hand, when I talked to the Chinese participants (except Penny) in English, especially in our first few interviews, I noticed their responses were rather short; they seemed to be constrained by their L2 language proficiency, which limited their ability to discuss their learning in FYW as well as inner feelings. In addition, I sometimes could not understand them during the interviews. Additionally, their journal entries in English were usually shorter than those of Naomi and Anika. Some of those entries disclosed little information about their weekly learning in FYW. The Chinese participants also seemed to be more nervous when speaking in English. Therefore, in order to establish rapport with them and collect their true reflections on their experiences in FYW, I decided to employ Mandarin Chinese to conduct interviews with every Chinese participant. This was necessary in order to obtain the kinds of data I needed.

I was aware that this arrangement could alter the original research design, and perhaps generated a sense of “unfairness” to Naomi and Anika. However, I believed strongly that this decision aligned with the characteristics of a qualitative researcher; that is, I embraced the nuances of human behaviors (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Then, too, although the later interviews with the Chinese participants were conducted in Mandarin

Chinese, Penny continued to write her journals in English. Her choice of language distinguished her from the other Chinese participants, who still preferred and were more comfortable using their L1 rather than English, and who had far less experience with English than Naomi and Anika. All things considered, then, I was confident that my approach was appropriate from a research perspective.

7.2 Participants' Responses to FYW

In the sections that follow, the chapter explores the participants' reactions to FYW from different vantage points.

7.2.1 Participants' Reflections on Writing for the FYW Course

This section overlaps in some ways with the focus in Chapter 6, that is, on how the students approached their writing tasks in FYW. However, where Chapter 6 took a close look at the writing processes they employed, this section focuses more broadly on what stood out for them as they encountered the assignments they were required to complete. This involved looking across the seven cases. While doing so, two broad areas stood out. The first had to do, in a variety of ways, with the role that language played for the participants. This is one of the ways in which they stood separate from their native English speaking FYW peers. As will be shown shortly (section 7.2.1.1), the participants experienced a complex interplay between language use and important components of the course. The second major area was their responses to the use of teacher feedback in the course (discussed in section 7.2.1.2).

7.2.1.1 Planning, Source Use, and Language

One of the topics that stood out while analyzing the participants' journal and interview data was what they said regarding *planning* for their writing. Naomi captured

overall group responses well when she said, “*I realized that it was best to outline the papers*” (Interview, 5/04/2016). Then the writing process became easier for her, which was the case when she wrote the ARP. Outlining the paper helped her organize her ideas after she already gathered sources and notes. Yulia brought this out in a different way while explaining that she had been using outlines since she wrote her ESL and History of Art papers. “*The first step I think is writing what I want, and then plan the organization, like what I’m going to write in the first and second paragraphs. Planning carefully before starting to write,*” Yulia said (Interview, 4/28/2016). Here, she, like some other participants, drew from an already existing schema for planning. Sono used to write directly without planning. However, that situation changed in FYW. Feedback and outlines or spending more time on planning established a system for his writing process (Interview, 3/02/2016). For example, for his Common Sense paper, before actually writing, he created a list of his standpoints and found sources that supported them.

What was particularly interesting about the planning aspect of the FYW course for these participants was its relationship to language-related issues. At the planning stage, writers need to retrieve their knowledge of topics. L2 students sometimes need an additional procedure to gain knowledge of topics: language translation. This was seen, for example, among Michelle’s Chinese L2 participants, who found that *Dilsey*, an excerpted text from William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, was extremely difficult, in part because it was literary writing and thus included complex cultural content and language use. For example, “*I think writing Dilsey is hard, even though the content has a lot of descriptions,*” Yenta said (Interview, 2/19/2016). This required moving beyond English to make full sense of the text. Loni made a similar point while noting that when a topic or

literary text was culturally encoded, she spent a significant amount of time on searching for Chinese versions or translations and looking up words in the dictionary. In order to write a response to that text, some participants searched for a Chinese translated version of the text to aid in their comprehension and then their planning. However, this response was not universal among them. Sono, for instance, searched for English sources to help him understand the readings (e.g., Dilsey and American Scholars). *“It is hard to read in Chinese, because the translated version is difficult to understand. The Chinese version is not better than the English version,”* Sono said (Interview, 3/02/2016). However, whether they consulted Chinese or English sources, it was common for the participants to seek out some kind of text-related assistance that would not have been necessary for the domestic students in the course. Without such assistance, planning for their writing would be more difficult for many of them. Thus, this was a dimension of the FYW course that helped mark their participation in it as L2 writers.

This reliance on such resources, while an aid to comprehension and planning, also added a component to the composing process in the context of the participants having to shift between languages and engage in translation, which was often not easy for them. *Code-switching* or L1 language transfer occurred in all of the L2 participants’ writing. That is, they reported that they accessed their first language (L1) when they encountered difficulties in finding the appropriate word in English to express what they meant to say. As one example, *“It’s like about something you don’t talk about it very often. The words you don’t use every day. I have to think about it and then try to find a word for it. Do dictionary, translate it,”* Anika said (Interview, 2/04/2016). The L2 writers’ first language was a resource they used to fill language gaps. A telling illustration of what this

meant for them is captured in Naomi's comments about a circumstance in which she needed cross-language translation:

Even when I write in Spanish, I take a long time doing it, because there are just too many ideas running through my mind that I don't even know where to start. That doesn't mean that writing in English is equally hard as writing in Spanish. Since my first language is Spanish, when I am writing in English, I find myself thinking some phrases in Spanish and having to use Google Translate to copy and paste it in my paper (Naomi's Journal 2).

Knowledge of topics also affected the L2 students' language use in the FYW course. A revealing example of this came from Penny, who described a different kind of translating circumstance. As a general practice, she used her L1 "when what I am writing connects to Chinese knowledge" (Interview, 2/19/2016). However, when she discussed religion as the topic of her ARP, she lacked knowledge of this topic in her first language. "*In the past we didn't have this kind of experience, I write this in English. When I think, for me, it's about English topics. So I think in English about this kind of topic,*" Penny said (Interview, 2/29/2016). However, the English in her thoughts then had to be converted to appropriate written form, which involved, in a sense, translation of her own English. Similar to that, Anika reported that "*if that (topic) comes naturally to me, I would probably write it (in English). If it does not, I have to think about it. I probably have to translate it a little bit*" (Interview, 2/04/2016).

Writing in another language is challenging. For instance, Yenta expressed her frustration about writing in English compared to writing in her first language: "*When I am writing Chinese essays, the same topic I can make up many plans to write that idea. Because there are many plans to write, I can choose among those ideas to write. But writing an English paper, I may only have one sentence to talk about or express an idea.*

I can't have many plans," Yenta said (Interview, 4/16/2016). This situation affected her composing process. In fact, she explained that when writing a paper in English, she was more concerned about fulfilling the required length of the paper rather than the quality of her ideas. By contrast, when writing in Chinese, she was better able to elaborate on her ideas. Thus, for her and for other participants, completion of the FYW writing tasks entailed various levels of complexity that included language-related issues.

Another critical part of the participants' FYW experiences involved the research process, that is, locating information to be used in their essays. Here, too, language played a role. They, as well as their American peers, were assimilating into the culture of research in an American university. However, it is important to note that, unlike many domestic students, some of the participants had never written a research paper or a comparable source-based paper before studying at an American university. By contrast, writing research papers and doing research for them was a common experience for the domestic students in their American high school education. During the research process, the participants reported that finding and selecting sources was the most time-consuming and difficult aspect of completing the FYW assignments. Michelle's Chinese participants reported that "researching" was more challenging than composing the paper. Yulia, for example, said that finding appropriate sources and integrating them into her writing was most difficult, especially obtaining good sources. *"The teacher just said finding good sources. It's very difficult. I don't know what counts good sources. I just found some sources with .edu. They may not be appropriate for my topic, though,"* Yulia said (Interview, 3/03/2016). This was not an activity she and the other Chinese participants had experienced in China, and there had been very little of such a practice in their ESL

writing class or classes. To conquer this problem, they had to consider issues related to using suitable search procedures and the language-orientation of search sites they consulted, as is discussed next.

In addition to having to grasp the importance, conceptually, of source text use in writing academic essays in English, the Chinese participants found that the process was also challenging because of their unfamiliarity with research procedures, including using American databases, catalogs and search tools, defining what counts as an appropriate source, and incorporating those sources into their writing. To counter this challenge, they relied on Chinese platforms (e.g., Baidu). Baidu is similar to Google in that it embeds various applications, such as translation, maps, and media. Chinese resources like Baidu were easy for the participants to use. However, the material available on sites like Baidu might not be appropriate for writing a research paper, because those sources most of the time were not scholarly and credible for academic English papers. The use of sites that would contain suitable sources could also be problematic.

The ESL writing course could have been useful in this respect, in that it included a focus on source text use, but the participants felt that the ESL writing class was less demanding than FYW in this regard and so was not particularly beneficial. Sono, for example, reported that writing the research paper in the ESL course was much easier. He chose one article from the textbook and then searched for other sources to write a 2-3 page paper. By contrast, he was worried about finding appropriate sources and fulfilling the minimum six page requirement for the Columbus paper in his FYW class. In addition to the difficulty in searching for suitable sources, the Chinese participants in Michelle's class indicated that reading sources was time consuming. And when those sources were

long and in English, as could easily occur in FYW, they became impatient. For example, although Loni's ESL writing course teacher had introduced Google Scholar to the class, she "*felt impatient and slowed down*" (Interview, 3/30/2016) after reading through quite a number of potential sources. Thus, the temptation to utilize Chinese-based search sites and materials was ever-present for them, even though this could create other challenges later when attempting to transfer (and translate) material from those sites to their writing in English for the FYW course.

7.2.1.2 Feedback

In addition to the use of the L1 as a crucial resource supporting the L2 participants' writing in FYW, the role of feedback in that course also stood out in looking across the cases and seeing how they responded to the course. Here it is important to understand that feedback on writing was not something the participants had experienced prior to coming to the United States. For most of them, their first exposure to it was in written feedback they received on some assignments in an ESL writing course as well as a small number of one-to-one conferences with their ESL writing instructor. The net result was that they were still novices when it came to understanding the role of feedback in writing and knowing how to use it effectively.

In FYW, the participants received feedback in various forms, including written and oral feedback from instructors and peers. Written feedback could occur in the form of comments written directly on papers, or in online exchanges, such as email. For example, Lisa asked Naomi to "pay close attention to pronoun usage and who is using what pronoun within the clip (Is Caitlyn being called Bruce? He/She? When?). Try to analyze physical aspects of the clip, and then broaden those details into a larger, thematic analysis

in relation to gender stereotypes, etc.” (Lisa’s Email, 2/02/2016). The feedback (Figure 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3) was helpful and specific, as it directed Naomi to improve the analysis and clarity. Naomi said, “*I try to have that (feedback) in the back of my mind when I’m writing ... trying to think about what are my main points and then just supporting*” (Interview, 3/15/2016).

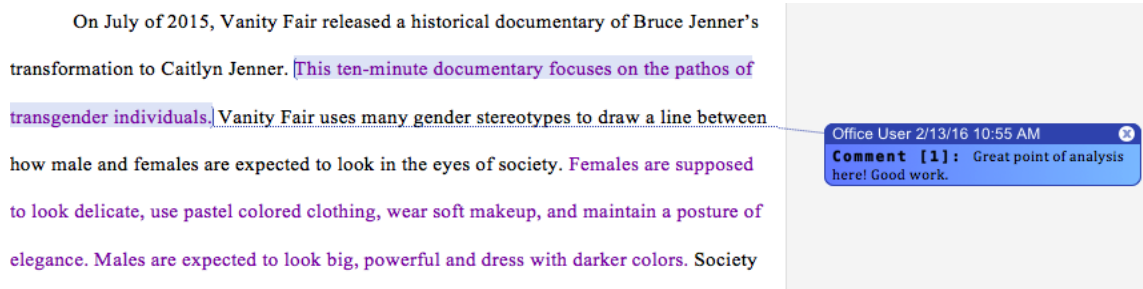


Figure 7. 1 Lisa’s PSA Comment I

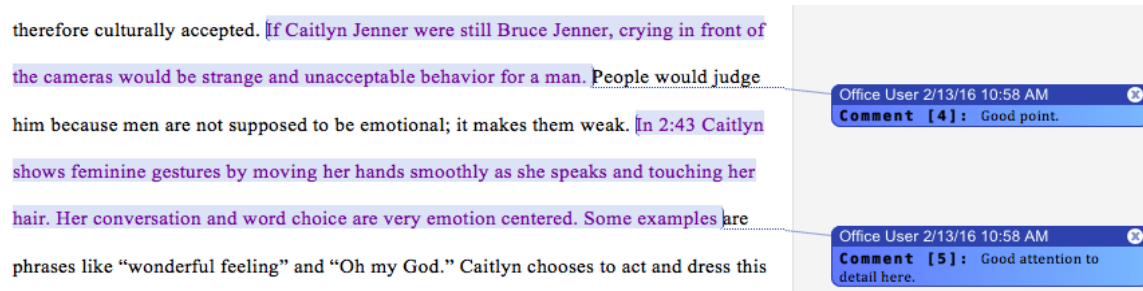


Figure 7. 2 Lisa’s PSA Comment II

Excellent work on your PSA. I think you’ve done a great job balancing details from the video with your own interpretation of those details. You present a clear argument and your analysis is strong. Good job!

PSA grade: A

Figure 7. 3 Lisa’s PSA Comment III

Lisa commented that Naomi's SSI was "interesting and thoughtfully written" (Figure 7.4), and also pointed out where there was insufficient evidence as well as a lack of integration of the primary and secondary sources. Naomi needed to improve her vague and bold claims (Figure 7.5), for example, by relating her argument of femininity to a cosmetic choice that connected with Caitlyn Jenner's transformation.

struggles that women face in a patriarchal society. Burkett describes Caitlyn Jenner's shallow views of women as the following: "This was the prelude to a new photo spread and interview in Vanity Fair that offered us a glimpse into Caitlyn Jenner's idea of a woman: a cleavage-boosting corset, sultry poses, thick mascara and the prospect of regular "girls' nights" of banter about hair and makeup." (Burkett, "What makes a

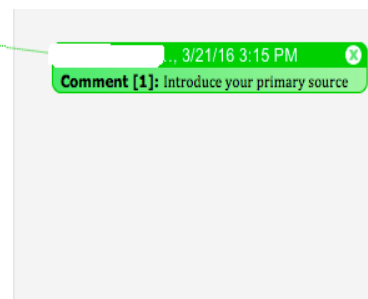


Figure 7. 4 Lisa's SSI Comment I

advantage over women. Young Bruce Jenner did not have to worry about getting raped while walking down a lonely street at night; He did not experience the difficulties women entrepreneurs go through to build their companies from scratch because he was born into a superior position in the gender hierarchy. Therefore, Caitlyn Jenner has no right to say that she knows what it means to be a woman.

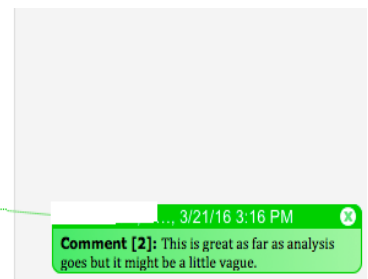


Figure 7. 5 Lisa's SSI Comment II

The feedback helped Naomi clarify her confusion with respect to the expectations of the ARP. The teacher-student conference that followed was an opportunity for Naomi to receive feedback directly. Lisa wanted Naomi to focus on "clarity" rather than "organization" of ideas (Conference, 3/23/2016). She asked Naomi to provide more

examples and focus on two claims that Naomi made about transgender in the case of Caitlyn Jenner. Besides feedback on idea development, Lisa complimented the fluency of writing. She was also aware of Naomi's concerns as a L2 writer; she affirmed to Naomi that "I can understand everything you were saying more than other American-born students" (Conference, 3/23/2016). Naomi gained a good sense of how to prepare the symposium and write the ARP, since Lisa had not only answered her questions but had also pointed out a clear plan for how to improve her final paper. In this extended example we can see how the feedback component of FYW could be beneficial, and thus appealing, to the participants in the study.

However, while opportunities to arrange conferences with their instructors were always available to the participants, Penny was the only participant in this study who met with the teacher a few times during the semester. She scheduled an appointment for each major FYW assignment. As it turned out, her worries were quite different from those of other participants, and this might have motivated her to seek out these one-to-one dialogues with her teacher. She was worried that her papers became too lengthy (in contrast to the others who were concerned that they would not fulfill the minimum page requirements). Meeting with Briana, her FYW instructor, helped Penny make "*the logic becomes clearer*" (Interview, 3/04/2016). After the meeting, she rewrote her PSA, which then became twice as long as her first draft. Penny "*revised the arguments, to make them clearer. To retrieve evidence in the articles to support arguments, it makes the paper long*" (Interview, 3/04/2016). The meeting for the SSI became extra helpful not only for idea development and revisions, but also for understanding the assignment itself, that is, strengthening her task representation. Penny understood the assignment incorrectly; she

believed that the SSI was comparable to the PSA, so she had done similar analyses of her (secondary) sources. Instead, she was told that she should “*use SSI as evidence or bring up one argument to see if it can support the short stories. I have not finished it (revising). Four pages are not enough*” (After class communication with Penny).

The teacher’s feedback deepened Penny’s idea development. Penny also looked forward to teacher feedback on “correctness,” as she called it:

Sometimes I think my point of view or way of thinking is strange. I wanna know like, this is acceptable strange or not acceptable strange. Because on one hand being unique is not something wrong, but on the other hand, if you think too extreme, you don’t communicate with others. It’s a problem. That will affect my grade (Interview, 2/04/2016).

Penny valued her teacher’s feedback and, perhaps, developed substantial reliance on it.

Unlike other participants, who liked to look outside the FYW course for feedback, Penny neither asked for her friends’ help nor visited the Writing Center at any stage of her writing processes. This is because, first, she believed that writing is a self-reliant type of work; feedback from non-professional sources (e.g., peers or friends) was neither credible nor persuasive from her point of view. She thought she would not benefit from peer feedback because “*it’s hard for other people help develop ideas. So writing is hard. It’s hard to affect one’s thinking*” (Interview, 05/02/2016). The second reason is that she favored working independently. Due to her personality traits, she did not enjoy interacting with others. Other participants were more open to interaction with others.

One of the notable features of the FYW course, especially in comparison to the ESL writing courses at University X, was the way in which the course had connections to the university’s Writing Center. The philosophy of the ESL Composition Program was

that students should not seek help at the Writing Center for any writing assigned in the program's courses (for assignments outside their courses, Writing Center use was encouraged). By contrast, FYW students were encouraged to go to the Writing Center for assistance on FYW assignments. In Michelle's case, she even granted extra credit for each Writing Center visit. Yenta, Yulia, and Loni took advantage of this opportunity and visited the Writing Center several times during the semester. They all agreed that feedback from the consultants was helpful. As Yenta said, "*I got many feedbacks. She (i.e. the writing tutor) said the main idea needs to be clear. The last sentence in each paragraph is the main sentence. Topic (sentence) is at the first sentence. The comment means to make my every paragraph clearer*" (Interview, 4/15/2016). Loni received consultants' feedback more on sentence-level issues, as "*the consultant said the writing was okay, to shorten sentences. The consultant said short sentences are better comprehensible. ... The consultant corrected many wrong word choices, also some grammar*" (Interview, 2/11/2016). She then was more able to identify her own errors through extensive revising practice inspired by her Writing Center interactions.

Michelle used class time to provide oral feedback, whereas Briana and Lisa relied more on written feedback. Lisa's comments functioned as guidance for her students' next assignment rather than simply helping them 'fix' the paper they were working on at the moment. In other words, she envisioned transfer possibilities in her provision of feedback. However, this meant that students engaged in less drafting in her class. Briana and Michelle, on the other hand, required multiple drafts of one assignment, though Briana permitted only one revision opportunity for each major assignment. Her detailed written feedback was intended to allow students to improve their grades. Conversely,

Michelle wanted students to understand they could improve their writing by continuous revisions. There was a shortcoming in that respect, though. Michelle herself was too busy to review every student's numerous drafts. Especially when there were more than ten papers per student in a 24-person class, it was very challenging for her to provide feedback on every draft. This limitation was felt by the participants in the study. Loni, for example, spent a lot of effort on each assignment, and after numerous revisions she said, "*I didn't know how to revise,*" since Michelle did not respond to her drafts. This suggests that the participants might have become too dependent on teacher guidance and found it difficult to revise on their own knowledge and initiative.

Another example of the use of feedback in Michelle's classes occurred with Anika. Anika reported that Michelle gave her a lot of constructive feedback on her Columbus paper at the teacher-student conference (Anika's Journal 10). Besides suggesting visiting the "Researcher Tutor" at the main library on campus, Michelle pointed out Anika had a descriptive title and a "static opening" in the paper, and her other comments were as follows:

Michelle: isolate the big ideas in the paragraphs ... pull them in the beginning ... in terms of the ideas of villainess, you can claim that his villainess, for example, didn't start until he landed and then encountered the native. Or you can actually start by saying that for example, the village he adopted, the war ... you can show evidence from the inception on the voyage. Or you can just say the significance doesn't really relate to anyone but the starting point that's what you are starting right here. Not so many words, but to justify why you include the piece about the history

These comments suggest that Michelle was quite engaged in the paper, as she offered detailed feedback. Also an interesting observation is how she made suggestions for

revision but was not directive in terms of telling Anika exactly what should be done or how to do it; she left that work to Anika.

In addition to teacher feedback, Michelle's students valued peer feedback from peer-review activities that took place during class sessions. For instance, reading native English speaking students' writing helped the participants self-evaluate their own writing, as this writing from their domestic peers provided examples or models to learn from. Anika had a reflection like "*Oh! My god. It's so good. Why can't I write like that*" (Interview, 1/21/2016). She said, "*I like reading other people's essays, peer-review before turning in mine, so I understand what we are supposed to do if I'm doing the right thing. I probably will be getting more ideas. Maybe I can broaden my essay topic*" (Interview, 2/04/2016). Another telling example was Yulia, who also enjoyed peer-review activities; as she shared in her journal, "*through discussion and conversations with them, my horizon [sic] is broadened. When reading their essays, I come up with new ideas about how to write a new type of essays*" (Yulia's Journal 1).

What was especially interesting about Yulia's comments was the comparison she made with peer review in the ESL writing class she had taken at University X. As she explained, "*in ESL class, we often talked about the fixed formula of writing, an academic paper and we had little chance to show our work to all the students*" (Yulia's Journal 1). In other words, the focus was on broader discussion of writing issues rather than commenting on each other's paper. However, in the case of FYW and peer review with her domestic student classmates, "*From their comments, I know the good part in my paper and the weakness of my paper as well. Through reading their essay, I get to know how American students write an essay,*" Yulia reported (Interview, 1/18/2016). In

particular, the group projects (the American Scholar Outline and the Debate Strategy Session) required that each group compose a group paper synchronously on Google Docs. Seeing “*the procedure of how American students wrote a paper*” was new to Yulia and “*helpful and interesting ... since we can revise and see what others will do when we are writing*” (Yulia’s Journal 8). Sono also liked this activity. The group synthesized American Scholars and found key points. The group google document then became the outline for Yulia’s and Sono’s American Scholars papers.

Loni was another participant who reported that the FYW peer-review activity was beneficial, especially for her Common Sense paper, with which she struggled a lot: “*If we turned the paper in directly, I didn’t feel confident about it. They helped me correct, improve my paper. I also know other people’s writing, so I know how the papers should be like,*” she said (Interview, 2/11/2016). Sono liked peer-review because he “*had the chance absorb more useful thoughts and improve my own thinking model*” (Sono’s journal 3) by discussing and exchanging ideas with his peers. He also preferred feedback on “*how to write, what you can improve, how the flow of ideas should be like*” (Interview, 2/11/2016). For example, “*If you put a conclusion in the beginning of the paper, it’s more difficult to write other parts of the paper ... you can’t write all ideas in one paragraph. You have to separate them. The feedback tells you how to separate and how to write it better*” (Interview, 2/11/2016).

However, I noticed the participants’ enthusiasm changed as they noted some weaknesses in the peer review dimension of the FYW course. For instance, sometimes, peer feedback did not help much, according to the participants’ responses, because “*people always say, it’s good. Everyone receives compliments,*” Sono said (Interview,

4/29/2016), rather than providing constructive feedback on how to identify what to improve. Peer feedback also often tended to point out grammatical errors, especially on L2 students' papers. While Loni appreciated this kind of feedback on mechanical issues, such as wrong word choices (Interview, 1/28/2016), others were less inclined to feel that way. For example, although peer feedback helped Yulia cope with her sentence-level errors, she commented on the weakness of direct grammar correction (that is, mistakes not just being pointed out but actually corrected by the peer reviewer) when she said, "*If you are telling me grammar mistakes and give me feedback, I won't write in correct ways in next papers. It's too difficult because I am not a native speaker*" (Interview, 2/19/2016). In short, she did not learn from such correction. Also, she recalled her that her ESL instructor taught her that feedback should not focus on grammar first, but instead on idea development. "*Because we students still think we don't have professional eyes to see a paper, we just use a simple way to check grammar mistakes,*" Yulia said (Interview, 1/18/2016). She preferred feedback on ideas, for instance, when "*they asked me to write my own opinion or to comment on the content of the article, to add viewpoints and materials. I think this kind of feedback is more helpful than talking about grammar mistakes*" (Interview, 2/19/2016). Later, she added, "*Tell me how to revise. If telling me to find good sources, I wouldn't know who to find good sources. If you tell me what counts good sources, I will know how to revise*" (Interview, 3/03/2016).

What emerged from the participants' responses to this aspect of FYW was that peer-review involved a binary aspect. On the one hand, the L2 participants benefited from peer-review. On the other hand, they positioned themselves, perhaps inevitably, as lower in a hierarchy of students in the activity. Here their status as L2 writers who were

still language learners meant that they received kinds of feedback their L1 peers did not, and they were not in a position to comment as much on their domestic student peers, who stood out as superior writers merely by their native English speaker status. *“Their writing is already good. Foreigners (i.e. Americans) write in their first language. If it’s in Chinese, I can write very well too,”* Sono said (Interview, 4/29/2016). Yulia and Loni reported that sometimes they could not understand their American peers’ papers, perhaps because of the sophistication they saw in that writing. *“Honestly, what they wrote is all good. We can’t recognize any mistakes. We all admire how well they wrote. Most of the times, they gave feedback to us. They revised ours and exchanged their own papers,”* Yulia said (Interview, 2/19/2016). Under these circumstances, Loni was embarrassed to share her writing with American peers, in part because she considered herself to be a poor writer, especially compared to them. Anika also struggled with this and said the activity made her very self-conscious (Anika’s Journal 2). Because of her L2 identity, peer-review was an activity which was stressful for her—to be evaluated by peers who knew the language so much better than she did. As the semester progressed, Anika said, *“Actually the feedback is not very helpful, because they don’t give you that much feedback. They probably like correct grammar. They didn’t tell you to edit it or focus on ideas”* (Interview, 2/04/2016). In short, their L1 peers were inclined to focus on language-related issues, which had the effect of making the L2 participants extra-sensitive to them. This suggests that the L1 peers operated from a kind of deficit perspective in which they assumed the L2 writers would struggle with use of the English language, and they would not benefit much from content-related feedback.

Noting these reactions to the different forms of feedback available in the FYW course, I also asked participants how they revised their papers in addition to incorporating teacher and peer feedback. Reading-aloud seemed to be one of their favorite strategies. Naomi, who identified herself as an aural learner, preferred an absolute quiet place when she was writing, so that she could read her papers out loud. Interestingly, Michelle encouraged her students to use the reading-aloud strategy. Yenta found that that approach was helpful (Interview, 2/19/2016). The strategy allowed her to spot grammatical errors. *“When I was writing, I didn’t notice. Reading aloud to myself is better and can find errors. People read out loud, I can’t spot out the errors. If I read aloud, I can find out the errors,”* Yenta said (Interview, 2/19/2016). However, Yenta noted that she could not identify her own errors *“if people read mine. I can only listen”* (Interview, 2/19/2016). Like Yenta, Anika said, *“After I finish an essay, I would read it out for myself, so that I can hear. See it sounds weird or not. It works for me when I do it for myself or maybe when someone is reading it for the whole class, I think it doesn’t work well in small groups”* (Interview, 2/04/2016).

On the whole, teacher-provided feedback was received positively by the participants, while they had a mixed reaction to peer-review. These differences in their responses may have resulted in part from power dynamic issues. The participants saw the teachers as authorities on writing precisely because they were in the teacher role, and so it was easy to be responsive to both written and oral feedback from their teachers. By contrast, their American peers had, in their eyes, a certain superiority as native speakers of the language being used in the course, but they were still students, or peers, and so their feedback could leave the L2 participants feeling marginalized in their participation.

7.2.1.3 A Student Illustration

In this section, I examine Naomi's narrative about her FYW experience because she was the only participant in the standard FYW class. It is important to understand the L2 student's responses to that kind of FYW course offering, since it is the type experienced by many L2 students at University X. Although presenting Naomi's FYW experience is not an attempt to generalize other L2 students' experiences in such a FYW course, to gain a deeper sense of the L2 students' responses to the standard FYW course, it can help to take an extended look at a participant's engagement in the course.

Naomi had assumed her international English school in her home country and the FYW class would be structured in a similar way with a similar curriculum, so she was surprised to learn that the FYW course was not the type of English course she expected. The major distinction between her previous English classes and the FYW course was the amount of focus on explicit writing instruction. Naomi's English education in Honduras was filled with intensive grammar lessons, including writing about a variety of topics. For example, they did literary analysis, such as comparing how love is portrayed in Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook* versus how it is portrayed in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Naomi had been taught "formulas" to write those papers, which included such instructions as: (1) the opening has to grab readers' attention, (2) the last sentence of the introduction is a summary of the paper, and (3) every first sentence of each paragraph tells the main ideas (Interview, 1/28/2016). Naomi called these steps filling in the boxes; she gathered and recorded information before writing as a method to organize ideas and part of her planning stage to help her structure papers. She preferred what her English teachers in those courses provided: writing handouts that addressed how to structure

ideas, and then the teachers reviewed the first drafts to ensure that students were following the prompts. Naomi especially mentioned learning about the “five-paragraph essay” approach, for which she had a formula: “*the first sentence and last sentence, and then leave the in-between blank because that’s what we’re supposed to write the body part*” (Interview, 1/28/2016), or “*introduce what you are going to talk about ... and how I’m supposed to organize things*” (Interview, 2/10/2016).

This was the background, and the set of expectations she had for a writing course, she brought to the FYW course. She had expected FYW to be challenging but she did not expect the culture shock she encountered. It quickly became apparent to her that this was a very different kind of writing course. The course theme concerned Naomi, not only because of her limited knowledge of the topic but also because of her own cultural background in which she was not exposed to certain topics, nor were those topics openly discussed. Naomi expressed her displeasure about the class:

I feel like, yes, our focus is gender, but in like regards to English, I feel like she’s not teaching us like how to write. ... It’s an English class. ... I just feel like she needs to also focus on like the writing and English class, not only the topic, so that bothers me (Interview, 1/28/2016).

Naomi soon found that “*It’s so open and so acceptable*” (Interview, 1/28/2016) to discuss those topics (e.g., gender, homosexuality, transgender identities, and polygamy) in American society. Naomi shared that “*there is a lot of prejudice for the LGBT community in Honduras, so for me, it was strange at first to get used to that*” (Naomi’s Journal 1). American and Canadian teachers in her international school were constrained, in that they were not allowed to discuss particular topics that were construed as controversial or sensitive. “*Because of the religion (i.e. Catholicism), there were some*

topics that the teachers were prohibited to teach us. In Honduras, the topic of like gender and so like homosexuality is not acceptable. It's something that goes against God over there, so that topic I'm not very comfortable with," Naomi said (Interview, 1/28/2016). Furthermore, her instructor, Lisa, used curse words in English as examples to initiate further discussions on gender inequality. This kind of discussion was prohibited in Naomi's home country. She stated, *"If ever a teacher said a bad word in my school, we could go to the office and she would be in trouble. ... speaking bad about religion or the Christianity, not allowed"* (Naomi's Follow-up, 3/02/2016).

The class, in Naomi's view, was not structured as a writing class but as a cultural class. At first, she could not understand the purpose that the teacher intended to achieve by choosing such controversial topics. Naomi started *"thinking about it, wow, women are so devalued ... All of those topic are bold but they're very important to discuss because of the message behind them"* (Interview, 3/25/2016), so the course taught her to *"think about life differently. These discussions are especially important in this English class because it helps me write more critically about topics I would have never thought I could write in the first place"* (Naomi's Journal 8). Those conversations were not commonly seen in her previous academic environment but she found them to be important. That the teacher used controversial materials was a device she came to recognize as being used to *"force us to come out of our bubble"* (Interview, 1/28/2016) and think more about the topic through other cultural lenses. Below are a few selected excerpts about Naomi's responses to the course design with an American-oriented topic or focus:

I would have never thought of that before if I were not been exposed to that. Because if we didn't discuss, all of our papers wouldn't be very objective. It would be more our own opinions. Because if we are not exposed to other things

and we don't think about other stuff, we are not able to like have a full picture ... Now I'm doing this class, I'm like forced to understand her (i.e. Caitlyn Jenner) and analyze her, so that's something totally new to me (Interview, 1/28/2016).

I bet they (international students) don't know what they were talking about, so I don't feel that bad. But if it would be only me with a bunch of Americans talking about cultural stuff, I would feel uncomfortable because nobody likes somebody talking about something they have no ideas about. And the teacher expects us to participate, but how I'm going to participate if I don't know the movie, don't know the song (Interview, 2/10/2016).

Even though my English is better than other international students, but if you notice, international students in our class don't participate as well because I don't know if it's the same as me, but most of the things she talked like this music back as this movie. I have no idea we're talking about. There's no way I can participate (Interview, 4/07/2016).

Those responses describe Naomi's adjustment to an American mainstream writing class. While she still considered the course to be helpful, the teacher did not take into account the differences related to "international students" in this kind of classroom. This was one of the ways in which the course differed from the ESL writing courses at University X, where the students' identity as international students and L2 users as well as learners are foregrounded in the course design and implementation.

For Naomi, "*English classes [should be] more writing focus*" (Interview, 2/25/2016) although she did value the course theme—gender—because it forced her to think deeply about the topic. She was anxious about her first assignment, the PSA, and constantly reminded herself of her disadvantage of being a L2 writer. She had expected explicit writing instruction for each assignment, but Lisa's focus "*is analysis, analysis, analysis, so she's made it very clear and that's what she wants us to do. I mean the grammar and everything is important, but what she wants to see is analysis*" (Interview,

3/15/2016). In other words, the students were not being taught directly how to write the course's papers. Naomi liked it when Lisa taught "*a little bit at least some grammar*" (Interview, 2/25/2016). For example, Lisa explained the usage of active and passive voice. That lesson was helpful because she learned how to change her sentence structure. It was also the kind of focused or directive instruction Naomi expected and preferred from an English teacher. She recalled the English classes back home in Honduras, in which the class discussed the topics of the papers and the teachers also focused on grammar. This kind of explicit writing instruction, for Naomi, not only provided a clear structure of the task but also accommodated her insecurity as a L2 writer who needed additional language support. Naomi stated that the FYW class was not really an English class; instead, the course was designed as a culture or society class, like other GEC (General Education) courses she and other undergraduate students enrolled in. In fact, she believed the course should be titled a 'gender and sexuality' class.

This focused account of Naomi's responses to a standard FYW course at University X shows how international students can encounter potential cultural conflicts in a mainstream writing course where content is emphasized over structure. It also highlights the potentially damaging effects of the kinds of backgrounds and expectations that L2 writers may bring to such a course. Students like Naomi may struggle with a sense of disappointment toward or even rejection of such a course design in light of what they expect to encounter. On the plus side, Naomi indicated that she did develop her critical thinking and analytical skills, as intended in such course; however, the unexpected culture shock struck her, and to some extent she struggled with her participation in class. Here her identity as a second language writer was an important

variable in the instructional dynamic, and one that would not have been problematic in an ESL writing course. This point draws attention to the difficult transitions that L2 writers might experience as they shift from ESL writing classes to courses like FYW. Here it is worth remembering that Sono dropped his original FYW section because of his difficulty related to understanding what he regarded as the excessive knowledge of American cultural, social and political topics students were expected to bring to the course and to utilize in completing the course's assignments.

7.3 Learning in FYW and Beyond

This chapter concludes by looking at each of the study's participants relative to what they learned from and took away from their participation in FYW. This is another way of exploring how they responded to the FYW course as L2 writers.

7.3.1 Naomi (Standard FYW Section)

As we have already seen, Naomi commented in detail on what she saw as the over-emphasis in FYW on learning a course theme. She also recognized the importance of the development of analytical thinking. It was in the latter respect where she identified some of her learning in the course:

If you notice my writing in my primary source, it is analysis. I noticed that when I am writing, I am aware of more things. When I write, I think about the tone that I want to portray and how it relates to my thesis if I am actually analyzing the sources that I'm talking about (Interview, 3/15/2016).

She also noted the importance of using evidence as part of the analytic process while developing, objectively, an argument or point of view. For students like her in the fields of science, writing analytically was important, she said:

It's not like writing about your opinions, but if writing objectively and kind of looking at things in difference and speaking with support ... like more scientific. I used to think science is only in the fields of biology and physics, but science is literally everything, because even in English, if you write a paper and you don't have evidence and you don't support, and you don't write objectively (Interview, 3/15/2016).

To her, critical thinking was important in the process of research and for academic writing, because, she said:

The first step is thinking about what you're going to talk about and then research to support, and make a list of your arguments and do research to see if you can support your arguments. While you're doing like the research, read actively and think about the ways that you can challenge or construct something about. Don't only read but analyze what you're reading (Interview, 5/04/2016).

Learning "critical thinking" in FYW appeared to affect how Naomi wrote in other courses, especially when she wrote in a scientific genre. For example, she was careful to write analytically in her dance class paper and "*[used] what I've learned from English to write the reflection*" (Interview, 4/07/2016). She had never written evidence-based arguments or incorporated sources in writing before taking the FYW course. By going through the ARP assignment, for which "*you have to expand your ideas and write a lot and do research*" (Interview, 5/04/2016), she began to pay more attention to providing supporting evidence in her Chemistry lab reports and Psychology papers. "*You can't just throw a sentence; you have to support it*" (Interview, 3/15/2016), Naomi said. Analysis required her to notice details and support her ideas, instead of only describing them. Evidence-based writing became a "*new style of writing*" since "*everything now that's the way I think about writing*" (Interview, 3/15/2016).

Also, regarding her learning in FYW, in-class discussions and activities trained her to analyze and to develop keen thinking skills, as well as made her “*notice more ... for example, the language used the tone*” (Interview, 3/25/2016). The tone of the language became an important element that Naomi paid attention to in her writing (i.e., SSD); she said that if she chose the tone carefully, she could have more leeway about what she wrote about (Interview, 3/25/2016). Naomi also noticed that her writing processes changed: “*I feel like I can write a little bit faster,*” she said (Interview, 4/07/2016). Even though she still relied on her language-switching between Spanish and English during her writing process, her thinking in English increased. This change could be the result of being immersed in an English language environment. The other factor was that “*I took this class (i.e. FYW) and it’s a writing class. I was forced to write in English more than my other classes that also help me start to think more in English*” (Interview, 5/04/2016). In the process, she paid more attention to constructing topic sentences for each paragraph, “*instead of just starting and not having an idea of what I want to write*” (Interview, 5/04/2016). She spent more time at the planning stage on developing an outline to plan “*what I’m trying to say and how it sounds, and this is supporting or not*” in contrast to the concern that she had about “*Does this sound good like grammatically correctly?*” (Interview, 3/15/2016). Knowing her own writing process, for instance, using outlines assisted Naomi in becoming a more efficient writer.

FYW was a challenging course for Naomi, and this is also where some of its benefits accrued for her. For instance, the course allowed her to experience writing in a substantial way through an extended research project, which she did successfully, even though she never thought that she would be able to write a seven-page English paper

(Interview, 5/04/2016). Naomi was satisfied with her learning experience. In the final interview, she said that what she learned in the FYW course would be helpful in her other classes throughout her undergraduate studies (Naomi's Journal 8), particularly for her second-level writing course to be completed in her second year as an undergraduate. Naomi became "*a lot more confident because the writing process now it's not only grammar based as it was in high school but more analysis*" (Interview, 5/04/2016).

Nevertheless, Naomi saw some shortcomings in the course and argued that the standard FYW curriculum was in need of improvement, especially taking into consideration the diversity of students. From her viewpoint, one essential element that is missing from the FYW curriculum is basic writing instruction that focuses more on structure and rhetorical use of language. Lisa "*didn't even tell us about good transition words*" (Interview, 5/04/2016) or how to write an introduction or a conclusion, other than addressing "*using good grammar*" (Interview, 5/04/2016). Naomi noted that one of her peers in the class, Andy (pseudonym), who was an international student, "*didn't get a good English education in his school*" (Interview, 5/04/2016) and made this suggestion for FYW instructors:

Not all of their students are from America. Not all of their students have been speaking English for their whole life and know the basics of grammar. For example, Andy had a hard time writing his paper. Compared to him, I didn't struggle like him. He was having a hard time like putting his thoughts like sound correctly in English. Like grammar, passive voice, like all of that, he didn't know it. ... he didn't know a lot of stuff. The teacher completely forgot that she had international students. She can't just expect us know the basics of grammar. I would tell her that if this is a course that more focused on critical thinking, that's fine, but don't completely forget about the grammar. At least she would have given out handouts (Interview, 5/04/2016).

Indeed, Naomi would not recommend this course to international students “*who don’t know how to write a proper English like grammar*” (Interview, 5/04/2016) given the current FYW curriculum, She suggested that those international students should take a grammar class prior to FYW.

Another of her concerns involved assessment of students’ work and the application of the same standards or expectations for all students, regardless of their background. As she explained, “*It’s more demanding in the sense since you are with American students. She is grading other students who are native English speakers. She is grading everyone in the same way while back home English is everyone’s second language*” (Interview 2/10/2016). These were issues that do not exist in ESL writing courses, where all of the students are L2 learners and the assessment of their performance takes that factor into account. The ‘level playing field’ in FYW was not necessarily fair or sensitive to the world of writing in English as experienced by L2 writers.

7.3.2 Penny (Modified FYW Class)

As noted earlier in the dissertation, being from Beijing, China and with a Chemistry major and German minor, Penny took the modified FYW class after completing an ESL Composition class in her first semester at University X. The ESL writing class experience framed some of Penny’s thoughts about writing courses. From the early interviews, it was evident that Penny possessed a strong position on taking an ESL course. She expressed her disappointment in the ESL writing class, as she said that that course was designed based on the assumption that “international students couldn’t speak English fluently,” and it focused on grammar and format. Hence, it ultimately operated more as a language course than a writing class. On the other hand, the FYW “*is*

more on content, method, more the thing I think it's more useful for me" (Interview, 2/04/2016). She also contended that the ESL class should *"be taught by Americans, because it's an English course. Why we wouldn't be taught by an native speaker, but a Korean"* (Interview, 1/21/2016). Penny had anticipated the FYW course would allow her to learn *"with a bunch of Americans (in FYW). I think that's gonna help me more than learning with a bunch of Chinese (in ESL)"* (Interview, 1/21/2016). The FYW course focused more on actual writing, including *"the logic or the way of writing, why you use the sources, or like what can you read from the sources? Why do you relate your writing to the sources"* (Interview, 1/21/2016), instead of the focus on format and citation in the ESL course. *"What I expect is at the end of the course, my English will improve generally, but it's not the same as changing the thinking process,"* Penny said (Interview, 1/21/2016). Ultimately, then, Penny saw the FYW course as a more beneficial learning environment for her.

However, Penny was concerned about potential challenges in FYW, such as *"the way I express it (opinion) or write it is not as good as theirs (native speakers), because I am not a native speaker. Language is gonna limit me ... I tried to express my opinion or thoughts or ideas. I don't say clearly as natives"* even though she was *"confident of her opinions"* (Interview, 1/21/2016). Thus, she saw her non-nativeness as a shortcoming that would be difficult to overcome. In addition, Briana's course theme—short stories—confounded Penny and was not a factor she expected to encounter in a writing course. She understood analysis, for which she *"focused on the general meaning"* and examined texts from different perspectives, but *"as for the short story, I had absolutely no idea where to start an analysis at all,"* Penny said. (Penny's Journal 2). She explained analysis

was “*to analyze a thing. Try to say what’s behind the word or the surface. Try to deduce what the author thinks, tried to express or try not to express. Tell you the writer as a person*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Penny found it was challenging to analyze fictional characters as to whether the perspective of the analysis should be approached from the view of the author or her, the reader. Penny was “biased” with respect to analyzing literature. She enjoyed reading it without having to be concerned about the “*logic*”; however, it was more difficult to analyze literature as “*you have to figure out all logic*” (Interview, 03/04/2016). She was baffled in this regard, and she said:

Rather than saying ‘I don’t like him because he’s like this’, it should be something like ‘why does the author make it that he’s like this.’ Though I’ve not yet systematically proceed any of this sort of analysis still the very end, I would expect the outcome to be something about the author. It is still an analysis about a person though. (Penny’s Journal 6).

Penny also constantly struggled with her “*emotions*” in analyzing stories, specifically about relating herself to characters. It seemed that the analysis became subjective if her emotions were blended with characters’ feelings. She was afraid that the analysis “*presented not her (character’s) feelings. She may think differently from what I feel. ... What she feels includes two parts. One is how the author thinks. The other is how the author doesn’t think what she feels. But everything is from the book. It can’t be analyzed by my first impressed [sic]*” (Interview, 2/19/2016). Penny thus approached analyzing texts from “*an outsider to look at it. Don’t think you are a character in the story or don’t put yourself in it too much*” (Interview, 2/19/2016). In writing the PSA, “*I can interpret characters as real people. When I view them as real people, I easily connect*

to my own emotion. I can write them in an emotional way, so in writing the second draft, I tried not to be emotional,” Penny said (Interview, 2/19/2016).

Her difficulty in analyzing literary works was highlighted when she was preparing the SSI, which involved reading academic journal articles. She reported it was “*quite a contrast when reading my short story as to reading the five academic articles of potential secondary sources ... It is much easier to first locate the general structure of the article and identify each part’s contribution towards the whole argument*” (Penny’s Journal 7). She also brought up the “so what” question mentioned in the textbook, “*which is again useful for stories because a symbol can contain infinite implications*” in contrast with “*research papers where each point made is directly pointing towards the next, inferences we can make about a particular point is rather limited within the context of the argument*” (Penny’s Journal 7). According to Penny, writing a (research) paper consisted of “*the arguments made by my source originally, whether I agree or not. But I guess for most people it’s always harder to convey someone else’s opinion on a thing authentically when you’ve already have an opinion on the subject*” (Penny’s Journal 9). In light of these different textual experiences, she discussed her confusion about the nature of the analysis aspect of writing, and her viewpoint of what writing is:

I want to think of things from my own term. In this sense I’m probably more interested in my subjective self than being academically objective or neutral. Violating the most fundamental academic principle, I don’t care what it really is or what the text really says as much as I care how I interpret them and what my interpretation says about me as a person. (I’m even tired of imposing this cliché, to you over and over again (Penny’s Journal 11).

Writing is more for articulating ideas clearly. Whether readers can understand is not what I focus on. I care more about writing slowly and making ideas clearly.

Writing is more important to make readers understand, not necessary to make them agree with you, but make them understand (Interview, 3/04/2016).

In summarizing her FYW experience, Penny considered the FYW course to be necessary even though she majored in a scientific field, because “*I was doing liberal arts in high school (in China), I don’t want to lose the opportunity to learn to think in liberal arts way*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Interestingly, though, as the semester progressed, she became concerned about the ambivalent relationship between learning to write in FYW and her other courses. Given her Chemistry major, “*analyzing words and numbers are very different. Lab results, numbers are very objective, not rhetorical. ... FYW is about mainly analyzing rhetorical objects,*” Penny said (Interview, 3/04/2016). She valued the importance of the FYW course as part of her undergraduate studies curriculum, but the course theme, short stories, seemed to disconnect learning about writing in FYW from writing in other classes. In other words, she was having a difficult time envisioning transfer of knowledge from FYW to her other coursework. Her reason for this concern was that “*writing humanistic and scientific papers is very different. ... The languages are so different*” (Interview, 3/30/2016). Writing in science requires a person “*to argue points. It’s not to persuade people*” (Interview, 3/30/2016), while writing an English paper (i.e., a Humanities discipline) focuses on explaining the writer’s thesis and claim. The FYW course “*will be very relevant to my future courses*” (Interview, 3/30/2016) if she were in the Humanities, but that was not the case for her as a Chemistry major. Below is a short conversation about how Penny perceived using her learning in FYW in her other courses.

(Interview on 3/30/2016 continued)

14:20

CL: learning writing skills, for example, quoting?

Penny: I don't think I will use them in other classes. Writing a lab report, you explain the number. Not someone's viewpoints or words. It could be your findings are different from others. You explain the differences, not using other words to be evidence.

CL: Using objective evidence for writing science paper?

Penny: Yes. Writing in this class, you can't quote people's evidence. You only can quote people's claims. But in science, you only quote people's number as well as evidence. Quoting someone's claim is not useful.

26:15

CL: Writing lab report is the same writing in FYW?

Penny: Writing lab reports is not writing, is analyzing numbers (findings). Writing in FYW has two parts. First one is like writing a lab report, you analyze numbers. The other part is to think about how to write out your thinking. Writing a lab report you don't need to think about how to present.

Thus, Penny recognized that analytical skills were helpful, perhaps, for her GEC courses, and in that regard FYW was beneficial for her. However, the FYW course introduced her to "*the world outside of the science*" (Interview, 5/02/2016) rather than prepared her for writing tasks in her major courses, and so its benefits were limited from her vantage point. The course taught her how to think and improved her English, but that did not directly have an impact on her overall writing ability. She stated that "*the class didn't teach you how to write in a way to make your papers better ... I think that helped me understand stories better. About understanding what is writing, because writing is differently defined in disciplines. Writing across disciplines is not transferrable*" (Interview, 5/02/2016). This latter point about the lack of transferability of FYW for a student like her was especially interesting. While the FYW was designed to fulfill the Writing and Communication component of the University's General Education Curriculum (GEC), Penny asserted that the writing course differed from her major

courses in light of the distinct writing conventions and different expected skill sets across three disciplinary categories—the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. In her view, the course had not prepared her for her disciplinary writing needs (a situation that would be addressed when she took the second year writing course, a point she was perhaps not aware of).

7.3.3 Anika (*Innovative FYW Section*)

In moving to Anika, this section also shifts to participants enrolled in Michelle's innovative sections of FYW, where her theme was “what you would need to succeed in college” (Interview, 1/22/2016), a significant contrast to the themes in Brianna's and Lisa's sections of the course. Anika expected to “*get better at writing*” and “*grammar confusion goes away*” as well as “*learn about what are the styles of essays*” (Interview, 1/21/2016) in FYW. She was in the English immersion environment longer than the other L2 participants, but even so she was concerned about her English writing ability and successfully completing writing tasks in FYW. “*I don't like writing English honestly. I'm not hundred percent comfortable, so if it was not a GE requirement, I would probably never take it,*” Anika said (Interview, 1/21/2016); she added that “*I can read but not like critically. I am not a literature person or creative ... I like doing math*” (Interview, 3/05/2016). Identifying herself as a science person rather than a creative writer, Anika was worried about not having “*great ideas or anything, so I will just take a really lame idea try to make something,*” especially because “*I'm very impatient in English. I'll just go on writing whatever it turns out ... not a good process*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). Additionally, “*I don't think it (writing) is very good though. When I am writing it (i.e. “The Story of My Name”), I feel like the essay is coming out good, but when I finish it*

and read it, it sounds like crap” (Anika’s Journal 1). To illustrate what writing was like for her, she spent two and a half hours to write a three-page (double-spaced) ethnography (i.e., the Character Sketch assignment).

Like Naomi, who was on the pre-med track, Anika encountered more scientific writing outside of the FYW class. She also worked as an undergraduate research assistant; in that position, she participated in research and wrote lab reports weekly. The FYW course was her only course in the Humanities that semester. Anika took an ESL class in the second semester of her junior year in an American high school and an Advanced Composition class in her senior year. These two classes improved her English proficiency in different ways. For example, she had more confidence in her English speaking ability after numerous in-class speeches in the ESL class, which *“helped me communicate with peers and teachers. ... Writing wisely, [the class] did not teach me writing. I could write kind of well before that too. But it helped my writing process too. What do you start do first thing you start writing”* (Interview, 1/21/2016). The Advanced Composition class, on the other hand, improved her writing with her teacher’s direct help; for example, she said her teacher made *“things right in essays. I practiced more English. For college essays too, my teachers edited and told me you should do in that way. ... That helped me get into University X”* (Interview, 1/21/2016). A key factor there was her frequent interaction with her teacher. By contrast, Anika’s interactions with Michelle were limited. She said, *“In high school, I would get more one-on-one attention from my teacher. She actually read mine before I turned in my final one. She would say that you are not doing well on grammar, do something with ideas, more instruction base”*

(Interview, 2/04/2016). She did not experience that same kind of environment in the FYW course.

In FYW, she still felt self-conscious, because of her ESL identity, in terms of speaking with an accent and making grammatical errors. She withheld her participation in speaking out in the FYW course, because “*when I am nervous, I speak like I never don’t know what English is*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). However, after noticing there were a few other ESL students in FYW, Anika felt confident because “*it makes me feel like I’m not the worst one in the class*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). She did, though, feel concerned about her peers’ judgement of her English performance. For example, she appreciated the peer-review activity as she liked to read peers’ papers, but “*I am very nervous when someone reads my paper. It’s like a piece of art. I give it to someone to judge*” (Interview, 1/21/2016). She was also worried about her accent and carefully pronounced particular words, such as annotated bibliography.

Michelle’s FYW curricular objectives were concordant with some institutional student learning outcomes: To increase student’s critical thinking, analysis, and research skills. The Christopher Columbus research paper aligned with the Analytical Research Project of the FYW Program’s curriculum. Compared to her experience in high school, Anika found that the research process for the Christopher Columbus paper was overwhelming without her teacher’s assistance. For that task, the planning process was particularly scaffolded, as the project involved several stages. She completed a 20-page research paper within a month, which included visiting the library; finding, evaluating, and annotating sources; and receiving the teacher’s feedback before writing the paper. Anika shared reflections that were similar to Naomi’s: writing a research paper in FYW

was pertinent to their undergraduate studies. She anticipated that there would not be much writing in medical school, but she believed it was highly possible that she would be involved in research, and that could include some writing, such as research reports. During the semester, she was an undergraduate research assistant (RA). In that position, her duties included conducting experiments and transcribing results, which she considered was “*not like writing from yourself*” (Interview, 2/22/2016). Her supervisor encouraged her to take part in one of the largest cancer research projects at University X, for which the skill of writing a research paper was necessary. Therefore, her research experience in FYW, specifically writing the Columbus paper, directly prepared her for research related tasks and writing. Besides that, other writing tasks seemed not to inspire Anika a lot with respect to her future writing practices in other classes. That is, she did not see meaningful transfer opportunities arising.

Regarding Anika’s FYW experience, she pinpointed her improvement around organizing her ideas. She explained her writing process as “*whenever I start an essay and I don’t have concrete ideas, I just keep writing whatever I want and then I will add or take something out. I think I am getting better in organizing my thoughts in the writing process*” (Interview, 2/04/2016). Compared to her science courses, in her only English class, Anika assumed she had to be creative in FYW, because “*it’s about my ideas. But like lab reports, it’s just information facts*” (Interview, 2/04/2016). She did not enjoy the lab report writing, which “*was very straightforward, but you have to think a lot to find the content, what you learn from the lab. I did the calculation, but I don’t know what I meant. Just like put them into words*” (Interview, 2/04/2016). Writing lab reports only requires one to report facts, and “*you don’t need to make it sound interesting. It’s just the fact is*

putting it there” (Interview, 3/05/2016). In short, science writing, such as lab reports, was not writing from Anika’s perspective. In fact, Anika made a template for writing her chemistry lab reports, which included first the procedure of introducing the experiment and secondly, “*summarize the method in a few sentences;*” however, “*Still, it’s easier than English*” (Interview, 3/05/2016). In contrast to the analytical writing (i.e. the Columbus paper) that required evidence to support arguments, “*I don’t have to prove anything like that*” (Interview, 3/05/2016) when writing the lab or medical reports.

Writing in FYW was challenging to her, she explained that:

I always have a hard time starting an assignment, the introduction, because your introduction has to do something catchy or attracts your interest. So for all assignments, I feel like when I start something, I like kind of have a flow some time, but it’s hard to just start what I should start. It’s not because I don’t know the topic. Sometimes it’s because I don’t know it, but mostly it’s because I don’t know where to start ... because introduction is something you have to be creative about and something that kind of summarizes the whole thing but not. So it’s that kind of that balance is difficult (Interview, 3/05/2016).

Grammar was another of Anika’s concerns, and that included word choice and sentence structure. First, she ensured that she used different words in order to avoid repetition. Secondly, she wanted to ensure that the length of her sentences was appropriate. Besides, she said, “*Grammar wise, sometimes I did a little grammar application I learned in English. I can apply to my lab reports*” (Interview, 2/04/2016). Anika recognized and valued her writing improvement; she said, “*I think I can write in a shorter time*” (Interview, 5/06/2016).

On the whole, then, for Anika there were not major benefits arising from her FYW experience. However, she did gain some additional knowledge in terms of non-scientific ways of writing, and there was some improvement in English proficiency. For

her, though, it was not easy to cross the divide between her scientific orientation as a college student and the more Humanities-oriented nature of the FYW course, resulting in what she saw as limited opportunities to transfer FYW knowledge to other writing contexts she would encounter.

7.3.4 Yulia (Innovative FYW Section)

Yulia majored in Business, as noted in Chapter 5. She had a positive personality, and this could serve as an asset in FYW. Michelle was impressed by Yulia's leadership among the group of L2 students in that section of the course. She was often the leader who gathered her peers and helped them in class. For example, when the class was deciding the pros and cons teams for the Columbus debate, Yulia led the other L2 students to choose the Cons group, and it seemed to be her nature to do so. In the beginning of the semester, she had been very enthusiastic because she wanted to improve her writing. *"I think writing is still very important. I can't lose that skill. I think this class helped me maintain the skill and to strengthen the skill,"* Yulia said (Interview, 1/18/2016). Toward the end of the semester, she shared that *"the journey of the FYW course is wonderful. I will make my final paper a perfect one to make a happy ending for the class"* (Yulia's Journal 13) and *"I love the class, love my classmates, love the professor and love everything here"* (Yulia's Journal 14). This included enjoying the chance to learn with native English speakers, whom she saw as a valuable resource. As a L2 writer, she pointed out that some assignments were new to her. When she worked with American students, *"they can help you be familiar with the content and assignments. Since they are native speakers, they write faster. They can teach us how to write"* (Interview, 3/03/2016). Another interesting fact that Yulia shared is that she improved her

writing fluency, which was a result of writing two papers per week, since “*writing every week makes me write faster*” (Interview, 3/03/2016).

Yulia shared that her ESL Composition course was different from the FYW course; that is, in FYW learning “*how to write a good paper is more difficult than in ESL ... the process is getting more difficult*” (Interview, 2/29/2016) in FYW. The ESL course (i.e., the second in the course sequence) was a basic class that “*teaches us to use APA style ... grammar, academic writing. I remember the first class we were taught what is academic writing. I didn't know at that time. I am more confident after knowing what academic writing is. I think it is the foundation of FYW*” (Interview, 1/18/2016). She learned about academic writing through a lot of writing practice and reading quizzes from the textbook in the ESL class (Interview, 1/18/2016), and so the class had served as a valuable springboard for her move to FYW the next semester. For instance, academic writing, defined by Yulia as “*a correct APA style, correct usage of words and sentences and objective*” (Interview, 1/18/2016) and derived from her ESL course experience, gave her a foundation to work from. Also, a strategy that Yulia had applied a lot from her ESL to FYW was paraphrasing. She used it especially when she was uncertain whether she could add her own viewpoints. “*Basically I paraphrase a sentence and write my own viewpoints,*” Yulia said (Interview, 2/29/2016).

Another difference she noticed between the ESL and the FYW courses was how and when to use her voice in writing. Yulia pointed out that FYW peers suggested to her including her own opinions and voice in her Common Sense paper. For example, she could express her concern that she was disturbed by advertisements and how they affected her life. She responded to that feedback:

It's impossible for me, because in ESL, we are not required to include our own voices. We can't write subjective opinions while they told me I should do that. I didn't agree with them. I talked to the teacher (i.e. Michelle). She told me yes. I need to write my own opinions and my voice for the assignment (Interview, 2/02/2016).

Yulia encountered contradictory advice. When writing a research paper in her ESL, she was taught not to write "*subjectively*;" she said, "*I have never used my own voices, but the topic is the one I chose. I never wrote I blah blah blah*" (Interview, 2/02/2016). This situation was related to the emphasis in the ESL course on source text use, which left no room for the development of a writing voice. This was not an issue in FYW. However, as for revising her Common Sense paper after receiving feedback on it, she changed the thesis statement by including her opinions and a sentence in every paragraph starting with "*T*" (Interview, 2/19/2016). That is, she was encouraged to be subjective. Yulia considered her writing to have improved in FYW, in part because she learned to express her own viewpoints. Yulia felt that the ESL class was teacher-centered because students would listen to the teacher's lecture most of the time. By contrast, Yulia believed the FYW was more student centered, as she participated more in that class, especially because of peer-review activities that forced her to interact with her peers.

One especially interesting comparison that Yulia made between the two courses involved identity. She explained that, "*In ESL, the instructor is Chinese. If you wrote like Chinglish, she could understand what you meant. The FYW teacher is American. I am afraid, because before she (i.e., Michelle) said my writing was not native-like and hoped I could change*" (Interview, 2/29/2016). In other words, her L2 identity was something of an asset in the ESL course but something of a detriment in FYW. As a result, she was

much more concerned about fulfilling Michelle's expectations than those of her ESL instructor, who seemingly accommodated Yulia's non-native-like English writing. Yulia was conscious about the fact that her English competence rendered a different communication relationship with her ESL and American instructors in the two courses.

After intensive writing practice in Michelle's class, Yulia indicated that she improved her writing, but writing still took her a lot of time. She acknowledged that her writing process changed in terms of vocabulary and the frequency of language transfer. She was able to use more advanced vocabulary (Interview, 2/19/2016). As for learning to write new genres, such as exploratory and descriptive papers, Yulia reflected that some of the tasks were difficult even if she wrote them in her first language, "*because there is a huge difference from [her] first language. [She] cannot just translate from [her] first language to English*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). She also "*used English to think more comparing to the past*" (Interview, 4/28/2016), especially since she no longer had her Chinese writing instructor from the ESL class who was receptive to her Chinese-oriented writing style. In FYW, "*I may use Chinese only when plan[ning] the paper and develop[ing] ideas, and then use[ing] English to extend ideas*" (Interview, 2/19/2016). Yulia improved her reading skills, too. Compared to the fact that "*in the past [she] wouldn't finish it if it is a long reading*" (Interview, 3/03/2016), she had become more accustomed to reading English materials. That had an impact on her writing, "*because reading more, you know how to conclude the essays*" (Interview, 3/03/2016). Yulia also noted that reading her peers' papers may have influenced her writing because she imitated their writing style and approach.

All in all, Yulia had a very positive experience in FYW. She encountered there an atmosphere that she responded to very enthusiastically, and this appeared to enhance her learning in the course. She was also able to build on at least some of what she had learned in her ESL writing course. If nothing else, this may have created in her a positive disposition toward writing in future courses.

7.3.5 Yenta (*Innovative FYW Section*)

Yenta was the only L2 participant who took the two-course ESL Composition sequence at University X. She was also a sophomore, unlike the other participants, who were freshmen, because she withdrew from the FYW course in her second year at the university. As a general assessment, Yenta responded that *“they are all writing classes, but very different. ESL is more about writing in college, what professor expect, but FYW is more about writing for publication”* (Interview, 02/05/2016). As she indicated, these classes had different goals, as they were designed for different student populations.

One of Yenta’s difficulties in FYW was that she had a hard time understanding the assigned reading material, especially “Dilsey,” due to the topic and content. She searched for other sources, including using translation websites, to aid in her comprehension, but she was still confused because of its figurative language. Although she hoped to have some more explicit assignment instruction or explanations that would guide her reading and writing, that did not occur, and she believed it did not *“because the teacher thinks it’s better to let us read and think about it. Maybe she explains it at first. We will not think about it. ... She expects some surprises ... she wants to see more about other topics. She thought writing is not right or wrong. Writing like native speakers, need*

to be fluent” (Interview, 2/05/2016). By contrast, in her ESL writing courses there would likely have been more directive teacher facilitation for both the reading and writing.

Another difficulty Yenta had in FYW was choosing topics for her papers. For example, when she was writing the Common Sense paper, Michelle suggested to her that *“it is easier to write something [she liked]”* (Interview, 02/05/2016), but that still left her with the need to select a topic on her own. Yenta decided to write about Impressionism since she liked art. Even so, writing the paper was still challenging; she said, *“I think it’s hard to write something I like because I even don’t know why I like it”* (Interview, 02/05/2016). However, once she started writing, she found the process went smoothly due to the fact that she did not need to search for supporting sources *“because it’s the information [she] already [knew]”* (Interview, 02/05/2016). This is why she enjoyed writing personal essays of the kind assigned in FYW. Indeed, Yenta expressed her fondness for writing a variety of papers in Michelle’s class. Compared to the series of assignments in the ESL courses that focused on one topic from the textbook, choosing her own topics eventually seemed to make her writing *“more interesting”* (Interview, 2/05/2016). Her experience with this was similar to Anika’s, in that choosing a topic for her paper *“is a lot easier in that way”* (Yenta’s Journal 4). This is one of the ways in which she grew as a writer in the FYW course and was a skill she could take from the course to future writing situations.

On the other hand, Yenta shared Yulia’s opinions regarding assessment of their writing in the ESL and FYW courses. Knowing that the ESL writing courses were aimed at L2 writers and often taught by nonnative speakers of English, they both believed that the ESL instructors would take into consideration that English was the second language

of the students. This appeared to create something of a comfort zone for them that did not exist in FYW. In short, they assumed the ESL instructors would “*not grade too hard. In this class (FYW) the teacher treats us just like normal American students*” (Yenta’s Interview, 2/05/2016). Yenta was more concerned about her final grade in the FYW course as a result, and this created pressure for her that did not exist in the ESL courses.

Among the writing assignments in Michelle’s class, Yenta preferred writing a reading response to a descriptive essay; she said, “*I don’t have much to write about myself*” (Interview, 2/29/2016), which is contradictory to her earlier interviews, in which she reported she preferred writing the personal essays. It seems that Yenta’s difficulty, perhaps, was relative to whether she knew what to write rather than more because of the types of genre. Yenta also reported that she benefitted from the Christopher Columbus research paper because it took her a lot of time, and this allowed her to experience and develop different kinds of skills. For example, she learned how to organize a research paper, and from that knowledge she created a formula that she indicated she was going to use in other classes. In other words, she saw transfer possibilities extending from FYW to future writing situations. On the other hand, she, like some other participants, had mixed feelings about the peer-review dimension of FYW. On the one hand, she found it helpful to see how her native English speaking classmates wrote their papers. However, she, like the other L2 participants rarely gave feedback on their American peers’ papers. They upheld their L2 writers’ identity when working with native English speakers. “*They write well. Their thinking is recursive, good and fluent,*” Yenta said (Interview, 5/03/2016), qualities she and the others felt were lacking in their writing.

On the whole, Yenta noticed improvement in her writing as a result of the FYW course. *“I feel I can write faster. When I write, I can just write,”* she said (Interview, 2/29/2016). When writing, she was able to change words (i.e., use synonyms) quickly and thought in both languages rather than relying on Chinese more than English (Interview, 4/15/2016). She began to plan her papers in English (Interview, 5/03/2016) and accessed her first language skillfully when she needed lexical support. Yenta concluded that critical thinking meant to think through different perspectives on one issue or phenomenon, and the research paper represented what academic English writing constitutes. Thus, she gained considerable knowledge through the FYW course.

7.3.6 Loni (Innovative FYW Section)

Compared to the other L2 participants, FYW was a really challenging course for Loni, though it could also be the case that she struggled with writing in general and so was likely to have difficulties in FYW. Loni pointed out her difficulty in writing in genres for which she had to describe objects as well as state her viewpoints. The difficulty could come from, first, their developmental language proficiency. Secondly, it may also be due to the insufficient knowledge of the topic in order to generate opinions to respond it. For example, when engaged in descriptive writing (e.g., a Character Sketch), she said, *“I know the topic, but I don’t know what writing is good or what to write. It takes me a long time to think,”* Loni said (Interview, 2/25/2016). She reported a few times to the researcher that she needed help, in particular for the Christopher Columbus research paper. Loni was very frustrated about searching for and identifying appropriate sources. Michelle told her to *“go to credible websites”* (Interview, 2/25/2016), but Loni did not know what the teacher was referring to; she really had no concept of what

represented suitable sites. Given these struggles, she resorted to using sources in Chinese in order to understand the topic better (Interview, 2/25/2016). Although she had gained experience writing research papers in the ESL writing course, there was little or no transfer from that involvement. The Columbus paper was not only a longer paper but also required her to “*think more*” about the topic, sources, and what to actually write (Interview, 2/11/2016). However, it turned out that this paper impressed her the most, as she indicated in our last interview, “*because it’s the longest one and I learned a lot about historical knowledge,*” Loni said (Interview, 4/28/2016). Here, interestingly, she focused on the historical knowledge she obtained, not the writing-related knowledge or skills that might have accrued from completing the task.

Prior to the FYW course, Loni took the second course of the ESL writing course sequence. She discussed how she approached the ESL and FYW assignments differently. The assignments (e.g., research papers) in the ESL course were connected to the textbook, and this arrangement had a strong impact on her writing. They were all on the same topic and built on each other, so that there was a narrow focus while completing them. In contrast, Michelle’s tasks were independent and different from each other, and so there was much more engagement involved in understanding as well as completing them. This required considerably more cognitive effort on her part. Those assignments also required her to express personal viewpoints, which was a concern that she shared with Yulia. Loni bluntly reported that “*when asking our own viewpoints, I didn’t have any ... I didn’t have special thoughts*” (Interview, 2/25/2016).

One interesting point of comparison between the ESL and FYW courses was that, where Yulia and Yenta preferred a classroom that consisted of both American and

international students, such as the FYW class, that was not the case for Loni. As she explained, FYW was more challenging in part because “*there were too many foreigners in FYW. In ESL, we were all Chinese and had similar proficiency. I had a better attitude in that class. In FYW, except Chinese students, all foreigners write very well*” (Interview, 2/25/2016). This was an especially interesting observation not only in the sense of Loni preferring an international (and especially Chinese) student environment, but also because she regarded the American students in an American university classroom as “foreigners” when they clearly were not. That she saw them, and not she as well as other international students, as “foreigners” suggests that she had a complex positioning in the University X environment. Indeed, Loni strongly believed that her L2 identity put her at a disadvantage in FYW, because she compared her writing to native English speaker’s writing and found hers seriously lacking. Interestingly, though, when I asked if she would rather take the FYW course directly without the ESL course, she said yes. Her reason was that it would require her taking one less writing course, and that was what mattered most to her. This suggests that writing was not an activity she enjoyed, as noted at the beginning of this subsection.

By and large, and perhaps surprisingly in light of some of the comments she made, Loni indicated that she would recommend Michelle’s FYW course to other international students. She said that “*Practicing writing different kinds of papers is still better ... If we just learned to write one research paper, we were limited. We might also feel annoyed if you were not interested in the topic*” (Interview, 3/30/2016). In other words, Michelle’s FYW gave students multiple opportunities to experience writing different kinds of papers though some topics may not be interesting. Loni still endorsed

Michelle's FYW course. Loni believed her writing had improved, but she also said, "*I feel it (her writing) is still strange and not organized after reading other people's writing*" (Interview, 3/30/2016). Relying on her first language more than English still occurred in her writing process. "*Thinking in Chinese still helps me write better,*" Loni stated, "*because I have more writing practices in Chinese. We had to write essays every day in high school*" (Interview, 4/28/2016). Interestingly, she did not differentiate Chinese writing from English writing, since she organized them in the same way. Despite her earlier endorsement of FYW, these comments suggest a more ambivalent attitude toward the course, a perhaps not surprising situation given her general dislike of writing. On a more positive note, Loni indicated that she may apply her learning from the FYW course in some situations, such as a literature class or her upcoming second-level writing course, thereby envisioning transfer possibilities. However, she did not see transfer to her major courses in Business.

7.3.7 Sono (*Innovative FYW Section*)

Sono, who was making his second attempt at taking a FYW course, liked to compare and contrast his learning in ESL and FYW. He had taken the second course of the ESL writing sequence before venturing into the FYW course. He recognized them as two very different courses, though both focused on academic writing, and saw FYW as more challenging than ESL. However, he felt that the FYW course could be even more challenging if he did not go through the ESL course first. This suggested that the ESL writing course had provided certain beneficial scaffolding for him. The difficulty in FYW was not because he was learning with American students, unlike in ESL. Sono actually pointed out an intriguing limitation in the ESL writing course that did not apply to FYW:

Relying on their shared first language and culture in a setting like the ESL classroom hindered L2 writers' learning (Interview, 3/02/2016), especially since there were many Chinese students in the ESL course, and peers could easily communicate in their first language. Although there were quite a few Chinese students in Michelle's sections, English was still the primary instructional language, and so he could not rely on his Chinese language resources as he could in the ESL course. Furthermore, the ESL course taught academic English writing as well as basic writing skills (e.g., grammar) and was designed to prepare students for other classes rather than just for English classes (e.g., FYW). Sono said, "*I think ESL XXXX was a tool*" (Interview, 1/28/2016), and in that respect was useful, but also limited. The ESL course did not completely fulfill his needs as a L2 student, since he still had to take two writing classes (FYW and the required second year writing course that followed FYW). "*I still have a long way to go,*" Sono said (Interview, 1/28/2016). His response implied an assumption that one writing course would be enough if he were a good writer.

In addition to different activities and types of assignments in the ESL and FYW courses, the major distinction he saw was that in FYW "*you need to have your own viewpoints*" (Interview, 3/02/2016), which corresponds to what Yulia and Loni also said about their FYW course. They were all challenged with respect to this need in FYW to express their viewpoints and develop writing voices. Their past writing experiences in ESL or English education had not provided them with much instruction in this area.

Moreover, FYW's reading materials and assignments were more difficult than those found in the ESL course's textbook. For example, Sono wrote about whether selling laughing gas should be prohibited as the topic of his Common Sense paper,

something he would not have attempted in the ESL course. The difficulty was twofold. First, he was first confused about the assignment prompt, and there was no attempt by the teacher to clarify it; she assumed it was clear. Secondly, it was a task that required him to express his opinions, which he considered to be hard because he had to understand various perspectives on this topic and then elaborate on his own viewpoint. However, after completing this assignment, he stated, *“I think my writing improved a lot as I can articulate my opinions more fluently. I hope I can continue to keep up the progress”* (Sono’s Journal 4).

Sono also reported his difficulty in understanding the literature-related work (e.g., “Dilsey”). The author used *“uncommon descriptive words and without any language descriptions”* to portray characters (Sono’s Journal 5). As a reader, he interpreted the character's mindset by identifying a few keywords. Comparing the Common Sense and Dilsey assignments, Sono pointed out that writing the Common Sense essay was easier than that writing the response to Dilsey, because *“expressing personal opinions is not hard, better than you have to refer to what the author said in an article. Reflecting character’s personality is more difficult”* (Interview, 2/11/2016). When reading materials were too difficult to understand, Sono could not develop his viewpoints because *“it’s difficult to come up with his interpretation of the text”* (Interview, 3/02/2016). Thus, his writing could be hindered by his reading, a situation he did not encounter in the ESL writing class.

As mentioned previously, Sono switched FYW sections during the first month of the semester because of the difficulty he had in adjusting to a mainstream American culture-oriented classroom in the standard section of the course. After two weeks in

Michelle's innovative class, he reported that the class was interesting, "*at least it's more interesting than the previous section. Maybe the previous teacher didn't think about international students a lot. It's more difficult. That class only Americans could understand meanings about politics and history*" (Interview, 2/11/2016). By contrast, Michelle assigned different activities, such as group discussion about a film, and peer-review, and Sono responded well to these activities.

The assignment involving "Falling Man" required him to interpret a specific picture and express his viewpoints. For this assignment, he searched sources related to 9/11 in order to better understand American culture and that particular terrorist attack. It is important to note that Sono did not report any cultural constraint with this assignment as he had in the previous standard FYW section, because he was approaching the Falling Man as a critical incident in American history. Similar to some other L2 participants, Sono stated that his difficulty in writing the Christopher Columbus paper was the research process, instead of his insufficient cultural and historic knowledge about the topic. He said, "*Searching sources is not an easy mission*" (Sono's Journal 7). That apparently was not the case with the "Falling Man" assignment.

In our early interview, Sono defined critical thinking, a key component of FYW, as "*how the authors inform you their thoughts and their minds. They will use like historical stuff, some other skills to inform you, to impress you. That's their skill. You cannot be a fool to just be influenced by the authors. You need to think about in what way they influence you, affect you ... analytical writing is to write down your critical thinking*" (Interview, 1/28/2016). He and Penny shared a similar sentiment about applying critical thinking to other classes. Sono majored in Business, and Penny majored

in Chemistry. Both considered the skills they were learning, particularly about critical thinking, in the FYW course were different from what would be expected in their academic fields, and this situation constrained their appreciation for the FYW course. It meant that they saw limited transfer possibilities, at best. They had fewer writing assignments but more exams in their major courses; they used different skills, such as calculating and memorizing, to complete those tasks. As for those kinds of tasks, Sono said it was unnecessary that he find a perspective or have his own viewpoint in those classes. As a result, learning applications, including critical thinking and analytical skills, for FYW and his major courses were different as well as not connected.

Regarding this transfer angle, Sono's beliefs were actually difficult to decode. The comments already reported suggested a lack of belief in transfer from FYW to other situations. However, Sono also stated that the "*transfer of writing*" will help him across various courses because "*it is a thing (skill) you are using all the time. As long as you are learning, you will use it (writing), not because of the break in between*" (Interview, 3/24/2016). Like the other L2 participants, Sono defined writing as a skill, and "*once you acquire it, you'll be able to use the skill in any contexts,*" Sono said (Interview, 3/24/2016). He later added that "*writing is always writing. Not because of classes, you don't know how to write*" (Interview, 4/29/2016).

Michelle's variety of assignments was an attempt to develop students' writing habits and skills by exposing them to different demands and challenges. Sono agreed with this because, as he said, "*More practices make you perfect. Writing more, the process will be smoother too. Developing more ideas*" (Interview, 2/11/2016). More writing assignments seemed to scaffold his learning process as a result. He learned different

writing strategies from those tasks (Interview, 3/02/2016). Relying on his first language still occurred, but he was aware that it was less frequent than before. However, despite the positive comments just stated, in his last journal entry (Sono's Journal 15), Sono shared that his writing, including his grammar, had not significantly changed. His writing speed, perhaps, improved, but the difference was not obvious to him. The most challenging assignment was still the Christopher Columbus paper. The whole process of completing a research paper took enormous effort from the early stage of finding sources to the writing stage, and his comments suggest that he did not learn as much from this experience, or FYW in general, as he may have hoped.

7.4 Summary

Although writing was consistently challenging for them in FYW, the L2 participants anticipated “good” grades, and all of them received letter grades ranging between A and B. Hence, they performed well, despite the challenges they reported. On the whole, they all seemed to value the FYW course experience to some extent, and there appeared to be a consensus that what they learned in it was more sophisticated than what they learned in the ESL writing course. Beliefs varied in terms of to what extent they would apply, or transfer, FYW learning to future contexts, but in general there was at least a modest belief in transfer possibilities. It was particularly interesting to note their views regarding feedback. That which came from teachers—written and spoken—was clearly valued, while they were somewhat ambivalent when it came to peer feedback from their domestic classmates. There was a dynamic process that the participants in Michelle's class experienced. They first felt that peer feedback benefitted them to improve their own writing. Nevertheless, when feedback later tended to directly point to

their grammatical errors, instead of idea development, their views changed; here they seemed to be most keenly aware of their status as L2 writers. Also interesting were their mixed responses to the course content in FYW, with some ultimately enjoying it and others expressing some degree of dislike or discomfort. Literary texts were clearly difficult to cope with, and heavily 'American' cultural content presented challenges for them.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The present study documented seven second language (L2) undergraduate students' First-Year Writing (FYW) experiences at a Midwestern research university in the United States. To be precise, this study explored how these students engaged a FYW course designed from the perspective of first-language (L1) composition studies, where the primary goal is to teach students to “learn about writing as the appropriate goal of the course (rather than teaching students how to write)” (Wardle & Downs, 2014, p. 276). In particular, the course focused, broadly speaking, on analytic writing and the related development of critical thinking skills, as reflected in the title of the textbook developed for the course and used in many of its sections: *Writing Analytically*. It was this ‘learning about writing’ versus ‘learning how to write’ dichotomy that was of special interest with respect to how it matched the L2 students’ needs and desires as academic writers. This was examined while looking at how the students approached the course’s various analytic writing tasks.

Relative to this instructional context, this study provides ethnographic findings that are currently insufficiently documented in second language writing and composition studies scholarship, despite the fact that it is common in the United States for L2 writers to be enrolled in FYW courses. That is, most literature in both fields (L1 and L2 writing) has suggested the *need* for rethinking how to embrace L2 learners in an introductory

writing course like FYW, while this study indeed investigated *what* and *how* seven L2 undergraduates actually experienced learning to write across three different FYW course settings (that is, sections of the course taught by different instructors). This included accounting, where possible, for the participants' prior participation in L2 writing courses at the same university.

The analytical framework of this study includes connecting L2 participants' English education in their home countries and ESL learning with their learning in the FYW setting. The study's findings thus are constituted from several perspectives, such as by analyzing the course's design and individual course instructor intentions and assignments as well as materials, anatomizing participants' writing processes and responses to the course, and observing classroom activities. This chapter thus discusses these perspectives together with the findings reported in the previous chapters to answer the research questions the study posed. It does so by looking across the seven student cases compiled in the study.

Building upon its overarching research question, "What were the L2 undergraduate students' learning experiences in the FYW course (especially after taking ESL writing courses)?" this study investigated several narrowly constructed research questions that helped answer the overarching question. Those questions were:

Research Question #1: What was the nature of the L2 participants' transition, as writers, from the ESL writing course orientation to the FYW framework?

Research Question #2: What were the L2 participants' perceptions of the transitions involved in the move from ESL to FYW?

Research Question #3: How did the L2 participants respond to the analytically-oriented tasks in FYW?

Research Question #4: What resources did the L2 participants use to address challenges they encountered in FYW?

The first section of this chapter reviews the findings related to those research questions, and considers how the results converge with scholarship in the interplay of second language writing and L1 composition studies. The chapter then concludes by discussing several pedagogical implications related to the study's findings, reviewing limitations associated with the study, and offering suggestions for future research. In addition, the contributions to the field arising from the current study are briefly summarized.

8.2 Brief Summary of Findings

Collectively, the results of this study reveal, first, that the L2 participants used their first languages in various situations, especially when they were completing the writing tasks, which confirmed the findings from previous second language writing (SLW) research (e.g., Beare & Bourdages, 2007; Crossley & McNamara, 2009; Krapels, 1991; Larios, et al., 2006; Sasaki, 2002; Silva, 1993; van Weijen, et al., 2009; Wang & Wen, 2002). That is, the L1 served as a resource in various ways. This was particularly true when the participants encountered challenges as they engaged the assigned reading and writing tasks. Because the study examined the experiences of L2 writers enrolled in a writing course that did not target their characteristics and needs as L2 writers, it was important to learn about possible roles played by the participants' native languages, and examine whether the reliance on their L1 shifts to English more after writing practices in FYW. This signifies an aspect of L2 undergraduates' writing development.

Secondly, the study uncovered a mixed picture regarding the notion of *transfer of learning*, that is, applications of what was learned in FYW to other writing-related situations, such as writing assignments in other courses. Transfer of learning was an important topic for the current study because FYW operates within a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) framework in which it is considered important to help prepare students to meet the writing-related demands they encounter across the undergraduate university curriculum. The results indicate that the participants seemed to be aware of this transfer of learning dimension, but their beliefs about transfer possibilities varied according to the intended future writing contexts. For instance, they recognized, to some extent, that they might experience some transfer when taking General Education Credit (GEC) courses. However, they generally did not envision transfer occurring when writing in their academic majors due to the nature of discipline-specific writing as opposed to the more generic types of writing practiced in FYW. Nor did they report much transfer from their ESL writing course experiences to the FYW context. These findings are in line with the discussions of Beaufort (2007), Nowacek (2011), Wardle and Downs (2014), and Yancey (2014) about the role of a first-year composition class.

A third general category of findings involves an overlap between feedback and the L2 participants' interaction in class. Their participation also implies that they were accommodating to the dominant discourse (e.g., Bartholomae, 2001) which they were not familiar with. The participants saw benefits in both written and oral feedback they received from their instructors, though they did express concerns about their writing ultimately being evaluated according to the standards used for native English-speaking writers. In other words, while the teacher feedback was helpful, in the participants' eyes,

they might be disadvantaged by having their writing in their L2 compared to native speaker standards. Because feedback was also a component of class sessions in the form of peer-review activities, another dimension that emerged involved class participation when a class is composed of mostly native English speaking students and some L2 students. Here the participants expressed admiration for the writing of their native English speaking peers but were reluctant to offer their feedback due to a sense of self-perceived inferiority as L2 users. They also expressed concern about the domestic peers focusing on language issues in their writing, resulting in heightened sensitivity about their status as L2 writers. As a result, they felt a reluctance to participate, since they passively positioned themselves by discarding their multilingual assets which could possibly benefit their mono-lingual peers. These findings converge with SLW scholars (e.g., Tony Silva, Paul Kei Matsuda, and Illona Leki) who advocate for offering a comfortable rather than a threatening environment for L2 students in the kind of mixed population setting found in FYW courses.

Lastly, the study provided an interesting set of findings regarding the processes by which the participants approached and completed their FYW writing tasks. What stood out was the diversity that emerged while looking at the processes they employed. While there was some commonality across the cases, there were also intriguing differences. These differences provided an important reminder about the need to treat L2 writers as individuals and not just one generic group called L2 writers.

8.3 Discussion While Addressing Research Questions

The focus of this chapter now shifts to the series of research questions the current study sought to answer. As noted earlier, the answers provided arise from a process of looking across the seven student cases.

Research Question #1: *What was the nature of the L2 participants' transition, as writers, from the ESL writing course orientation to the FYW framework?*

Most undergraduate L2 writers at American universities experience both ESL writing courses and FYW courses, and so it is important to understand what happens to them as writers as they transition from one of these course settings to the other. This is especially true because the courses tend to operate in different ways, as was the case at University X. Thus, the current study sought to learn about the transitions the L2 student participants experienced.

It did so in part by drawing upon a recently introduced view of writing instruction that was relevant to the research context in the present study. This is Manchón's (2011) important distinction between three major functions of writing instruction: *learning-to-write* (LW), *writing-to-learn-language* (WLL) and *writing-to-learn-content* (WLC). The ESL writing courses at University X embraced the LW and WLL domains, as students were taught essentials about *how to write* academically (LW), and enhancing their English language proficiency while writing (WLL) was another important goal. These LW and WLL orientations went hand-in-hand with the ESL writing courses' foundation in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pedagogy, an approach rooted in the idea that students need to learn core elements of academic writing in English that can then be transferred to other course settings where writing is required. The underlying assumption in EAP pedagogy is that there are certain standard or stable aspects of academic writing

that apply across disciplines. The EAP approach, then, is designed to enhance academic literacy, what Leki (2007) describes as “the activity of interpretation and production of academic and discipline-based texts” (p. 3). In the ESL writing courses at University X, this meant helping students learn how to organize a few essay genres in what were considered standard academic formats while also developing commonly accepted citation practices, much like the participants in an ethnographic study by Gorska (2012). Thus, the ESL courses were, above all, courses where students were being taught *how to write*.

On the other hand, in FYW students were learning *how to use writing* rather than how to write. In this context, WLC fit well with the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) framework at the heart of FYW. WAC accounts for students’ academic literacy needs as they traverse the academic curriculum and seeks to help students view writing as a tool for learning in different curricular settings as well as a means of presenting content in meaningful ways. WAC has both *writing to learn* (WTL) and *writing in the disciplines* (WID) components. To promote their WLC, WTL, and WID goals, the standard and modified FYW courses contextualized a writing course as being built around a theme. That approach emphasizes writing as an analytically-oriented set of skills used to express one’s ideas and voice in relationship to the assigned theme. In other words, these FYW sections operate in such a way that writing serves as a means to facilitate idea development, to develop critical thinking skills, and to acquire knowledge of a topic. The writing process is also experienced at a significant level. All the while, the analytic writing and thinking orientation is preparing students to write across the curriculum and engage disciplinary writing contexts. Much of the same could also be said for the

innovative sections of FYW as shaped by Michelle's approach, though her notion of a course theme differed considerably.

Another key distinction between ESL and FYW at University X revolved around Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) important cognitive model of writing that identifies two primary orientations toward writing instruction: "knowledge telling" and "knowledge transforming." In Bereiter and Scardamalia's scheme, 'knowledge telling' refers to activities such as paraphrasing or the writing of a summary, where students simply display content they have encountered, especially in source texts. They do not reshape or rearrange the content to express some larger meaning; they simply reuse or report it within prescribed ways for doing so. By contrast, in 'knowledge transforming' they are reshaping content encountered so as to meet their own goals as a writer. ESL writing courses are often seen as emphasizing knowledge telling by teaching fundamental writing conventions and essay development. In short, students are taught directly how to write as a knowledge telling activity. By contrast, the FYW course works from a knowledge transforming perspective. In that setting, students are expected to engage in more complex cognitive tasks, for which they not only describe what they know about a text (and a topic through a text or texts), but they also articulate their viewpoints to respond to the text(s) and topic. This is considered a more sophisticated domain of writing, and students are expected to already know about knowledge telling when they enter the course, including L2 writers, who are presumed to have taken at least one ESL writing course and thus acquired a foundation in core writing skills. This is partly why I wanted to investigate L2 writers' transition from ESL writing courses to FYW.

This distinction raises the important issue of whether L2 students are prepared to engage in knowledge transforming as they move from ESL to FYW. According to the study's findings, the transition was generally arduous for the five participants who had taken both an ESL writing course and FYW (Naomi and Anika were exempt from the ESL course requirement, as pointed out in Chapter 5), with only Penny experiencing a relatively smooth transition from the knowledge telling and LW features in ESL to the knowledge transforming and WLC/WTL/WID characteristics in FYW. The other L2 participants often struggled in FYW and spent a lot of time trying to navigate the FYW orientation, even though they eventually obtained solid course grades.

Penny may have benefited from her higher level of English proficiency compared to the other participants, and it appeared that she may have felt limited by the nature of the ESL writing course she took and its knowledge telling/LW orientation. Indeed, she expressed frustration about what she saw as the overemphasis on organization and citation practices in the ESL course. She indicated that she wanted to learn "*real writing*" in FYW that "*focuses on the content*" (Interview, 1/21/2016), such as how to analyze journal articles, and how to use sources in writing. She hoped to write like a native English speaker eventually, and so she seemed fully prepared to make the shift to FYW. Indeed, as was stated in Chapter 7, Penny "*loved*" many aspects of the FYW course, and it was shown how she managed her writing well in the midst of so many native English speaking classmates. There were certain aspects of the course that she did not care for, such as group activities and peer reviews, and lecturing (which was not a part of her section of FYW) was still her favorite learning approach. Still, on the whole it appeared that she was ready to move on to knowledge transforming and the use of writing for

learning and knew how to transition from the previous knowledge telling framework in her ESL writing course.

As for Yulia, Yenta, Loni, and Sono, who were enrolled in Michelle's FYW sections and who had taken at least one ESL writing course, it was difficult to transition to knowledge transforming and using writing to learn. Recalling their ESL experiences, they mainly remembered learning about organizing essays and the APA citation style, as well as grammar, and while they expressed some dissatisfaction with that situation, it was the one they were accustomed to. While limited in scope, with no focus on analysis or critical thinking, it was a place where they were learning how to write academically in English, and so this was likely the construct of a writing course that they carried into FYW. For instance, Sono believed that the ESL courses taught fundamental writing skills that prepared him for any courses rather than only for the FYW course, and so he did not envision a direct path from ESL to FYW. In a similar vein, the other Chinese participants viewed the FYW course as a writing class that was independent from the ESL courses. These views correspond with Blanton's (1998) assertion that ESL writing courses at the college level are designed to not only help students improve their fluency in English but also to prepare them "to read and write in their mainstream academic courses" (p. 224) by introducing them to core academic writing skills that work in those courses. This 'how to write' initiative was not included in FYW, though it shared the same underlying aim of helping students write in other course settings.

As such, these participants may well have expected at least some continuation of the 'how to write' and knowledge telling focus in FYW. Thus, they were perplexed when Michelle and their peers asked them to include their own viewpoints in response to the

assigned texts. Loni, for example, was concerned about inserting her thoughts in her writing, because she often did not have reflections on the topics that she was asked to write about. This was a common struggle for these participants. Then, too, they were no longer being told how to write, and so they had to create their own task representations for how they were supposed to approach the assigned writing tasks. In ESL composition, teachers tend to explain, in detail, how to write specific types of papers being taught when they give writing assignments. There can also be models of the assignments distributed and discussed, with students then imitating the models. None of this was happening in Lisa's and Briana's classes, so that the participants had to engage in much more decision making about how to complete the tasks. Although L2 students could imitate the models of the assignments in Michelle's textbook, a collection of her students' writing samples, they struggled with what constituted good writing or what the teacher expected. In a sense, the transition from knowledge telling/LW to knowledge transforming and WLC/WTL/WID called upon L2 students to configure new approaches to writing and to reconceptualize their construct for an English writing course, and these participants still clung to at least some vision of such a course as a site for more knowledge telling.

It was also interesting to see that Naomi, who had not taken an ESL writing course, also encountered some difficulties. As discussed in previous chapters, Naomi's English classes in the international English school were taught by American and Canadian teachers. Those classes were structured in some ways to resemble the ESL writing courses in Anglo-American universities with EAP features or the knowledge

telling approach. I conceptualized her transition to FYW, though her instance is still subtly different from those of Chinese students.

Naomi was baffled for a time by the focus on the very American-oriented course theme—Sex and Gender in Representations in Modern Society—and had to write a research paper on that topic, which involved knowledge transforming. At the academic level, she assumed “an English course” would teach her how to write, with a focus on essay and sentence structures, as occurs in ESL writing courses. Prior to her arrival at University X, she had learned how to write a five-paragraph essay—perhaps the best known and most established form of writing taught to students—and this became, for her, a template, or, as she called it, a “*formula*,” for any kind of writing. Given this background, she expected more knowledge telling/LW/WLL of the kind she was familiar with, and so she was puzzled as to why an English writing course [FYW] resembled a social studies class wherein she learned more about the course theme than what she considered “*real*” writing. Even without any ESL writing course experience at University X, she had formed the ‘teach how to write’ view of what writing courses should do. It could also be the case that she entered FYW expecting a course directly teaching students how to write because she had not experienced the ESL writing courses and so was missing that entry point into FYW. Eventually, though, the standard FYW course section she was enrolled in changed her approach to writing. In our later interviews, she said writing for her was all about analysis more than just grammar. Her writing approach shifted from what she had known about writing (i.e., format and structure) with newly learned knowledge about how to develop her relationship with the topic and the responses to the texts called for (i.e., analytical writing, or knowledge transforming).

Unlike the Chinese participants, Naomi did not have the “real” ESL writing course experience to transition from. While she did have a certain pre-determined notion of what should happen in a writing course, i.e., knowledge telling, she was not constrained by that view in the ways the Chinese participants might have been and so could more easily move into the analytically oriented orientation in FYW. Her ultimately positive FYW experience occurred, perhaps, because Naomi had a longer history of being situated in the emulated ESL classes throughout her elementary to high school education prior to taking the FYW course. From the skill-based aspect, she possessed high writing competency, so that she was in a sense ready to move into the more sophisticated analytically-oriented writing tasks. However, her adjustment to the “real” American writing course was still painstaking, as it entailed a kind of culture shock. She and the Chinese participants *had no ideas at all* about the FYW framework, which resulted in their difficult transition across writing courses and transnational educational systems.

As Galbraith (2009) has stated, learning in a writing course structured within a knowledge transforming framework (i.e. FYW) requires novice writers to adapt appropriate rhetorical strategies to the needs of the reader. In these circumstances, such writers need to have discourse knowledge so they can tailor their viewpoint in order to achieve their communicative goals. For many L2 writers, it may be difficult to achieve that approach to writing, because they are unfamiliar with genres in the target language academic discourse and are still improving their target language proficiency. Thus, they may face hurdles not encountered by many L1 writers, especially when it comes to developing the ‘voice’ aspect of writing (Mangelsdorf, Roen, & Taylor, 1990). Grabe and Kaplan (1996) pointed out that “the ability of students to find their own ‘voice,’ and to

develop a voice that is appropriately academic, is a difficult task” (p. 373), and yet that was an expectation in FYW (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996).

For the Chinese participants of this study, it was difficult, in part because they had not been “asked” to do it in ESL classes or had a “wrong” idea about ‘voice’ in their writing. As Yulia discussed in one of our interviews, her ESL teacher commented that she should not use “I” in her research papers. She then overgeneralized her teacher’s comment as well as was not aware of the relationship between genre and voice representation. Hirvela and Belcher (2001) have noted that L2 students are not voiceless; as such, writing instructors “need to find ways to help them make effective use of these voice-related schemata” (p. 89), especially for those novice writers who have just entered academic writing courses. They, perhaps, need better understanding and aspiration in terms of how they can perform their voice in discourses and activities (Kramersch, 2003; Witte, 2014). In the case of FYW, this could entail instructors being more sensitive to the challenges many L2 writers will have in shifting from a knowledge telling/LW/WLL expectation to a knowledge transforming context, and in learning how to use their own ‘voice’ when engaged in analytic writing tasks. Pedagogically, this can lead to aiming at helping L2 writers learn to negotiate and perform their voice by connecting the ideological, institutional, linguistic, and rhetorical contexts (Canagarajah, 2004)

Cumming (1995) suggested that “students who have not yet developed a knowledge-transforming approach to composing may have to be prompted to do so through instructional approaches aimed specifically at this goal” (p. 379), and for the participants in the current study, this prompting was not present, at least in the standard and modified sections of the course. The story was perhaps a little different in Michelle’s

innovative sections. In those sections, students wrote a variety of essays that built their analytical skills without confining them within a culturally-oriented course theme.

Michelle's focus was on helping to develop students' "*habit of writing*", especially within a knowledge transforming framework, through multiple opportunities to write. Under these circumstances, students created a toolbox of skills as they engaged in the writing process, especially since Michelle emphasized revising as part of one's writing process. Though this did not directly involve a teaching students how to write (i.e. LW) approach, as in the ESL writing courses, there were elements of that approach in Michelle's sections. Her course topic was actually writing itself, not a culturally-oriented theme, and so the L2 participants may have ultimately found it easier to transition to her knowledge transforming emphasis as reflected in analytic forms of writing.

Research Question #2: *What were the L2 writers' perceptions of the transitions involved as they moved from ESL to FYW?*

This question was constructed as a follow-up to the previous question. While the previous question looked at actual writing-related transitions, this question touches more upon attitudes. The co-existence of, and possible relationships between, ESL writing courses and FYW courses at many American universities constitutes a situation of considerable interest to many writing scholars, especially since most international undergraduate students will participate in such courses. This situation raises important questions about such students' transitions from ESL to FYW courses, especially their transfer of learning about writing. However, relatively little is known about such transitions, and it was this gap in the research which led to the second research question.

In the current study, the Chinese participants, who were the ones enrolled in an ESL writing course prior to FYW, viewed the ESL courses as their first college writing classes. In this regard, the FYW course was assumed by them to be an advanced, more difficult writing course than the ESL courses, particularly since it was taken by many native English speaking students who would presumably not need to learn what was taught in ESL courses. Then, too, it occurred *after* the ESL courses, a positioning that in itself could suggest it would be more advanced in nature. Thus, and as shown in response to the first research question, the participants did not think the courses were connected in curricular terms, and in fact there were important differences between them beyond the knowledge telling-knowledge transforming distinction already made. ESL writing courses at University X are designated only for international students from non-English dominant countries holding an F1 student visa, while the FYW course is designed to teach *every* undergraduate, international and domestic. Furthermore, the courses are offered by different departments, so that there is no official or formal connection between them, and those designing them tend to draw from different bodies of writing scholarship. In addition, the ESL courses are taught by individuals with training in working with L2 students, while FYW course sections are taught by individuals with little or no such training. Moreover, FYW instructors and most students are *Americans*, while many ESL writing courses at University X are taught by individuals who themselves are L2 writers teaching L2 writers.

Under these circumstances, it was not only the move from knowledge telling/LW/WLL to knowledge telling and WLC/WTL/WID that the participants found challenging. In particular, the participants generally considered themselves to be in a

disadvantaged position when learning with native English speakers in FYW. In the ESL writing courses, their L2 peers were similar in terms of language proficiency, culture, and literacy experience, and since some ESL writing instructors were L2 speakers of English as well, they could be presumed to empathize somewhat with L2 students' difficulties in ways native English speaking teachers (like those in FYW) might not, or at least understand what the students were experiencing. At the very least, in the ESL writing courses, students' work was graded relative to expectations and standards applying only to L2 writers, and so all of the students were 'in the same boat' in terms of how their work was assessed. It meant the playing field was level. As shown in Chapter 7, this was an area where the transition to FYW was challenging, as the participants worried about their work being evaluated relative to native English speaking writers, who were the majority population in FYW. The participants feared, perhaps unavoidably, that their L2 writing would inevitably look weak compared to what they presumed would be the polished and well developed writing of the American students. Thus, they may have operated from a kind of self-imposed deficit orientation as writers.

Also, as was shown in Chapter 7, in the ESL writing courses the participants had a certain comfort level regarding participation because they were always interacting with students like themselves and thus felt a certain degree of relaxation. With nearly all of the students in ESL writing courses being Chinese, this created a kind of familiar and safe environment in which to operate. In the transition to FYW, they often struggled with having to interact with their far more linguistically and culturally proficient native English speaking classmates. That interaction seemed to highlight their imperfect English, especially during peer review activities. This was a difficult transition to

manage, especially when, as shown in Chapters 6 and 7, the participants did not have the cultural knowledge necessary to fully understand and respond to the kinds of materials used in FYW that were much easier for the native English speaking students to handle.

As Leki (2001) argued in her ethnographic case studies, L2 students need to work hard to adjust to American classrooms culturally and socially, in addition to their focus on improving language proficiency and writing development. Consequently, the Chinese participants knew the transition as they moved from ESL to FYW would be challenging in terms of the overall ecology of the FYW classroom environment. They went from being the majority (ESL) to the minority (FYW) and had to negotiate different standards and expectations. ESL courses, to some extent, focus more on L2 students' "mechanistic abilities that focus on separating out and manipulating discrete elements of a text—such as spelling, vocabulary, grammar, topic sentences, and outlines" (Heath & Mangiola, 1991, p. 40) due to their limited repertoire of literate behaviors in English. By contrast, the majority of FYW students are native English speakers who are assumed to have ample experiences of literate behaviors in English, and the FYW course is calibrated to account for these conditions. This situation put the L2 participants in a difficult spot. Lawrick (2013) suggested that FYW Program administrators should be aware of L2 students' literacy experiences and cultural background "prior to their participation in a U.S. FYC course" (p. 49). The results of the current study appear to support Lawrick's point of view in the sense that more could perhaps be done to anticipate the complex positioning of L2 writers in the FYW course environment.

Research Question #3: *How did the L2 participants respond to the analytically-oriented tasks in FYW?*

The heart of a writing course is what students are actually asked to do in the course—the writing assignments or tasks they encounter. The discussion in response to the previous two research questions looked more broadly at the participants' experiences in FYW. However, another important topic in the current study was the participants' interactions with specific tasks, as this would provide more of a micro analysis of their FYW experiences. Data in both Chapters 6 and 7 was relevant to this inquiry, especially with respect to their writing processes and the resources they utilized as they faced different tasks and had to learn how to write analytically. Here it is important to remember the interplay between writing tasks. The tasks did not operate as discrete elements but instead often fed into each other, especially in service to the course themes in the case of the standard and modified sections of the course.

The findings revealed that none of the major FYW tasks were considered easy when looking at the participants as group, so the focus here will be on the challenges related to various tasks. According to the Chinese participants in Michelle's class, responding to literature (i.e., the "Dilsey" task) was especially difficult. Here their level of language proficiency was an issue, as literary texts often feature colloquial uses of language, often in specific cultural contexts, that the participants were unable to decode easily. They lacked experience with literary texts in English to begin with, and so they were better equipped to cope with more standard uses of language, especially as found in more academic types of texts, rather than the conversational English occurring in texts like "Dilsey." This is also where their transition from ESL was a factor, since in that course they were not required to read and write about literary texts. As such, they lacked schema related to literary texts. Nor had that course taught American cultural content.

Thus, reading and responding to literary texts in FYW was bound to be difficult for them. Even if they understood the literary texts, there was still the matter of crafting personal responses to the texts, a kind of writing new to them and for which they had no existing schema to work with.

The L2 students also found that descriptive writing (i.e., Character Sketch) could be difficult, though not to the degree experienced in literature-based writing. First of all, this kind of task required a large vocabulary that would allow them to describe and illuminate an object. Secondly, learning English in their home country, according to their reports, focused on sentence structure. They had few experiences writing more than one paragraph essays before coming to University X and only a few such experiences in the ESL writing course. This made it difficult to build more extensive descriptions or to know how much description was appropriate. Still, the topics of those essays were often about their lives, such as pets, food, music and other subjects they had experienced, and so they had schema to work with. What they needed to do was develop an appropriate task representation for descriptive writing as defined in the context of the FYW course, and that's where some difficulty existed for them.

Writing a research paper was another challenging task for the L2 participants. Indeed, this task stood out in their comments about FYW. In this case, they had to conquer different types of task demands, beginning with searching for and appropriately reading source texts. Then they had to figure out how to incorporate the sources into their writing. This was where their ESL writing course experience could be more helpful, as they had been required to learn how to work with source texts in terms of writing summaries and engaging in various citation practices. In this case, they had an

opportunity to transfer ESL course learning to FYW, but the composing circumstances differed, and so this was not an easy form of transfer to enact. Nor did the participants reference engaging in this kind of transfer, even though it was readily available to them. As Bailey (2013) has shown, the first challenge of writing a research paper is “finding source material” (p. 175), a process that involves a range of literacy and problem-solving skills, and there had not been enough experience in the ESL course to acquire such skills at a deeper level. A particular issue was that the ESL course had taught them core skills for using source texts, but not locating them, especially highly suitable texts.

The latter point was one that was clearly reflected in participant comments and was confirmed by class observations. A common assumption among the FYW instructors was that the students already knew about the tools or resources necessary to conduct research. In fact, not only the L2 participants, but also their American peers, lacked knowledge in this regard, including how to use the University Library Research resources for their projects. And when such instruction was provided, as in Michelle’s sections, it apparently sounded vague and abstract to the novice L2 researchers. Complicating matters was the emphasis in FYW on using writing as a tool rather than teaching students how to write. The L2 participants lacked a meaningful task representation for research paper writing, and so, when instructions for how to write the research paper were lacking, they were left to their own devices in terms of finding ways to approach the assignment. At the rhetorical level, the instructors had incorrectly assumed students had experience writing a research paper and knew how to write one, but the students lacked relevant schema to work with.

Besides finding sources, integrating sources posed another challenge to the L2 writers. The confusion of L2 writers with high language proficiency (i.e., Naomi, Penny and Anika) was due to their lack of a clear understanding about how to use sources to support their arguments. In other words, they wanted genre-oriented knowledge for source text integration in the belief that this would differ for argumentatively oriented writing. By contrast, other Chinese participants were overwhelmed by linguistically related components prior to worrying about rhetorically related tactics. Dealing with the complex grammatical structures of, in particular, scholarly journal articles took them a lot of time, because the L2 students had to decode the language in addition to the content.

What was really missing with respect to research-related writing was a deeper understanding of or handling of reading-writing connections on both the participants' and the teachers' parts. According to Grabe (2001), there are at least five perspectives on understanding reading-writing relations; these include reading to learn, writing to learn, reading to improve writing, writing to improve reading, and reading and writing together for better learning (p. 15). For the participants, in both ESL and FYW, the focus had been on writing; reading was a neglected area, and yet at least some of their writing in both courses was based on reading within a reading-for-writing framework. However, like writing, reading, as a literate ability, requires extensive practice and guidance. There is also a need for guidance in connecting it to writing. Each course section and the teachers failed to account for these factors. Then, too, as Yulia said in one of her interviews, she did not like reading, and "*reading is too boring*" (Interview, 01/18/2016). Reading was also not particularly appealing for the other participants as related to FYW, especially since it could involve culturally-based content they could not easily access. Bailey

(2013) indicated that L2 students “may need to acquire new reading strategies” (p. 177) in support of their reading proficiency in English, especially when writing about their reading, and this was an area the students had not learned about in the ESL course or in prior instruction. This made it especially difficult for them to engage in the kind of reading necessary for analytic writing of the type stressed in FYW, let alone the transfer of input acquired through that reading to their writing, a process that novice L2 writers frequently struggle with (Hirvela, 2016). While a research paper is designed as an attempt to develop critical thinking and analytical skills, for these L2 novice writers, scaffolding the research process, including providing direct instruction for finding and evaluating sources as well as shifting them into an essay, is necessary, and this is where FYW was lacking for them.

Looking more deeply at the points just raised, it appeared from the findings that the difficulties in completing some course assignments were, at least to some extent, the result of the unclear teacher expectations and assignment prompts. For example, when writing the SSI paper, Penny was confused, in particular, about what the integration of secondary sources meant. *Integration* implied using sources as evidence to acknowledge one’s claim; nevertheless, Penny did not know *integrating sources* as a rhetorical term in academic English writing. Moreover, the course theme—short stories—implied that the primary sources would be literature-based texts, while the secondary sources would be scholarly journal articles. However, literary characters are fictional in contrast to journal articles stating facts. Under these circumstances, Penny found it difficult to use journal articles as secondary sources to support her argument about fictional characters. She had a task representation for such writing that was not aligned with her teacher’s

expectations, a situation that might not have existed for her native English speaking peers, who had likely experienced similar writing (and reading) in high school. On the other hand, Naomi's concerns were more language-related. For example, she was anxious that Lisa did not provide her with enough explicit writing instruction or grammar lessons to aid her with her sentence structure.

A finding that stood out among all of the participants was how lack of understanding of assignment prompts contributed to struggles they experienced in FYW. Michelle assigned a variety of papers, and the L2 participants reported their confusion regarding the assignment instructions. Basically, they felt that too little attention had been paid to explaining the assignments, a situation that likely had not occurred in their ESL writing course. The result was that they frequently struggled to assemble appropriate task representations, not only because of the lack of explanation from their teacher, but also because these were new kinds of assignments for them. For example, Yulia, Loni and Sono reported that they spent a lot of time trying to figuring out the task demands of the Common Sense paper, including such issues as what counted as common sense, and what the structure of the paper should be like. Was it an expository, explanatory, or argumentative essay? Did they need sources? These were issues where they felt they needed explicit instructor guidance.

Here, in addition to overall task representation, they lacked genre knowledge. Those findings converge with genre scholarship (Bawarshi, 2000; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011; Soliday, 2011) indicating that every academic task is culturally and rhetorically contextualized. As Canagarajah (2011) stated, L2 writers encounter difficulties "in the writing and knowledge interplay" (p. 113) as they encounter

many tasks for the first time in writing courses. They are already influenced by their first language in terms of writing and rhetorical conventions, i.e., L1 schema, which may conflict with academic English conventions. New textual genres require them to reconfigure their rhetorical knowledge, and this is not an easy task when performed without instructor guidance. Proficient multilingual writers may be able to represent their knowledge in diverse manners and contexts. However, the L2 participants were novice writers in American academic discourse. Canagarajah (2011) suggested that “students have to be taught not only forms and conventions of the new language; they also have to be made aware of their implications for knowledge representation” (p. 113). These suggestions resonate strongly with the situation that existed for the participants in FYW.

The findings disclose the shortcomings of the tasks as well as activities in those FYW classes. They were structured with an assumption that students already knew how to approach the tasks and to participate effectively in the activities. From American instructors’ perspective, participating in class or small group discussion and peer-review was self-explanatory. As Leki (2001) pointed out, the domestic students are like the *experienced peers* of Vygotsky’s (1978) work who may know more about local, institutional, linguistic, and social conventions, a situation that did not apply to the L2 participants in the current study. Though they would have experienced peer review and small group discussion in the ESL writing course, such interaction was with other L2 writers in the ‘safe zone’ of a writing course aimed at L2 writers. In FYW, these activities occurred mostly with native English speaking peers, and findings were presented earlier showing how the participants generally struggled with that dynamic.

The gap between the assumptions of what students knew about how to participate and what students actually knew contributed to the language and cultural difficulties that the international students experienced in FYW. For instance, Naomi could not participate in discussion because of her insufficient cultural knowledge about American-oriented topics. Penny did not like in-class group activities, in part because of her personality, but also because of her preferred learning style: she liked being a *passive* learner in class, and she would rather listen to lectures, take notes, and do tasks by herself than interact with peers. The L2 students in Michelle's class also expressed their frustration with group activities due to vague instructions for conducting group work. In Leki's (2001) research on NES students' participation in group projects, their unsatisfactory experience was partially because they "were barely given more than a direction to work in groups" (p. 59) in addition to linguistic difficulty. To create a successful group work experience, Leki suggested "a teacher's intervention to assert equality of roles within the group" (p. 60). For example, Briana walked around the class to ensure every student's participation in a group. However, this was an exception, not a rule, in the current study.

Research Question #4: *What resources did the L2 participants use to address challenges they encountered they faced in FYW?*

While the participants encountered certain challenges in FYW, it was also interesting to see how they dealt with those challenges. Learning about this aspect of their FYW experiences was another of the current study's goals, as reflected in this research question. The findings showed that they were often resourceful and creative, and the solid grades they received for the course indicated that the strategies they adopted worked well.

One noteworthy finding was that these L2 learners demonstrated what is called “translingual practice” (Canagarajah, 2013) or multicompetence (Cook, 1999) when completing writing tasks. They had their own repertoire of writing-related strategies (e.g., sticky notes, outlines, etc.). They were also quite adept at using language as a resource, including relying to some extent on L1 in a language-switch approach, as revealed in their think-aloud protocols in Chapter 6. Their first language functioned as a tool to solve problems, and to fill in language and knowledge gaps. These findings converge with SLW scholarship (Ellis, 1994; Friedlander, 1990; Leki, 1997; McLaughlin, 1990; Myles, 2002; Odlin, 1989; Spack, 1997; Widdowson, 1990), in which language-switch or translation occurs naturally in a L2 learner’s writing process. Connor (1996) pointed out that linguistic and rhetorical conventions cannot always transfer successfully across languages, and to some degree, can create negative interference (Odlin, 1989). To solve linguistic problems arising in writing, participants used various resources, such as online dictionaries (e.g., Dictionary.Com, Thesaurus.Com, etc.), Google Translate, some common “go-to” places (e.g., Google, Wikipedia, and Baidu), and the Writing Center.

At the linguistic level, online resources through computers or portable electronic devices in the Digital Era are convenient as well as essential to assist L2 writers in problem-solving circumstances. That was certainly the case for the participants in the current study. What was interesting in this regard was the extent to which they relied on L1 and L2 resources. At the rhetorical level, in particular, the Chinese participants worked with American-based (i.e., English language) resources. Earlier in the course, they mainly used Chinese language applications and websites, but they gradually changed to searching for information in English (i.e., colloquial English explanations of Dilsey).

Interestingly, the findings indicated that reliance on L1 or language-switch occurred less frequently as students gained more writing practice in FYW. Participants in Michelle's class developed a *mode of writing*; that is, writing became natural to them as a result. It became the "habit," as indicated earlier in the chapter, that she hoped it would. More importantly, they became more comfortable with writing when they were able to apply previous writing experiences. If genres were similar to each other, L2 writers employed the same strategies. Loni and Yenta reported that some of essays they wrote in FYW were similar to the format of TOEFL or SAT essays, and so they approached writing them in the same way. Naomi's five-paragraph essay writing experience in her international school created her perception of academic English writing, and she transferred that style to her FYW writing where she felt she could. For her it became a default style in light of the lack of direct instruction on how to write the assigned papers. It was also likely that this is where they could draw, at least a little, from their experiences in the ESL writing course, such as in the use of source texts, an important focus in the ESL course.

These instances infer *transfer of learning* (across assignments). In Leki's (2011) work, she assumed that L2 writer's previous genre experiences in L1 and L2 affected "how they approached and constructed texts in [a] new context" (p. 88), while James (2006, 2008, 2009) claims the transfer of learning from previous genre experiences is difficult to accomplish. The genre does not 'dictate' writing conventions, per se (Hyland, 2012); however, Leki found that students knew how to approach writing tasks in their L1 and L2 differently when they increased their genre knowledge. Transferability, as she concluded, occurs "sometimes implicitly sometimes explicitly" (p. 104).

Where there was a mixed picture with respect to use of resources was in the domain of feedback, as discussed in depth in Chapter 7. Here there was a divide between teacher and peer feedback. Teacher feedback was viewed positively across the board among the participants, consistent with findings from Ferris (2004). Naomi and Penny, for example, viewed teacher feedback as guidance to confirm if they followed assignment prompts correctly, and they calibrated what they wrote relative to what the teacher expected. Especially interesting was how Penny recognized only teacher feedback rather than other writing support. As she said in one of our interviews, “*I have my ideas, which may be different from those of other people, so peers can’t help me*” (Interview, 5/02/2016). The teacher, on the other hand, gave explicit instructions on how to improve her paper, advice that Penny trusted, whereas she lacked such trust in peer commentary. Thus, Penny only sought teacher feedback because she concluded that only the teacher knew what she should write and how she should write it. Hence, she wrote only according to what the instructor expected, an approach that would probably have displeased Michelle, who wanted students to develop agency in their writing as their critical thinking and analytic writing skills increased.

As for feedback via peer review, peer responding activity grants autonomy to students, which encourages students to be independent and to develop a sense of ownership and commit to their work (Leki, 2001). Nevertheless, the L2 participants had mixed feelings about peer review. As discussed in previous chapters, a binary perspective on participating in peer review existed among them. On the one hand, reading peers’ writing as *sample essays* enabled the L2 writers to gain insights into their own writing, especially since they assumed essays written by native English speakers must be good

due to their native English speaker status. This view corresponds with Cumming's (1995) suggested pedagogy for teaching ESL students—modeling writing for students. Text modeling displays syntactic forms or specific rhetorical patterns that students can “analyze and then emulate in their own writing” (p. 382). Similarly, peers' writing functions as a model; L2 students can acquire familiarity with the specific genres.

On the other hand, and as discussed earlier, the L2 writers considered their position to be disadvantaged in this kind of activity. They were not able to provide feedback on their American peers' writing because “*they wrote so well*” (Yulia's Interview, 2/02/2016), a view that was commonly held among the participants. This also left them especially sensitive about their own writing when it was read by their American peers. Anika, in particular, was hesitant to share her writing because it seemed to her that she was being evaluated by peers. Thus, despite the intentions of the FYW instructors, peer review tended to be counter-productive for the L2 writers.

What may have helped these students, had they known of it, was exposure to a well-known article by Fan Shen (1988), who discussed his own experiences in a FYW class. Recently arrived from China, he found himself struggling to meet the expectations for academic writing in English. After considerable struggle, he arrived at certain conclusions about how to overcome the kinds of challenges he encountered. As he said, learning to write in English is “not an isolated classroom activity, but a social and cultural experience” (p. 124). It is a process of not only learning the rules of English composition but also, to a certain extent, “learning the values of Anglo-American society” (p. 124). The first rule in a FYW class, as Fan Shen suggests, is: Be yourself. However, this means that instead of using the *first* language/cultural identity, create a *second* identity—an

English Self—to think and write. The peer review activities in FYW offered the participants such an opportunity to socialize into the American educational culture they found themselves within at University X, but they did not see such an opportunity. FYW gave them a meaningful opportunity to learn the nuances of the “writing game” of the academic community (Casanave, 2002), but it appears that the participants were not yet ready to embrace that perspective.

8.4 Discussion of Answers to Research Questions

In this section, there is extended discussion about the answers to the research questions by scrutinizing multiple perspectives related to the data sources. That is, while those answers focus on depicting the L2 students’ accounts, it is also necessary to take into consideration non-participants’ viewpoints, which include the comments of the teachers and the Director of the First-Year Writing Program. Although those individuals’ responses are already presented in Chapter 4, they have not been looked at relative to what the student participants reported. Discussing them now in relationship to what the students said provides a more balanced view of what actually took place in the FYW classes. Also pertinent is especially relevant L2 writing research, including a previous study of some relevance also conducted at University X.

8.4.1 Research on Second Language Writing in Composition Classes

Before discussing, through comparisons, the students’, teachers’, and Director’s sides of the story presented in this study, it is necessary to relate the findings of the current study to other studies, so as to better understand this study’s contributions to the fields. While many L2 writing studies (see Bailey, 2013; Chiang & Schimida, 2006; De Larios, et al., 2006) point to the obstacles that L2 students encounter when writing in the

L2, a key point is that most of them were conducted in research sites such as ESL writing classes, where the EAP orientation is dominant (Hyland & Shaw, 2016), as is the knowledge telling approach discussed earlier. There has been very little focus on L2 student writers' experiences beyond the ESL course context, including sites like FYW.

Additionally, while some studies (see Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Hirvela, 2005a; Hirvela & Du, 2013; Leki, 1995; Perl, 1979; Pinnow, 2011; Tran, 2011; Zamel, 1998) adopted qualitative methods, a qualitatively case study approach centered on one course is rare in SLW research and in composition studies. The current study shares some similarities with Leki's (2007) groundbreaking five-year work, *Undergraduates in a Second Language: Challenges and Complexities of Academic Literacy Development* in the early 2000s. She investigated L2 undergraduates' academic literacy experiences starting from first-year writing courses on through to the other course experiences until graduation. Our commonalities include the research methods and the selected research site—the first-year writing courses. Interestingly, in both Leki's research and the current study, all of the L2 undergraduate participants reported that they did not perceive writing as a means to promote their intellectual growth. In their early writing development, L2 writers did not comprehend the concepts of WTL and WID, with which they could develop other skills, such as critical thinking or analytical ability. Another critical commonality of our findings is about transfer of learning. Our studies draw upon “transferability of literacy skills as general principles” (Leki, 2007, p. 239) to assess whether L2 undergraduates perceived general-education writing courses assisting them in coping with writing demands in other courses. Our participants reported they were able to

‘transfer’ the subset of their learning about sentence-level features, but a FYW type course seemed insufficient to prepare them for writing across the courses.

Besides comparing the current study to Leki’s ethnographic, longitudinal case study, another important point of comparison is Park’s (2009) unpublished dissertation that was also conducted at University X and researched L2 undergraduates’ academic socialization in multiple courses, including the FYW course. It is important to compare the findings of this current study to Park’s because nearly a decade has passed since her study was conducted in the same research site, and both the ESL and FYW courses have undergone some changes. Table 8.1 presents some major similarities and differences between this current study and Park’s study. However, an important note is that we took different approaches to conducting our research. First, the theoretical frameworks of both studies are very different. Park was interested in the L2 undergraduates’ academic socialization, and she grounded her dissertation in Lea and Street’s (2000) academic literacies model, Lave and Wenger’s (1991) situated learning theory, Wenger’s (1998) CoP (community of practice) view of learning, and dialogism (Bahkin, 1981; Mercer, 1995). None of these foci applied to the current study; nor did it investigate academic socialization. Secondly, she used a multi-site approach by following international undergraduates in and out of various classroom contexts to examine international students’ academic socialization experiences, while the current study focused only on FYW. Third, she followed L2 participants for a full academic year, in contrast to this study’s one-semester data collection period. Still, comparing our findings sheds valuable light on the academic literacy experiences of undergraduate L2 writers.

	Park's (2009) Study on Academic Socialization of International Undergraduates	This Current Study on L2 Undergraduates' Learning Experiences in the FYW Course
Similarities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The same research university and FYW course • First-Year International Undergraduates • Ethnography Case Study • Findings: FYW is efficient; learning to focus on analysis in writing; deviating from the five-paragraph essay; developing claims and evaluating sources; using multiple writing strategies 	
Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical Frameworks: Lea and Street's (2000) academic literacies model, Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory, Wenger's (1998) CoP and dialogism (Bahkin, 1981; Mercer, 1995) • Multiple L2 students and focal student group • An academic year of data collection across different courses • Data sources: observations, interviews and cultural artifacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical Frameworks: Emig's (1971) and Flower and Hayes' Process Model, Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) models of <i>knowledge telling</i> and <i>knowledge transforming</i>, WAC's Writing to Learn and Transfer of Learning • Seven L2 students • A semester of data collection across three FYW sections • Data sources: observations, interviews, journals, think-aloud protocols, and cultural artifacts

Table 8. 1 Comparison of Park's (2009) Study and This Current Study

Moving now to the results of these studies, first of all, we both found that developmental writers like the L2 undergraduates in our studies experienced challenges “while transitioning to discourse communities because their writing practices are grounded on different belief systems” (Park, 2009, p. 77). Joon and Nana, participants in Park's study, also took the advanced ESL writing class prior to the FYW class. They reported differences between those two classes which are similar to my Chinese participants' reflections; that is, the ESL classes emphasized “writing as forms” (Park, 2009, p. 63) and format, such as citation styles. Also, Joon's pre-college English education in his home country was influential in reinforcing his command of the five-

paragraph essay writing approach taught in the ESL course, making it difficult for him to leave that approach in FYW. Likewise, Naomi in this current study could not deviate from her previously acquired five-paragraph essay structure when writing in FYW. Our findings show this similarity that L2 students' English education of learning how to write in English outside of the United States focused on the fundamental essay structure—the five-paragraph essay. Nevertheless, such grounded writing practices made their transition to FYW challenging. For example, in Park's study, Hosoo's FYW instructor asked him to deviate from the restricted five-paragraph essay writing approach, because the course emphasized content and analysis, and its analytically-oriented tasks were designed to show that writing is logical and based on the development of claims and evidence while revolving around 'analysis'. Moreover, like Park's participants (e.g., Joon, Nana and Hosoo), Naomi and Penny in the current study reported that their FYW course was “efficient” in terms of learning rhetorical strategies (e.g., ethos, logos and pathos) to help them analyze.

Secondly, after taking FYW, our L2 participants all came to employ multiple strategies, such as outlining, to cope with writing tasks. The findings show that the process of learning to write consists of not only knowledge of what counts as academic writing but also strategies for completing writing tasks. This was demonstrated, for example, Park's analysis of Hosoo's development of declarative knowledge and moving from it to procedural knowledge. L2 undergraduates were able to employ *artifact and peer mediation* (Lantolf, 2000), such as using sample essays and peer review to complete tasks (e.g., research papers).

However, there was also a noteworthy difference between the two studies. All in all, Park's (2009) L2 undergraduates reported positive learning experiences in ESL and FYW. They also seemed to have smooth transitions from ESL to FYW. For example, Hosoo's ESL writing teacher provided step-by-step guidance for writing a research paper. He was able to apply, or transfer, this knowledge to his learning to write in FYW. In FYW, he could expand his thoughts and make them more complex by reading the source materials, so that what he experienced in ESL served a kind of scaffolding function for him that eased his transition into FYW. Joon, too, shifted well into the academic literacy demands of FYW, so that ESL served as a useful bridge. In contrast, the L2 undergraduates of this current study, regardless of which type of FYW class they took, reported a considerably different understanding of learning to write in FYW. As discussed earlier, they struggled with task representation in FYW and did not see a bridging relationship between ESL and FYW. For them, the courses represented very different experiences of L2 academic writing that did not lead to a scaffolding relationship in the transition from ESL to FYW. While this difference could be accounted for simply by individual differences among the research participants, it could also be the case that both ESL and FYW had changed since Park's study was conducted. At the time of Park's study, the courses may have been more closely aligned in terms of what they asked students to do, with a reduction in that alignment in later years.

8.4.2 Discussion of Students' Response to FYW

The current study sought to investigate L2 students' experiences in the FYW course by delving into how they approached the writing tasks and depicting each individual's writing process, as presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Their accounts reveal that

they did not understand the objectives of the FYW course well enough to report what they learned about writing in that writing course, in contrast to what was seen in Park's study. It also seemed that they had expectations for a course like FYW that were not well matched with how the course actually operated. For example, Naomi in Lisa's class complained about insufficient instruction regarding how to structure her papers. She wanted a formula to apply, and she never received one. Penny in Briana's class wanted more lectures and less in-class (group) activities. Like Joon in Park's (2009) study, Penny seemingly refused to "locate [herself] in the academic culture" (Sommers & Saltz, 2004, p. 131) of the course and socialize into the academic discourse environment it constituted. She also pointed out that source analysis in the Humanities (i.e., FYW) was different from what she would do in the sciences, even though Briana engaged students in analyzing a variety of artifacts in the hope of helping them acquire analytical skills that could be applied in other course settings. Penny did not see, or did not believe in, that possibility.

Another interesting example of this occurred with the L2 students in Michelle's FYW sections, who never even mentioned learning to write analytically, despite that being the key focus of the course. Nor did they mention developing better critical thinking skills after writing numerous papers in the course. In general, although in the interviews, I asked them about their understanding of those skills, from their answers it appeared that they did not discern those skills revolving around academic writing. In short, they seemed to know little about the purpose of the tasks in which they participated and what their teachers as well as the course taught them. This was especially true among the L2 students in Michelle's innovative class. While Michelle aimed to teach students to

develop a toolkit for the skills that they would need in college, the participants said little about what they learned from each task. They completed the tasks, but there were no real indications that they were aware of what they were supposed to learn while doing so.

All in all, regardless of which FYW sections participants were in, they showed limited understanding of the FYW course at University X that was designed with an aim to develop novice writers' rhetorical knowledge of conventions and ability to work with outside sources (Director Interview, 2/28/2016). This was a striking disconnect between course intentions and student uptake of what they were exposed to and practiced.

This discordant alignment between the course designs and students' responses, perhaps, is a result of the dichotomy between 'learning how to write' versus 'learning about writing,' and the challenge of moving from knowledge telling to knowledge transforming. What this situation suggests is that these are not easy moves for many L2 undergraduate writers to make in a relatively short period of time, i.e., one academic semester featuring around 15 weeks of classroom instruction. The gaps between learning how to write and learning about writing, as well as knowledge telling and knowledge transforming, for them, may be quite wide, and it could be the case that those involved in FYW fail to fully understand this point. Then, too, Leki (2007) has argued that L2 undergraduates are expected to take writing courses too soon in their undergraduate education. They likely do very little writing outside of their writing courses in their first year or two of study, and so they cannot make meaningful comparisons or connections between what they learn and practice in writing courses and the tasks they encounter in GEC courses. As such, in both ESL and FYW, the teaching and tasks are decontextualized and would actually be more effective if the courses were offered in the

third and fourth years of study, when more writing may be required and transfer would become more targeted and meaningful.

Moreover, the ESL writing courses with the EAP orientation at University X were structured with the concept of LW that tended to focus on fundamental essay development, sentence-level features (e.g., grammar) and forms (e.g., the APA Citation Style). Loni and Yenta mentioned that writing tasks in ESL were similar to the writing tests of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and SAT. Training on writing for those test essays, as Joon and Nana said in Park's (2009) study, was instrumental to their transnational transition from previous English classes to ESL. The Chinese participants in the current study also reported that they wrote "many" research papers in the ESL writing course, which gave them a construct of the external discourse pattern (Swales, 1990), knowing how to structure an essay (e.g., introduction-body-conclusion). Through those practices, they centered around the forms/procedures of research papers, so they hinged on that kind of task representation and may have tried to transfer this knowledge to FYW. They thought of writing in structural terms, and FYW did not approach it that way, thus leaving little ground for meaningful transfer to occur.

However, the key point that hindered L2 participants' full understanding of the FYW course is that they had assumed there was *only* one kind of writing class that taught them how to write. Instead, the FYW course was structured with the aspect of 'learning about write' referring to Manchón's writing to learn language (WLL), and writing to learn content (WLC) and WAC's writing to learn (WTL). They were not acknowledged the different writing course orientations between ESL and FYW, as their writing course construct was simply too limited, or too narrow, and they could not move beyond it. The

difficulty was also as a result of L2 participants who had not developed awareness in meta-learning (Carter, 2007) to adapt to different kinds of writing courses. Additionally, at the micro-level, they were not aware of the internal discourse patterns in writing (Paltridge, 2002). In FYW, it was assumed that the student writers already know structures of genres as well as mode-of-text, such as summary, report, analysis, argument, and discussion. However, that was not the case for the participants in the current study. This implies a wide course gap between ESL and FYW; the alignment was inadequately constructed to facilitate transfer of learning of either a “near” or “far” variety (Nowacek, 2011; Perkins & Salomon, 2012; Salomon & Perkins, 1989; 1998) between two writing courses.

Additionally, students’ limited understanding of the FYW course goals may imply inconsistent communication between students and teachers. Drawing from my interview with the Director and observations of the GTA pedagogy training course and classrooms, it was clear that the Director discussed *transfer of learning* and how it relates to international undergraduates’ learning in FYW. He was keenly aware that expecting multilingual students to perform writing with the same fluency as their native English speaking peers after a 15-week period of instruction was unrealistic. In the training course, he advised the GTA instructors focused on grading students’ analysis performance and content to allow (some) grammatical errors, especially in L2 students’ writing. However, the application of these ideas in actual FYW instruction may have been limited. There was not a lot of evidence of it during the current study, and this situation might account for some of the distance between the students’ experiences and perceptions and what took place.

As an illustration of this, from my classroom observations, Michelle limited her 'lecturing' to 10-15 minutes and assignment prompts were often sent via emails. The participants sometimes expressed their frustration to me as they did not understand what the assignments were or how to write them. Michelle explained her rationales of each assignment in her journals for this study; however, she did not communicate much of the information (assignment objectives) in class. She wanted to allocate most of the class time to group interactions, but she was not aware that L2 participants had not developed awareness of meta-genres (Carter, 2007), as they needed more explicit instruction for every new type of task. As a result, the course tasks were not explained clearly enough from their perspective. That prevented the Chinese participants from fully understanding the purpose of the tasks. As the skills (e.g., responding to texts, synthesizing, argument, positioning) learned from every task of the e-portfolio presumably assisted students in completing the Christopher Columbus research paper, the participants did not perceive the connection between them. In other words, they were not aware of *near transfer* (Nowacek, 2011) even within the course assignments. Insufficient information about the course goals and tasks obscured a fuller picture of the course. As for the L2 writers, without such information, they could not recognize the differences between FYW and ESL, and perceived that the both writing classes were designed with the same goal: Teaching how to write. The notion of "learning to write" was not conveyed successfully, as the teachers did not explain it explicitly enough. These variables account for why the participants across the three FYW sections displayed their limited understanding of the FYW course as well as why students' account appears contradictory to the teachers' and the Director's perspectives on the FYW course. The Director appeared to want FYW

teachers to be sensitive to L2 students' needs and perspectives, but it appeared that the instructors lacked this awareness.

A point worth discussing here involves the course grades. Given the exit course grades (between As and Bs) that the participants obtained, they still performed reasonably well. This is where the FYW teachers appeared to make accommodations for them. Briana shared in the interviews that she sympathized with L2 writers who had to deal with multi-layered challenges in a writing course, so grammar errors were not her focus in terms of assessing students' writing. She focused on whether students achieved the goals of the course, such as analysis, critical thinking, and citation. Michelle also valued students' effort and progress by encouraging continuous revisions, which was an opening for students and particularly L2 students to improve their papers and grades. From this perspective, students' course grades may not have reflected their full understanding of the course or its learning outcomes. On the one hand, the teachers were aware of the developmental differences between native and non-native English writers, so they employed different assessment approaches so as to encourage L2 students to continue their progress. On the other hand, the teachers did not communicate with L2 students to help them understand better their learning. It might also be the case that those participants who had taken an ESL writing course made better use of what they learned in ESL than they realized.

As the study progressed, I sensed that at least some of the L2 participants did not acquire a complete understanding of what counts as academic writing and why it plays an important role in their success in an Anglo-American university (Tran, 2011). They participated in the course but seemed somewhat removed from it in terms of connecting

to its goals and its core philosophy regarding writing and writing instruction. Seeing this gap between the FYW course's intentions and what the L2 students took from the case is one of the current study's contributions to the writing field.

8.5 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study suggest several implications for those who design ESL and FYW courses and those who work with L2 students. They also shed light on how to create meaningful bridges between ESL and FYW courses. The findings in this study also point to a challenge faced by course designers and writing instructors with respect to working with L2 writers. On the one hand, it is necessary, to a certain degree, to treat them as a group in order to lend coherence to the course design process. On the other hand, and as the current study has shown, these writers have individual characteristics that impact on how they approach writing and writing courses. Thus, course designers must avoid overreliance on generalizations of student behavior (Heath & Mangiola, 1991). In this section, I will first discuss the methodological implication. Secondly, I provide pedagogical implications of this study.

Methodologically, this interdisciplinary study contributes to awareness of the value of a qualitative case study approach to both L1 composition studies and L2 writing research. First, while the focus of this study was on exploring L2 students' learning experiences, I included non-participants' accounts so as to corroborate data courses. Additionally, instead of focusing on one FYW section, I selected three greatly different FYW section and instructors; the course representations showed a significant impact on student participants' FYW experiences. In future studies, approaching the same course but including such variation can bolster the findings from multiple perspectives.

Secondly, by collecting L2 participants' retrospection about their ESL experiences and connecting it to their FYW learning, this research intends to suggest 'backward' course design for the ESL practitioners. Hyland (2004) stated that all students need to know how to reference the sources correctly and some skills, such as paraphrasing, which corresponds to the emphasis of the ESL writing courses at University X. While those courses are designed to "teach generic skills which can be transferred across contexts" (Hyland, 2016, p. 23), pedagogically, the ESL writing course can also aim to develop L2 students' awareness of meta-genre (Carter, 2007). As Cavusgil (2008) suggested, ESL writing instructors can design a variety of writing assignments, instead of only focusing on one basic type of essay organization, to assist L2 writers in developing their writing skills and learning strategies to complete academic tasks across courses (p.141). L2 participants need to develop awareness of meta-genre as early as they can that will help facilitate *near transfer* when they encounter similar tasks. Allow students to experience a range of genres and related decision making. This can include accounting for the types of writing that occur in FYW courses so that L2 writers are equipped to transfer writing knowledge from ESL to FYW. In a creative application of this idea, Rugen (2016) designed an action plan for a two-semester course sequence that includes a first course in ESL and then a follow-up FYW course. In this way students can more easily transition from ESL to FYW. Even if the ESL and FYW courses are in different departments, as is the case at University X, course designers from the departments can work together to envision ways of linking the courses.

Thirdly, in terms of the FYW course' role in supporting L2 students' academic literacy development, I first want to bring attention to a point of contention regarding the

curricular nature of a general writing course. Some writing specialists embrace the notion of what Lea and Street (1998) call an autonomous model of literacy in which writing conventions are static and decontextualized but are valued as exemplars of how to write. They question that approach, just as David Russell (1991) and Russell & Yanez (2003) argue that teaching writing as a single generalizable skill that students can acquire within a semester is debatable. Russell argued that “the failure to understand writing as such an ongoing and continuing process accounts for many of the complaints on the part of non-writing faculty, and perhaps employers, that students cannot write” (p. 326, cited in Leki, 2003). Furthermore, Spack (1998) pointed out that writing assignments in disciplines are often different from those in FYW. Thus, if the educational goal is *transferability*, teaching for transfer in FYW must be conceptualized with great care. For example, students “must not only learn new ways of writing but also learn when to ignore what they have learned about writing elsewhere” (Russell & Yanez, 2003, p. 358) so that misguided efforts at transfer are prevented.

Therefore, with respect to the FYW course at University X, this study’s findings showed that the course, regardless of which sections were selected for this study, was designed carefully not only in line with the WPA’s Outcome Statement (2014) but also in alignment with the institutional objectives (i.e. the curriculum of the GEC). The FYW tasks converged with Nesi and Gardner’s (2012) three main functions of undergraduate assignments: “to demonstrate disciplinary knowledge, to produce new knowledge and to prepare for professional practice following graduation” (cited in Hyland, 2016, p. 22). As such, native English speaking undergraduates may benefit from the sequencing of assignments in FYW and the training on analytic writing as well as research.

Nevertheless, the findings revealed the challenges that the L2 participants encountered, in part because of their developmental language proficiency. Also because L2 students did not experience writing various kinds of tasks in the much narrower focus on “forms” (according to the Chinese participants) in the ESL writing course, the FYW tasks were not only ‘new’ but also daunting. The objectives of those assignments can be beyond the L2 novice writers’ reach as they may not be developmentally ready to cope with complex writing tasks yet. As Hyland (2013) has noted, gaining fluency in the conventions of writing in English is extremely challenging for students who are writing in a second language. It is not only because of their language proficiency but because their prior writing experiences in their home countries and/or ESL do not prepare them well for the expectations of tasks in the university.

The findings of the study imply that to resolve the difficult transition between previous literacy experiences/ESL and FYW for L2 students, a separate FYW course exclusively for the L2 students may be necessary. Such a hybrid FYW section can be designed with the focus on non-native English speakers’ needs in light of their developmental readiness for a FYW course. A hybrid FYW course can still embed the teaching English for academic purposes (EAP) features in instruction, as Hyland (2016) suggested that, “EAP is a means of empowering students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their studies and professional careers” (p. 22). A key note is that L2 students need to be informed explicitly what knowledge and skills they need for their success in an Anglo-American university. The hybrid-FYW course can also employ Hyland’s suggestion—genre approach (2004; 2013)—to develop L2 writers’ awareness of meta-genre (Paltridge, 2002; 2013).

However, the Director did not support having a separate FYW course exclusively for L2 students in consideration of the role of social interactions in one's learning process, as this may be a case in other intuitions. This study thus points to Wardle and Downs' (2015) suggestion for the FYW course; that is, the course can "[teach] students flexible and transferable declarative and procedural knowledge about writing" (p. 280). Students need to know not just *what* or *how* to write in FYW and other courses but also the *why* or purpose of writing. Developing students' transferable metalinguistic awareness assists students in becoming familiar with the knowledge of text types and performing proper rhetorical forms in specific contexts (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). James (2009) also affirms that "writing knowledge is transferrable" (in DePalm & Ringer, 2011, p. 136), though he has also found that L2 writers tend to struggle in terms of transferring learning from ESL writing courses. To promote positive transfer, explicit instruction can help facilitate transfer of learning as long as transfer is directly and actively included in the course design process.

Another implication for the FYW curricular evaluation is to teach writing related skills. The FYW course, presumably, is designed in an attempt to train freshman students to acquire skills, such as analysis, critical thinking and reasoning skills. Newell (2006) has noted teaching analytical writing allows students to "have access to a different tool for understanding new ideas and information: a focused examination of relations among ideas and events" (p. 239). However, this necessitates paying close attention to topic selection for writing assignments, as L2 writers, in particular, may struggle with them (Leki & Carson, 1997). The theme-based FYW course instructors may need to consider that topics are culturally-specific and can be uncomfortable for some students, especially

for international students who lack knowledge of topics outside of their own cultural experiences. Based on the findings of the current study, a more precise explanation of how students understand topics and their writing about them is suggested. Teachers need to develop students' metacognitive knowledge and context-specific knowledge (Bazerman, 1998).

Furthermore, drawing from Ann Beaufort's (2007) conceptual model of five knowledge domains (Figure 8.1), which consists of discourse community knowledge, subject matter knowledge, genre knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, and writing process knowledge, this study demonstrates the need for curriculum assessment for both the ESL and FYW writing programs. Administrators need to rethink pedagogies that can enhance these five knowledge domains. For example, research assignments can be assigned in both ESL and FYW courses, not only because of the institutional context, but also because both courses uphold a notion that conducting primary research "allows students to take control of problem areas in their own writing" (Downs & Wardle, 2007, p. 562). Additionally, assigning research papers helps prepare students for applying research related skills to their other classes. For example, students in Carroll's (2002) research reported that they applied writing strategies related to "research, style, audience, organization and analysis" in FYW to their writing in other classes. Therefore, transfer can occur. When designing research projects in both types of writing courses, instructors need to incorporate the pedagogies that require students to draw on the five knowledge domains, especially so that L2 students can make (writing) connections across courses.



Figure 8. 1 Conceptual Model: Expert Writers Draw on Five Knowledge Domains

Lastly, a pedagogical implication for both ESL and FYW scholars is a reminder that “writing is not a natural ability that automatically accompanies maturation. Writing—particularly the more complex composing skill valued in the academy—involves training, instruction, practice, experience, and purpose” (Grade & Kaplan, 1996, p. 6). It is important for writing instructors to recognize the very different literacy experiences and learning circumstances of students, especially L2 students. Both the ESL and FYW writing programs may need to implement a more robust and longitudinal teacher training program so that instructors are better prepared to work with diverse groups of writers in their courses. Specifically for FYW instructors whose teaching experiences vary and who rarely have contact with multilingual speakers, introducing second language acquisition and writing scholarship early in their training helps them to understand their students who come to their classrooms with non-American rhetorical knowledge and literacy experiences. As Matsuda and Silva (2006) advised, all composition teachers should be prepared to teach L2 students in “regular” writing classes

if the goal is to integrate students' ESL learning into FYW. Hyland (2003), referencing research in intercultural rhetoric suggested, in response to Kaplan's (1966) views on the impact of cultural background on writing and Hinds' (1987) writer- and reader-responsible distinction, that teachers can "become aware of different rhetorical conventions, to understand some of the issues L2 writers face, and to accept different conventions in the work of their learners" (p. 49), and consider the extent to which designing the curriculum can account for the linguistic and rhetorical variety in a diverse student population.

8.6 Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the current study was that it was difficult to observe how the participants completed every course assignment. The participants were all carrying heavy course loads (16-18 credit hours that semester), and this sometimes diminished their availability for data gathering. For example, I could not schedule think-aloud sessions with Sono or observe participants' writing center sessions. Nor could I interview them bi-weekly as planned. Therefore, the quantity of the data gathered for participants varied.

A second limitation is the qualitative nature of the study, which inevitably limited the number of participants. In addition, the number of participants from different FYW sections was not equal. This prevented the creation of a truly representative sample of the L2 student population in FYW. Thus, I could not attempt to generalize the results from several cases to the entire L2 student population.

Third, there are more than 70 FYW sections offered at University X per semester, and so a handful of researched sections may not be truly representative of the much larger body of FYW courses, especially since there is variability in terms of the

amount of latitude given to FYW instructors with respect to how they approach their sections of the course.

8.7 Suggestions for Future Research

As a second language writing researcher, I was inspired by Ilona Leki's (2007) collection of longitudinal case studies to study "how these students cope with the literacy demands they encounter in their other courses across the curriculum" (p. 1). Starting in the late 1990s, she followed four L2 undergraduates from the time they took entry-level ESL writing classes until they graduated. However, what this and other research has failed to look at is what happens to L2 writers when they navigate a second mandatory writing course (SYW) that follows a course like FYW, one that may be more closely aligned with writing in their own discipline. The L2 writing field would benefit from seeing what happens to students in this second writing course, especially in comparison to their experiences in FYW. It would be especially interesting to investigate transfer-related issues, both in terms of transfer from FYW to SYW, and from FYW and SYW to other courses requiring writing.

A second possible strand of future research would involve further investigation into writing across the curriculum as undergraduate students move into both the general education courses they are required to take and courses in their academic majors. Despite its rich history, WAC remains an area in need of more research, especially with respect to L2 writers and their WAC-related experiences. For example, DePalma and Ringer (2014) employed adaptive transfer as a lens to explore how multilingual writers navigate diverse writing demands across the curriculum. Such a study grounded on the framework of WAC can help writing instructors and scholars "adjust their practices in ways that

effectively serve the growing population of multilingual learners in US higher education” (p. 61).

A third possible strand of future research, by the same token, would employ the framework of WAC to investigate multilingual writers’ reading across the curriculum (Center & Niestepski, 2014). While this study has not conferred the role of reading in participants’ FYW experiences, the FYW course goals in line with the WPA’s Outcome Statement (2014), in essence, affirm the necessity of students’ reading skill. Although the Director affirmed that the FYW course attempted to refrain from assigning an amount of readings, as Hirvela (2004) has stated, teaching reading helps students know what and how they write. With the advent of Hirvela’s (2013; 2016a; 2016b) reading for writing research, the L2 writing field would benefit from more research on how L2 students use reading skills learned in EAP settings to cope with reading and writing demands across contexts. The research could also investigate whether the extent of reading across the curriculum helps L2 students writing across courses.

8.8 Closing Remarks

Before offering some personal reflections after having completed the current study, I will briefly summarize the study’s contributions to writing scholarship. The current study has contributed to the literature on FYW courses and L2 writers’ participation in them in the following ways. First, this study provided both emic and etic perspectives that are available but still limited in current L1 and L2 writing literature. Also, its qualitative case study design that involved gathering participants’ and the researcher’s comments and corroborating those sources not only enhanced the reliability and validity of this current study, but also helped analyze data heuristically.

Second, this study featured a multi-faceted research design which was comprised of multiple forms of data collection and variation of cases (i.e. the FYW course and participants). Thus, this study was able to reveal the complexity of a FYW course relative to L2 students' learning to write experiences. The research design of the current study illustrates methodological possibilities that can be applied in future research.

Third, this study delineated L2 writers' narratives as they were engaged in learning to write in FYW and especially in analytically-oriented tasks. Unlike previous L2 research, the current study uncovered L2 students' learning in a major writing course outside of the mainstream ESL writing courses. This kind of focus is still rare in current L2 (and L1) writing scholarship and is useful for understanding the gap between writing ESL and FYW courses as students proceed through them.

Fourth, this study revealed the complexity of a FYW course and its focus on novice writers' intellectual growth through the "writing to learn" approach. Moreover, by highlighting non-native English writers' learning experiences in such a writing course, this study affirms that the course was not designed in accordance with L2 students' learning needs, and the course orientation was daunting for L2 students. This study therefore has shown that there remains much to be learned about how a FYW course can be designed so as to embrace linguistically and culturally diverse writers. It is worth conducting more research in this area, as this study has highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary writing research.

Lastly, drawing from the students' previous English education and ESL experiences, this study showed the complexity of transfer of learning. Basically, there was not what James (2010) has called an appropriate "transfer climate" for these

participants. The complexity of what they were expected to do in just 15 weeks in FYW, coupled with the difficulty of seeing applications of what was being learned beyond the FYW course, meant that the L2 students did not conceptualize transfer possibilities, even if they existed. It was especially noteworthy that the participants never seemed to really grasp the course's focus on analytic writing and critical thinking, thus making transfer of such skills and knowledge unlikely in either near or far transfer contexts.

In summary, I contemplated the complexity of this study, including the three different kinds of FYW sections, three instructors at different stages of their teaching careers, and the diversity of the recruited L2 students from these sections. More importantly, the participants differed in their cultural, linguistic, and academic literacy backgrounds. Their FYW experiences emerged from those factors. Silva (1993) argues that "L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically and linguistically different in important ways from L1 writing" (p. 669). To succeed in writing in English, according to Canale and Swain (1980), writers need: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. To acquire these competencies, L2 participants and I need to continue our life-long-learning of English. As this study unfolded, what I found is probably just the tip of the iceberg, but I do hope that it still has provided ESL and FYW writing instructors with some insights into curricular and pedagogical assessment. Consequently, *we* can create a curriculum and construct an inclusive learning space of a FYW course for the linguistically and culturally diverse students in writing classrooms.

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Appendix A: Sample of a Field Note

Classroom Observation notes of Naomi's class

Date/Time/Place: 2/01/2016 9:10 AM Room #204

Task/Agenda: What is rhetoric?

Participants:

- Instructor: Lisa
- Student(s): Naomi

Activities:

Observations	Comments
continue the analysis activity from last Friday	Lisa/discussion sometimes are very culturally contextualized, not only the language, but also pop culture. Analysis is focused on American cultures--animation. The discussion is based on the assumption that students/everyone watch those movies (e.g., batman, Disney movies, Pixar characters). You have to know characters, personas, characteristics of roles.
Naomi in Pixar Characters group. She didn't speak for the group.	
A student said this "Shrek is love."-- Andrew Modie when discussing Pixar Characters. (Lisa said her high school teacher gave a quote everyday; she gave that for today's class)	It seems Naomi watched the Pixar movies
students feel lost after analysis activities	
pure analogy/analysis--what is this related to the theme of gender/sexuality? Students are lost about this. Implication of life	

The teacher doesn't need to agree with students' points of view, but the writing has to be more substantial, convincing analysis may not come out easily.	
emails about Lisa's past un-monogamous experiences--contextualize things → encourage students come to her office hours to talk about it.	
power figure/authority figure	

Reflections:

Naomi likes the activity that helped her know how to do the primary analysis paper. She thought she went too far of her analysis. After the activity, she thinks she isn't going too far, but maybe need to do more analysis.

Emerging questions/analyses:

Future action (to-do list):

Appendix B: Coding Schema on HyperResearch

Code Book

Edit Code ▼ Apply Code

23 Codes, 1 Group

▼ All Codes

- 1110 writing tasks
- class peer review and feedback
- connection btw 1110 and other courses
- connection btw ESL and other courses
- critical thinking and analysis
- cultural and rhetorical references
- differences btw 1110 and ESL or English class
- English education in home countries differences from 1110
- English education in home countries similarities with 1110
- other courses and writing tasks
- similarities btw 1110 and ESL or English class
- student's academic and language learning in home country
- student's changes and progresses
- student's communication with teachers and feedback
- student's concerns difficulties struggles challenges
- student's grades and expectations
- student's perspectives on the 1110 curriculum and teacher
- student's perspectives on NES peers
- student's perspectives on the ESL curriculum and teacher
- student's social life and job
- student's writing processes
- teaching and inclass activities
- writing services like writing center and friends

Analysis Codes

HyperRESEARCH 3.7.3
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teaching and inclass activities	39:35 so how do you think about yesterday class that the teacher used this kind of materials and bring out all the discussions based on the course theme? how do you feel about that?
cultural and rhetorical references	I felt like this was kind of like forcing us to come out of our bubble ok and like think I think more of like both ways so like some of the arguments that are some students gave were pretty good like I would have never said that it's ok if both partners are are doing it like that but since yesterday class that like made me think about it more like other cultures don't are not monogamous And like they're happy I guess ok but I mean I would have never thought of that before if I were not been exposed to that
teaching and inclass activities	40:38 then how do you think about for your own learning in this class with this kind of discussion with this kind of materials? I mean I guess I will help me with my paper because I'm starting to like look at the other side and not necessarily agree with it but trying to understand it I'm not sure though if like in our paper we have to write personally or more like objectively ME: I think it is more objective because it's called a research paper yeah
critical thinking and analysis	41:19 so then I maybe I can ask you what you think the intention behind those that your teacher used those of materials bringing up those in conversation in class?
teaching and inclass activities	I think it goes back to critical thinking ME: how? Because if we didn't discuss all of that then our names wouldn't be very objective?

Coding the data sources