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Applying Contemporary Western Composition Pedagogical Approaches in University EFL Writing Context: A Case Study of a Writing Workshop at a Chinese University

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APPLYING CONTEMPORARY WESTERN COMPOSITION PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES IN UNIVERSITY EFL WRITING CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY OF A WRITING WORKSHOP AT A CHINESE UNIVERSITY

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Title: Applying Contemporary Western Composition Pedagogical Approaches in University EFL Writing Context: A Case Study of a Writing Workshop at a Chinese University

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Abstract

This study explores the possibilities of applying certain aspects of contemporary Western composition pedagogical approaches in university-level advanced EFL writing classes at a Chinese university. A series of writing workshops were conducted outside of the regular English curriculum, where the research focus was on students' attitudes toward this process-oriented writing workshop experience. The research design was to apply principles of the qualitative method and naturalistic inquiry in the classroom setting. Through prolonged engagement in a collective case study, multiple data sources were collected and triangulated for better understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon.

Contemporary Western composition pedagogy applied in this writing workshop addresses the five elements of Silva's ESL writing model (1990), which involves the roles of EFL writer, the native English reader, EFL written text, and

the context of EFL writing, as well as the interaction of these factors throughout the composing process in an EFL setting. Applying this Western approach to the EFL writing workshop at a Chinese university provided scaffolding for students as they went through writing processes, and helped them develop some appropriate social, cultural, and contextual language awareness in English writing. This writing pedagogy encourages student self-expression and emphasizes writing for real purposes, audiences, and contexts. By attending a series of workshops, Chinese students were exposed to various aspects of an incorporated writing pedagogy and reported significant improvement in their confidence in writing, and in the acquisition and use of Western writing strategies. Incorporating aspects of Western pedagogy in this EFL writing workshop helped students develop demonstrable language competence and confidence to express their thoughts within appropriate contextual awareness.

Besides the reports on students' attitudes, four EFL writing teachers shared their concerns and dilemmas on current EFL writing instruction in China. They also contributed some attempts to seek to improve and invent effective ways of teaching EFL writing. The study sought to understand the teaching and learning of English writing from both student and teacher perspectives. This study also has implications for how to teach writing effectively to an increasing ESL student population at universities in the United States.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

With the development of literacy theory in both first language (L1) and second language (L2), second language writing has gained much attention in on-going research in the field. In the majority of non-English speaking countries, English is taught as a foreign language, and the English instruction is influenced by local or regional teaching approaches and philosophies. As stated in You's report on EFL writing (2004), the Current-Traditional Rhetoric approach, which was introduced to EFL countries by British and American teachers in the early 1900s, still has great influence in some Asian countries like China, Japan and the Philippines. This teaching approach mostly focuses on the written product rather than the writing process, thus it makes L2 writing more like rigid language formation rather than thought expression and meaning-making, which inevitably causes frustration and increases apprehension toward writing in English among the majority of Chinese students.

Writing in English involves obvious difficulties for Chinese students, and the problem calls for language teachers to find effective ways of empowering EFL students so that they can overcome writing apprehension and develop adequate L2 writing competence. This dissertation project explores the possibilities of applying some aspects of contemporary Western writing approaches to the Chinese educational context. Will writing instruction that incorporates such Western approaches be helpful for Chinese EFL students? What are the students' attitudes and teachers' perceptions of the application of a

Western-rooted writing approach in a Chinese educational context? This dissertation examines the feasibility of applying a contemporary Western approach to the university EFL writing context at a university in Beijing, P. R. China, by close study of a workshop in which students participated in the kind of activities typical of contemporary Western writing pedagogy. This first chapter contains a statement of the phenomenon under study, research questions, and the significance of this study to EFL university writing instruction in China.

Theoretical Background of the Study

With the development of second language (L2) literacy research, writing in ESL/EFL settings has also gained much attention in recent years. Scholars and researchers are trying to find ways to teach writing to a growing number of ESL students in English-speaking countries and a large number of EFL students worldwide.

Young (1978) defines the early writing approach as “current-traditional rhetoric,” citing “the emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the strong concern with usage and with style and so on” (p. 31). At the earlier stage of ESL writing, language was regarded as bits of grammar, and so teaching writing is actually “teaching formalities of language” (Leki, 1992, p. 5). In the past two decades, writing approaches in Western contexts have shifted from product-centered to process-centered, and have gradually moved toward contextualized writing. In ESL writing classes in the United States, the process approach has become dominant in L2 writing class practice since the early 1980s,

where the cognitive model of writing has been presented as three subprocesses: planning, translating, and reviewing (Flower and Hayes, 1981). However, the process approach received criticism because teaching writing sometimes is only understood as teaching writing steps.

In second language literacy development, research has led to an on-going discussion among L2 writing researchers and teachers. Based on the historical account of approaches to L2 writing provided by Raimes (1991) and traced by Matsuda (2003), Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) summarize the major trends in ESL writing theory and practice since the 1960s. Their account highlights the sequential emergence of competing foci during that period. Each period has its own theoretical preference and pedagogical emphasis, ranging from early concerns with traditional rhetorical form to the later emphasis on sociopolitical issues. Those competing foci are not completely separate from each other; instead they overlap to some extent. In recent years, ESL/EFL writing specialists also have begun to address issues of critical pedagogy, thus genre-oriented and socioliterate models have emerged in the L2 writing field. Advocates of socioliterate approaches believe that writing and the teaching of writing always have social purposes.

Among contemporary Western writing approaches, it is post-process theory which echoes this pedagogical emphasis. The post-process writing paradigm strives to transcend the “limitations of the process approach to writing” and advocates paying attention to the “socially situated nature of writing itself” (Sinor and Huston, 2004, p. 371). Post-process writing does not abandon the

writing steps originally proposed in the process approach to writing; in fact, modern scholars agree with Sinor and Huston that “working through the writing steps is a crucial component” even as writing instruction must be “centered on the social, political, and contextual forces that surround writing” (p. 371). At the level of classroom practice, post-process theory calls for writing for real audiences, purposes, and contexts, which is one of the key principles applied in the writing workshop under study.

Silva (1990) offers a brief review on the developments in ESL composition instruction during the period 1945-1990, and gives an holistic evaluation of existing approaches, then makes suggestions for future directions in ESL composition theory, research, and practice. Silva (1990) proposes that L2 writing should be approached systematically as “purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction, which involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge” (p. 18). The basic elements that need to be addressed are the L2 writer, the L1 reader, the L2 text, the contexts for L2 writing, and the interaction of these elements in a variety of authentic ESL settings (1990). Based on Silva’s framework, this dissertation research explored the application of a teaching approach that incorporates the above five writing elements in a writing workshop at a Chinese university.

Statement of the Phenomenon

Since the early 1980s, with the economic reforms carried out by the Chinese government, there has become a strong need to communicate with the outside world. Being able to understand a foreign language, especially English,

has become an important skill among professionals. Therefore, foreign language education has also gained attention and more and more people have become aware of its importance. Chinese government encouraged learning English by including English in the public school curriculum as a required subject course for Chinese students who enroll in secondary schools, high schools, and universities nationwide. Thus, students are required to learn English from the first grade in secondary school, at the age of 12, through the senior year in high school, by the age of 18. If students go to college, they will have opportunity to continue English learning. This is the basic pattern of English learning in Chinese school settings. Based on my personal learning experience and my general observation of English teaching and learning there, English instruction in the majority of secondary schools and high schools mostly focuses on English grammar, vocabulary, and basic reading skills, which are believed to be the crucial elements of learning a foreign language. If students want to enroll in a Chinese university, they need to take the nationwide University Matriculation Exam, which includes English, as well as Chinese and Mathematics, as its three core requirements. If students are admitted to university, they will continue to learn English throughout their four-year courses. It is very common in Chinese universities that in General English Program for Non-English majors the English curriculum places emphasis on developing reading skills, and a large amount of time is devoted to reading-based courses—Intensive Reading and Extensive Reading are two most widely offered courses. There is very limited time spent on developing other language skills like writing, speaking, or listening. In some

universities, only English majors have the privilege of being offered formal instruction and extensive training in speaking, listening, and writing skills.

Writing skills, considered a less important element in learning a foreign language, have been neglected in the first two decades of English teaching in China, from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. According to Sun's report at the 4th International Conference on ELT in China in May 2004, only a small number of schools offer academic writing courses among the 52 colleges and universities he surveyed (You, 2004). This phenomenon is not unique. In a large number of Chinese universities, writing has not been included in the core curriculum but exists chiefly as a by-product of reading classes. However, having realized that literacy should be developed with equal emphasis, some English departments of foreign-language specializing universities began to offer writing courses to students, calling for developing comprehensive English competence and meeting educational, personal and social needs.

Though English writing has been included as a part of the reading courses in the Chinese educational contexts, the elements, emphasis and the process of writing are quite different from those in the Western composition classroom. According to my own learning experience in the mid-1990s, a typical English class in my home university operated like this: The teacher usually went through the reading materials first, explained the grammar rules and key vocabulary from the text, then asked students to make up sentences with learned sentence structures and vocabulary. Occasionally, at the end of the class, the teacher assigned certain topics, related to the reading materials, for students to write

about, or just asked students to write a summary of the reading text to test their comprehension of the learned sample text. There was very little instruction given to students or attention paid to the writing process after a teacher assigned a writing task. As recently as the mid-1990s, students mostly worked on their own outside of class and experienced very little collaboration or instructional support regarding the writing assignment before they submitted their written essays. They simply wrote for the teacher to get a grade for the assignment. Having very little explicit writing instruction, many students were afraid to write in English, and they struggled through the writing process characteristically suffering from lack of ideas, writer's block, and low language proficiency. I saw that some students had great difficulty in writing, so they frequently consulted dictionaries and used literal translations from Chinese into English to try to express their ideas in English. The writing resulting from this pattern showed many problems, including divergent text structures and lack of cohesion. It was not surprising that students had to make great efforts to come up with a few short paragraphs, which usually consisted of simple sentences featuring basic words and phrases and little variety in sentence structures. Back then, students were generally graded without having any opportunities to receive feedback or to revise their writing. Once they got a grade, the writing task was over for them. Furthermore, students seldom had opportunities to read their classmates' papers and learn from their peers. Thus, writing functioned more as a language formation exercise rather than as a means of self-expression.

Within the EFL context in today's China, current-traditional rhetoric still

has great influence on the writing pedagogy, that is, paying much attention to the written product and neglecting some crucial elements in the L2 writing process. In this traditional teaching pedagogy, writing is nothing more than a means for students to practice what they have learned, for reinforcing vocabulary use and sentence pattern construction. Students are able to combine words and phrases according to given sentence patterns, but anything beyond this sentence-building task will lead to certain problems for them. The product-oriented pedagogical focus, to some extent, increases writing apprehension for most EFL students, as they seldom get help from the teacher during the writing process and do not have adequate language competence nor appropriate writing strategies.

Writing in English involves common difficulties for the majority of EFL Chinese students. Due to traditional teaching beliefs, learning English has been interpreted as learning grammar rules and vocabulary in order to comprehend English texts. In fact, grammar-translation and read-translate patterns seem to have a dominant influence in a large number of EFL contexts. The main goal of these patterns is to gather and retrieve information from English texts by requiring students to acquire a large vocabulary and master a set of grammatical rules. Thus, the pedagogical focus is more on receiving knowledge than constructing it. In this educational context, skills for receiving knowledge, such as reading and listening, are given more attention than skills for constructing knowledge, like writing and speaking. After years of receiving knowledge, most Chinese students appear to be quite competent in English grammar, vocabulary, and reading English texts. However, they feel much more apprehension and

incompetence when they need to express their thoughts through English writing. In contrast to the EFL context outlined above, L1 writing contexts encourage opportunities to project ideas and positions.

Besides the traditional teaching pedagogy, the experience of learning English for Chinese students is also test-bound. In many school settings, tests are widely given on a frequent basis. Students study hard to pass all types of tests, from regular semester finals to the TOEFL and GRE exams. According to the institutional requirements released by the Chinese Ministry of Education, Non-English majors are required to take the nationwide College English Test Band 4 (CETB-4) as the proficiency test for the foundation stage of learning English (usually freshman and sophomore years). English majors are also required to take the nationwide English Proficiency Test Band 4 (EPT-4) after two years college English instruction, which demands more proficiency in listening and writing skills besides adequate knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and reading competence. Although writing is usually included in these proficiency tests, the nature of the writing portion is still a test-oriented timed essay exam. The purpose of this essay exam is to assess students' ability to write short essays with correct form in a timed period. Evaluation weighs more on form and correctness than on content and expression. Under the test-oriented syllabus, students tend to memorize English grammar rules and vocabulary lists in order to get high scores. It is said that some teachers recommend that students memorize many sample essays in order to be able to use correct phrases and accurate sentence structures in their exam essays to achieve high scores. This

test-bound writing assessment hinders students' potential to express their own ideas and develop critical thinking as individuals perceiving the outside world.

Upon university graduation, the majority of students end their formal English schooling. They are supposed to have a certain level of English language competence to fulfill the needs of professional careers and further education. In fact, based on my observation as an EFL teacher in China, it appears that the majority of university graduates can recognize English words and phrases they have learned, can use English grammar rules to understand sentences and paragraphs, and can comprehend reading materials within their reading capability, but they nevertheless have difficulties writing in English, even writing short essays. This phenomenon is the outcome of a complex combination of traditional teaching and learning, and educational and institutional reality in the Chinese context.

Current Educational Context of the Study

The concepts of the process approach and the genre-based approach, growing out of the North American context, are gradually permeating non-English speaking countries and areas (You, 2004). In China, Wang (1986) formally introduced the process approach into the Chinese English Language Teaching circle, emphasizing the recursive nature of writing. Since then, some Chinese ELT teachers and researchers have explored the implementation of the process approach and genre approach in a few Chinese educational contexts (You, 2004). Therefore, English writing instruction and research in China have begun to be influenced by ESL writing research in North America. According to You (2004),

EFL writing research and practice are being given more attention by the English teaching circle in China today. Some Anglo-American approaches to writing instruction, such as process, task-based, and portfolio approaches, are being tested in some English classrooms in China. New concepts in ESL writing—peer review, portfolio assessment, paradigm shift, and post-process ideas, among many other, more standard Western practices—are being used in EFL writing research in China (You, 2004).

Today in the Chinese English Language Teaching circle, the field of L2 writing is gradually gaining support and attracting the interest of educators. According to You's report, "New directions in EFL writing: A report from China" (2004), new requirements for English teaching were proposed at the 4th International Conference on ELT in China, held in Beijing in May 2004. A new wave of college ELT reform is underway in China, initiated by a document entitled "Teaching Requirements for the College English Curriculum," published by the Chinese Ministry of Education in January 2004. In this new policy statement, English education at the college level is conceptualized as the teaching not only of language knowledge and skills, but also of language learning strategies and cross-cultural communication skills. Among learning strategies, individualized learning, collaborative learning, and hyper-textual learning are to be emphasized (You, 2004).

Under the new wave of college English language teaching, some changes in the pedagogical applications began to emerge in the writing classrooms at my research setting, Beijing International Studies University. Some teachers began

trying out commonly used process-oriented writing activities in their English writing classes. Therefore, students in the English Department have had some experience in writing activities such as brainstorming, group discussion and peer corrections. This previous writing experience had some influence on students' attitudes toward the writing workshop I conducted on site, which I will discuss in detail in later chapters.

Research Questions

According to Creswell (1998), for a case study, the researcher should focus on "an event, process, or program for which we have no in-depth perspective" (p. 95). Conducting the case study provides "a picture to help inform our practice or to see unexplored details of the case" (p. 95). Creswell (1998) suggests that research questions should be "open-ended, evolving, and nondirectional [and] restate the purpose of the study in more specific terms" (p. 99). Stake (1995) suggests that the researcher can present a few issues as subquestions that address the major concerns and perplexities to be resolved.

Growing out of a quest for effective methods of teaching English writing in the Chinese context, this dissertation project seeks to answer the central questions of this pedagogical inquiry:

1. How would students react to specific activities if some aspects of contemporary Western writing approach were applied to a college-level writing workshop at a Chinese University judging from their own expressed views?
2. What would be the students' attitudes toward this writing workshop

experience? Which activities would they favor, and which would they find problematic?

3. What would be the Chinese English teachers' perceptions toward incorporating some aspects of contemporary Western writing approach in college-level writing classes?
4. How could such an approach, if found to benefit students, best be integrated into the Chinese educational context (judging from student reactions to the workshop referred to in the first question)?

These research questions are concerned with students' experiences in traditional English classes as supplemented by aspects of contemporary Western writing workshops. The research questions would also allow for the analysis of specific aspects, which may be related to the L2 writing process and L2 writing pedagogy in an EFL context using Silva's ESL writing model and other aspects of contemporary Western writing approaches.

Significance of the Study

Since writing skill has been neglected in Chinese EFL teaching compared with other skills, and only a small amount of EFL writing research has been done in the field, writing in English appears to be a significant problem for the majority of Chinese students. Therefore, there is a need to inquire whether the current L2 writing instruction in China is effective or beneficial to the large number of EFL students. This dissertation project explores Chinese students' experiences with contemporary Western writing approaches, and students' attitudes and teachers' perceptions toward aspects of a contemporary Western writing approach applied

in a Chinese educational context. The ultimate goal is to gain insights about L2 writing in this EFL setting, and to better increase educators' understanding of L2 writing behaviors and strategies that would lead to better practice in the future.

Silva (1990) suggests that ESL/EFL writing instruction needs to address the roles of audience, writing purpose, and social, cultural context of L2 writing. In keeping with these needs, this study tried to seek ways to facilitate students' efforts in the writing process through collaborative learning as well as developing students' social, cultural, and contextual language awareness. The motivation behind this study is the desire to empower EFL students in their L2 writing and to help them build adequate competence in expressing thoughts with adequate language competence and appropriate L2 writing contextual knowledge.

The key factor for successful EFL writing classes is that students become aware of the interaction among writer, reader, text, context, and the interaction between their own thoughts and the sociocultural contexts among which they operate. In summary, it is expected that this study would be able to broaden views of teaching and researching on English writing in China, the country with the largest population of EFL student writers in the world. Moreover, I hope this study would be a helpful addition to current L2 writing research, and to provide an opportunity for ESL/EFL teachers to rethink the nature of L2 writing and gain insights from the application of contemporary Western pedagogy for future L2 writing research and practice.

The Possibility of Conducting the Study in China

The new wave of college ELT reform provides the ideal context in which to carry out this qualitative, naturalistic inquiry focused on applying a contemporary Western writing approach to L2 writing practice in the Chinese context. This dissertation project tried to explore what might happen if certain aspects of a contemporary Western writing approach were applied to a college-level writing workshop in a Chinese university; students' attitudes toward this workshop experience; and teachers' perceptions toward incorporating this contemporary Western writing approach in the regular writing classes. At the same time, I hope this dissertation project could raise Chinese students' awareness of collaborative learning and constructing knowledge in their educational contexts, which have long been dominated by the concept of "receiving knowledge" advocated in traditional Chinese culture and educational philosophy.

Of course, there might be obstacles in the process of educational reform, and some of them might come from the differences in cultures, values and beliefs. You (2004) reported that some experiments had been conducted in the classroom to improve students' writing, based on the new standards from the 4th International Conference on ELT in China in 2004. Most English teachers have to confront several obstacles when teaching college-level writing, such as large class size, students' test-driven learning styles, inadequate English proficiency, and teacher's limited training in teaching writing. At this conference, Chinese teachers reported their attempts to try out some new approaches in their classes, such as portfolio assessment, the adoption of a task-based approach, and an

attempt to try out imported writing pedagogy. Zhan found difficulties in implementing one Western writing pedagogy—process pedagogy—derived from differences between Chinese and Western cultures, conflicts between linear thinking and critical thinking. However, if advantages outweigh disadvantages in college ELT reform, it might be worth trying out an imported writing approach with cultural adaptations and contextual considerations. As part of the present study, I hope to help identify the ways in which positive features of contemporary Western writing pedagogy can be effectively adapted in the Chinese educational context. At the same time, some factors about the Chinese context might need to be taken into consideration in the study, such as traditional Chinese philosophy; for example, Confucianism and its influence in education, the role of teacher, the roles of students, and traditional classroom participation framework. It is hoped that this dissertation project could effectively incorporate the principles of contemporary Western writing theory and practice with some aspects of Chinese writing heritages into the Chinese educational scene. Ultimately, it is hoped that EFL students could benefit from the application and gradually develop competence in their English writing.

As a study concerning English writing pedagogy in China, there is very little existing literature that covers this issue in-depth due to the traditional emphasis on teaching grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills. Although some teachers have done certain experiments on the imported writing pedagogy, more in-depth studies are needed to fully evaluate the effectiveness of this kind of

writing pedagogy in Chinese context. Thus, the time is ideal for the present study, which aims at contributing insights that could help inform this new movement.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, I present an overview of relevant ESL writing research and approaches to L2 writing pedagogy. Then I discuss the educational context and current classroom practices in China. Finally, I further explain the ESL writing framework based on Silva's writing model, which provides the theoretical basis for the series of writing workshops I conducted in the study.

Overview of ESL Writing Research

With the development of second language (L2) literacy research, writing in ESL/EFL settings has gained much needed attention. Scholars and researchers are trying to find ways of teaching writing to a growing number of ESL students in English speaking countries and a large number of EFL students worldwide. What kind of teaching pedagogy should teachers apply to L2 writing classes? How can teachers teach writing to ESL/EFL students? Should teachers focus on the written product, or on the writing process?

This chapter reviews the major trends in ESL writing theory and practice from historical and pedagogical perspectives. Based on previous L2 writing theories and research insights from ESL/EFL classrooms, I propose applying some aspects of contemporary Western Composition approaches to EFL writing classes for intermediate and advanced students at universities in China. The idea is, in part, to guide students through the writing process by helping them gain awareness of issues of audience, purpose, and language context involved in writing in English. However, the more recent "post-process" theory, which will be

discussed later, also has a view of the writing process which might be effectively applied. Therefore, I also want to consider a post-process approach, in the terms suggested by Sinor and Huston (2004), who state that “working through the writing steps is a crucial component of this approach,” and that “instruction is centered on the social, political, and contextual forces that surround writing” (p. 371).

Based on the historical account of L2 writing provided by Raimes (1991) and traced by Matsuda (2003), Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) summarize the major trends in ESL writing theory and practice since the 1960s, which consist of the sequential emergence of competing foci. Each subsequent focus has had its own theoretical preference and pedagogical emphasis. These can be summarized as follows:

- “Focus on Discursive Form, Traditional Form, and ‘Current-Traditional Rhetoric’ 1966-”. This focus sees writing used to reinforce patterns of the language being learned and to test learners’ accurate application of grammatical rules (Rivers, 1968).
- “Focus on the Writer: Expressionism and Cognitivism, 1976-”. Researchers in this paradigm pay much attention to the cognitive strategies and metacognitive processes used by writers.
- “Focus on Disciplinary Content and Discursive Practices, 1986-”. Reservations concerning writer-centered instruction led to this emphasis on content-based and genre-based instruction, which calls for building literacy around appropriate academic content.

- “Focus on Readers and Discursive Communities: Social Constructionism, 1986-”. Overlapping with content-based models, reader-based and discourse-based writing instruction emerged in the late 1980s. Proponents of this reader-centered framework believe that writing instruction should address writing purposes and audience expectations.
- “Focus on Sociopolitical Issues and Critical Pedagogy, 1990-”. In recent years, ESL/EFL writing specialists have begun to address issues of critical pedagogy, thus genre-oriented and socioliterate models have emerged in the L2 writing field. Socioliterate advocates believe that writing and the teaching of writing always have social purposes. Post-process theory echoes this pedagogical emphasis by calling for writing for real purposes, audiences and contexts.

While these principles of different approaches seem to be categorized into different themes, however, they are overlapping with each other to some extent. In the following sections, I will discuss some of these major foci in more detail, as they cumulatively provide the context for the present study.

Approaches to L2 Writing Pedagogy: An Overview of Current Trends

Focus on Form and Current-Traditional Rhetoric, 1966-

Young (1978) states that the features of the current-traditional paradigm include “the emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the classification of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument;

the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, punctuation) and with style (economy, clarity, emphasis); the preoccupation with the informal essay and the research paper; and so on" (p. 31). Rivers (1968) explains that in the L2 field, writing, at that time, was used essentially to reinforce oral patterns of the language being learned and to test learners' accurate application of grammatical rules. Raimes (1991) connects early L2 writing approaches to the audiolingual tradition in second language teaching. Other L2 writing researchers, Silva (1990), Matsuda (1999), Kroll (2001), and Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) share the common points of views on this early L2 writing approach and provide further explanations on the distinct writing patterns under this pedagogical focus. That is, early L2 composition pedagogy places a great emphasis on the production of well-formed sentences. A typical writing task is the controlled composition, which is a focused paragraph- or essay-length writing assignment designed to have students practice with specific syntactic patterns and lexical forms. Zamel (1976) points out that early ESL student writing is "still essentially seen as the formation of a habit. . . . This kind of practice, however, is hardly the expression of genuine thoughts and ideas" (p. 69). Leki (1992) further summarizes the phenomenon of the early stage of ESL writing instruction and states that language was regarded as complex bits of grammar, and teaching writing was actually "teaching formalities of language" (p. 5).

Current-traditional rhetoric is an extension of the controlled composition model (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996; Silva, 1990). Following this model, ESL students were expected to "generate connected discourse by combining and

arranging sentences into paragraphs based on prescribed formulas" (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005, p. 11). Barnett (2002) provides representative composing tasks in current-traditional rhetoric, which include imitation of specific rhetorical patterns based on authentic samples and student-generated models.

Focus on the Writer: Expressionism and Cognitivism, 1976-

In the 1950s and 1960s, the study of rhetoric and composition for native English speakers was predominantly concerned with analyzing literature and the students' writing style. Writing pedagogy mostly addressed grammar and rhetorical structure and evaluations focused almost exclusively on the product of writing (Hinkel, 2002). However, this product-centered approach was eventually found to be rigid and restrictive. Since the 1960s, researchers had begun to study the composing processes of native English speakers. Process pedagogy arose in the late 1960s and early 1970s in reaction to the dominance of product-centered pedagogy (Matsuda, 2003). Methodologies for teaching composition began to move from a focus on the writing product to emphasis on the writing process.

Faigley (1986) identifies two distinct L1 composition perspectives or views of writing within the process-oriented framework: expressionism and cognitivism. The expressivist view reached its zenith in the early 1970s, when the individual's personal expression became a popular trend in teaching writing (Johns, 1990). Berlin (1988) describes writing, at that time, as "an art, a creative act in which the process—the discovery of the true self—is as important as the product—the self discovered and expressed" (p. 484). Leaders of the expressivist movement,

Elbow (1981) and Murray (1982), stress the personal voice in writing and value fluency and voice as principal tools for achieving proficiency in writing. From the expressivist perspective, teachers should facilitate classroom activities designed to promote writing fluency and power over the writing act. Writing assignments designed to encourage self-discovery, such as journal writing and personal essays, are highly recommended by Elbow. Through these personal expressions, students can “first write freely and uncritically so that [they] can get down as many words as possible” (Elbow, 1981, p. 7).

In contrast, Kroll (1978) and Flower and Hayes (1981) advocate a cognitivist view, which focuses on the intellectual analytical procedures in writing and places great value on thinking and problem-solving skills. There are two key concepts in the cognitivist discussions: thinking and process. Flower and Hayes (1981) present a detailed cognitive model identifying three major writing processes: planning, translating, and reviewing, which are hierarchically organized, “with component processes embedded within other components” (p. 375). This writing model is regarded as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers follow when they are involved in the composing process. In studies characteristic of this period, Hayes and Flower (1983) employed think-aloud protocols and revealed that writing processes are not linear, but rather individual and recursive. Perl (1979) found that unskilled writers’ revising is mostly editing; the changes they make focus on form rather than content; and they are overly concerned with accuracy. Flower (1979) also pointed out that inexperienced writers spend little time considering the reader.

It is the cognitivist view, or “writing as problem solving” perspective, that has had more influence on the development of theories of L2 writing. Zamel formally introduced the composing process research to second language studies in “Teaching Composition in the ESL classroom: What We Can Learn from the Research in the Teaching of English” (1976). She argues that advanced L2 writers are similar to L1 writers and can benefit from instruction emphasizing the process of writing. In the 1980s, process writing pedagogies were gradually introduced into the ESL/EFL profession. Raimes and Zamel were among the strongest voices calling for process writing. Zamel (1982) combines the expressive and cognitive schools of thought while criticizing traditional ESL writing pedagogy for stressing usage and form rather than composing strategies. Zamel (1982) further claims that writing is a process of discovering and making meaning and that the writing process is recursive, nonlinear, and convoluted. She also concludes that the composing processes of L1 writers can be applicable to ESL writers, but teacher-guided revision is the main focus of instruction in ESL classes. Raimes (1985) states the general features of experienced L1 writers’ composing process: “They consider purpose and audience. They consult their own background knowledge. They let ideas incubate. They plan. As they write, they read back over what they have written to keep in touch with their ‘conceptual blueprint’”(p. 229). The whole process is recursive in that “writers inevitably discover new ideas as they write and then change their plans and goals accordingly” (p. 230). Furthermore, Raimes (1987) compared ESL students’ composing processes with other writing researchers’

findings on L1 basic writers, and concluded that the two groups of students had much in common. Study of the ESL composing process (Zamel, 1982) has also noted the similarities between composing in L1 and L2. Connor (1988) states that the process-centered approach “focuses on writing processes; teaches strategies for invention and discovery; considers audience, purpose, and context of writing; [and] emphasizes recursiveness in the writing process” (p. 677).

The process approach emphasizes writing as a process of developing organization as well as meaning, so this approach has gradually been accepted in ESL writing research. A process approach to teaching writing stresses steps in the analytical writing process, such as generating ideas, writing drafts, and revising. Therefore, in process-focused classrooms, a series of writing procedures, invention strategies, prewriting tasks, multiple drafts, peer collaboration, feedback sessions, abundant revision, and attention to content before grammatical form have become important parts of writing instruction in L2 classrooms informed by this approach. (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005). In short, process writing pedagogies advocate that writing teachers use procedures “designed to help students think through and organize their ideas before writing and to rethink and revise their initial drafts” (Applebee, 1986, p. 95).

In spite of the similarities between L1 composing and L2 writing process patterns, Silva (1993) identifies differences between L1 and L2 composition on the distinct nature of L2 writing in the subprocesses: “L2 writers did less planning”; “transcribing in the L2 was more laborious, less fluent, and less productive”; and “L2 writing involved less reviewing” (p. 660-1). Within the

classroom context, Silva (1993) provides valuable insights for L2 instructional practices, stating that L2 writing teachers need to “devote more time and attention to strategic, rhetorical, and linguistic concerns” (p. 670). He suggests that L2 writing teachers should “include more work on planning”; “have students draft in stages”; “familiarize students with L1 audience expectations and provide with strategies for dealing with unfamiliar textual patterns and task types” (p. 671). In addition, L2 writing teachers are advised to “enhance L2 writers’ grammatical and lexical resources” (p. 671).

Resistance to the Process Approach in L2 Writing Research

Acceptance of process pedagogies is not universal in the L2 field. In fact, many EFL teachers are still trained primarily to teach grammar and forms in most EFL classrooms. This is mostly because much EFL teaching is aimed at preparing students to pass standardized tests. To prepare for these tests, students are urged to memorize words, phrases, and sentence structures in order to achieve high scores. There is no need to express personal thoughts in English. For some EFL students, learning to write is mostly geared toward passing timed essay exams, which usually accompany the other standardized English proficiency tests.

But one major set of the concerns have been voiced by writing specialists as well, that is the process approach does not adequately address some central issues in ESL writing. Reid (1984a, 1984b) has suggested that the process approach fails to consider variations in writing processes due to some factors, such as individual differences, writing tasks and situations; the development of

academic discourse schemata; language proficiency; level of cognitive development; and insights from the study of contrastive rhetoric. Horowitz (1986a) states that the process approach overemphasizes the individual's cognitive processing and neglects the sociocultural context. Widdowson (1983) is concerned that process pedagogies may emphasize fluency at the expense of accuracy. Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Jacobs (1983) suggest devoting more consideration to forms and grammar despite their strong call for a process approach. Most EFL students are taught from teacher-centered, product-oriented, and accuracy-focused backgrounds, so they need more time and instruction to become accustomed to student-centered, process-oriented, and fluency-focused elements of process pedagogy.

Numerous L2 writing research findings suggest that L1 and L2 writing are similar in a broad sense, but they are also different in many ways. These differences should be acknowledged in classroom practices, and L2 writing teachers should be aware of L2 students' characteristics and design courses to meet their needs. Thus, the process approach in L1 composition cannot be simply taken and put into L2 writing classrooms, because a model of the writing process itself cannot guarantee good writing. If L2 students are only told to follow a set of stages without being given appropriate strategies, adequate linguistic repertoire, and socially situated knowledge of the language and its context, how can they express ideas and thoughts in their composing processes as L1 students do? Although the process approach has been generally accepted in ESL composition, it does have limitations and has met resistance in the field.

These critics have perceived theoretical and practical problems in the process approach, and have suggested that the focus of ESL composition should be shifted from the writer to the reader—the academic discourse community.

Focus on Disciplinary Content and Discursive Practices, 1986-

Some criticism of the process approach has come from proponents of an English for academic purposes orientation. They question whether the process approach realistically prepares students for academic work and meets the needs of many L1 and L2 writers to compose texts for academic or professional readers with particular expertise (Coe, 1987; Horowitz, 1986a). For example, Horowitz (1986b) argues that the process approach fails to consider the academic realities facing EFL students, especially their need to write essay exams under time pressure. In response to this need, writing specialists have proposed shifting the pedagogical focus to the written genres characteristic of ESL students' specific areas of study and academic disciplines.

The proposed alternative places a primary focus on academic discourse genres and the range and nature of academic writing tasks, aiming at initiating students into the academic discourse community (Horowitz, 1986b,). Proponents of content- and genre-based instruction state that ESL writing courses should address ESL students' content areas (Flowerdew, 2002; Jordan, 1997). Some articulate their stances more specifically: Horowitz (1986b) and Johns (2003) clarify that this focus on content does not throw out the use of process-oriented principles and procedures such as prewriting, revision, collaboration, and peer review. Raimes (1991) states that the fundamental emphasis is to build whole

courses or modules of reading and writing tasks around the academic content.

Focus on Readers and Discursive Communities: Social Constructionism, 1986-

Many scholars, influenced by postmodernist and anti-foundationalist perspectives, have offered some concepts to explain writing activity. Social constructionists see writing as “a social artifact with political as well as social implications” (Santos, 1992, p. 2). They believe writing has social purposes, and the writing product is considered a social act that can take place within and for a specific context and audience (Coe 1987). From the social constructionist view, knowledge, language, and the nature of discourse are determined for the writer by the “discourse community” for whom the writer is producing text; as Bruffee (1986) states, “reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves and so on are constructs generated by communities of like-minded peers” (p. 774).

Along with content-based models, reader- and discourse-based writing frameworks have emerged based on the principles of a social constructionist premise. According to this premise, reader-based and discourse-oriented composition pedagogy should not only apprentice both L1 and L2 writers into academic discourse communities, but also prepare students to anticipate, satisfy, and even challenge the demands of academic readers as they generate their written products (Hyland, 2002; Johns, 1990; Pennycook, 2001). According to this view, writing instruction most appropriately focuses on identifying, practicing, and reproducing specific features of written texts for particular audiences. In terms of classroom practice, a reader-centered pedagogy emphasizes discipline-specific rhetorical forms, therefore, teachers need to acquaint students with

textual features of relevant disciplines, learn to analyze their purposes, assess audience expectations and produce the texts which are acceptable in a certain discourse community (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005).

Focus on Sociopolitical Issues and Critical Pedagogy, 1990-

Theories of Writing in the Post-Process Era

With the development of composition research and pedagogy, writing itself is no longer seen as a set of steps, and many writing instructors agree that the writing act is much more complicated than early process approach writings suggest, since it involves social and contextual factors that were not addressed in these writings. The focus on writing as content began to shift to the idea of writing as activity. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, while the process approach was still a dominant theme in writing research, some researchers began to pay attention to the educational, ethical, and political dimensions of L2 writing instruction, including genre-oriented, and socioliterate models. In the L2 field, ESL/EFL writing specialists have begun to address issues of critical pedagogy, including critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995), critical writing about academic genres (Benesch 2001; Hyland, 2002).

The notion of “post-process” arose in composition studies during the early 1990s and quickly became one of the important key concepts in the field. The general view was that the process approach no longer offered an adequate explanation of the writing act; writing is much more complex than any series of stages would suggest. In the process classroom, teaching writing is emphasized as the teaching of steps, while the dynamics of the writing act—the contextual,

social aspects of writing—are left behind (Sinor and Huston, 2004). Accordingly, post-process theory questions the “limitations of the process approach to writing” and advocates paying attention to the “socially situated nature of writing itself” (Sinor and Huston, 2004, p. 371). It encourages students to write the way “real” writers write and to be aware of the context of writing, not simply the “visible processes of writing” (p. 371). Post-process does not abandon the writing steps; in fact, Sinor and Huston emphasize that “working through the writing steps is a crucial component,” while at the same time, “instruction is centered on the social, political, and contextual forces that surround writing” (p. 371). However, post-process theory recognizes that there are perhaps different steps for each writer because “no two writers engage in the same act of writing” and so “there is no single process” (p. 370-371). Kent (1999) articulates three assumptions: writing is public, interpretive, and situated. The public nature of writing suggests that writing is “communicative interaction with others rather than a product of an individual,” and so writers should “work toward communicating their message to an audience” (Breuch, 2002, p. 110-111). To view writing as interpretive is to emphasize the “indeterminate nature of the writing activity” (p. 115). Finally, writing is situated in that it should “correspond to specific contexts” (p. 115).

As an emergent writing theory, post-process does not offer concrete applications to the writing classroom, but it does provide valuable pedagogical insights that can guide teaching practice. Based on Kent’s ideas of a new paradigm of writing, Breuch (2002) elaborates two main principles of post-process theory that can be applied to teaching pedagogy. First, writing pedagogy

requires dialogue between teacher and students rather than monologue, suggesting that teachers move away from “a transmission model” and toward “a transformative model” as collaborators (p. 102). Others agree with Breuch. For example, Freire (1998) encourages students’ participation and two-way dialogue between teacher and students. In place of the traditional “banking concept” of education, in which a teacher “issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat” (p. 67), Freire advocates a “problem-posing” concept which requires students to play active roles in learning. Breuch (2002) views teaching as “an act of mentoring” and the teacher-student relationship as “collaborative and dialogic” (p. 120). Post-process theory advocates empowering students, equalizing the power structure between teacher and students.

Post-process theory also provides some insights for L2 writing instruction. Atkinson (2003a) sees writing as a “highly cognitive, individualist, largely asocial process” (p. 10). The teacher’s role in the post-process classroom is as facilitator and collaborator, offering feedback and encouragement to scaffold the writing process. Other researchers also propose similar research insights for L2 writing instruction in a new era: Atkinson (2003b) regards writing instruction as a highly cultural activity, and Hyland (2003) offers “genre approaches,” which see ways of writing as “purposeful, socially situated responses to particular contexts and communities” (p. 17). Post-process theory shares much with other aspects of contemporary Western approaches that could be applied to the EFL writing workshop in my study.

Silva's L2 Writing Framework

As early as 1982, Berlin presented an evolving writing model that suggests considering the elements of the composing process—that is, showing concern for writer, reader, reality and language in written text; this model has provided some basis for understanding the developments in L2 writing theory. With the maturation of L2 writing as a discipline and profession, many L2 writing specialists raise questions and seek better L2 writing practice considering previous limitations and new challenges. According to Silva (1990), the process approach provides "a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment" for students to work through their composing processes (p. 15). As outlined in the previous section, although the process approach has been generally accepted in ESL composition, critics of the process approach indicate a move toward a "more complete understanding" of L2 writing.

Silva (1990) first proposed that L2 writing should be approached systematically as "purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction, which involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge" (p. 18). The basic elements that need to be addressed in writing instruction, are the L2 writer, the L1 reader, the L2 text, the contexts for L2 writing, and the interaction of these elements in a variety of authentic ESL settings (p. 18). Silva's main proposal is to teach ESL composition based on "a broader, more comprehensive conception of what L2 writing involves"; that is, a "bigger picture" that must "meaningfully account for the contributions of the writer, reader, text, and context, as well as their interaction" (p. 20).

The Context of Education in China

Historical Background

China is a country with long history and rich cultural traditions. Since ancient times, people in China have had the tradition of respecting teachers and intellectuals. Confucius (551-479 BC) has been regarded as a great thinker and educator. It was Confucius, about two thousand years ago, who initiated the first private schools and advocated teaching and learning, ending the notion of education as a privilege for the upper-class and making education possible for ordinary people (Su, 2002). After that, private schools flourished, existing side by side with official schools as a component of the educational system in China's feudal societies. One major objective of feudal education was to train officials. Beginning from the Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD), the government held examinations to select officials (Su, 2002). Since then, the imperial examination system has become an important part of education. Under the imperial examination system, the content for teaching and examinations included poetry, essays, Confucian classics, and comments on strategies of governance advocated by well-known philosophers. During the Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing (1644-1911 AD) Dynasties, candidates for imperial examinations were required to write essays strictly in accordance with a rigid eight-part form called "eight-legged essay" (Su, 2002), which consists of eight parts: opening, amplification, preliminary exposition, initial argument, central argument, later argument, final argument and conclusion. This essay form gradually became the standard device of the civil service examination in the middle of the fifteenth

century, and was accepted as a literary form until the early twentieth century.

The Goal of Education

The philosophy underlying Chinese education is Confucian thinking. Two principles are the basis in Confucian thinking: *Ren* (benevolence) and *Li* (propriety of behavior and loyalty to the social traditions) (Cai, 1993; Connor, 1996). A few studies describe Confucian thinking from different perspectives: Chen (1990) states that Confucianism teaches obedience to authority; Hall and Ames (1987) point out that reasoning was not a high priority for Confucius; Carson (1990) studied the social aspects of Chinese schooling; he also agrees with the historical influence of Confucian philosophy on Chinese education. That is, Confucius was more concerned with presenting moral concepts than with advocating a method of critical thinking, so teaching moral principles to students remains the traditional function of schooling in China. Carson (1990) also summarizes a few major social values reflected in Chinese traditional schooling: patriotism, the collective good, group loyalty, and respect for authority. For Chinese, individuals are expected to maintain social harmony, while individualism is possible so long as it does not threaten the shared acceptance of order and responsibility.

The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher is well defined in Confucian teaching philosophy. Traditionally, Confucius is asked questions by students and responds with wisdom. He has been respected as an external authority and is a messenger who transmits the wisdom of the ancients (Scollon, 1999). Chen, in *Confucius as*

a Teacher (1990), summarizes the teaching methods which Confucius advocated: the teacher is to serve as a role model, to answer questions and assist in the development of talent, and to cultivate his own virtue and learning while encouraging students to do the same. In other words, the teacher's role is to transmit the wisdom learned from past sages, and students are to receive the socially accepted knowledge. Under these principles, Chinese teachers encourage students to express what is socially shared rather than what is individual and personal. Thus, choral recitation and memorization are often used in classroom, with an emphasis on enunciation and dictation (Carson, 1990).

Classroom Participation

Scollon (1999) compares the frameworks for participation between the Western and the Chinese classroom. In the Western classroom, she found that other students retain the role of listeners when one student becomes a speaker. In contrast, in the Chinese classroom, students often act as bystanders when one student becomes involved in any teacher-student interaction. This classroom behavior has been further analyzed by other scholars. Hall and Ames (1987) agree that Confucian thinking concerns consequences more than truth: Confucius was interested in "tuning the language, the practical consequence of which is to increase harmonious activity" (p. 264).

Based on classroom observation and the studies of Chinese and Western teaching philosophies, Scollon (1999) concludes that the set-member relationship, in which an individual is a member of the whole group, is one of the characteristics of Western philosophy. In contrast, the part-whole relationship is

the concern in Confucian thinking: a person is an integral part of the whole group. Influenced by this thinking, Chinese students tend to abide by the group's decisions rather than insisting on individual opinions.

Cultural Framework

The notion of "group harmony" advocated by Confucian thinking has had a great impact on Chinese social norms and cultural ideology. One distinct example is the concept of "collectivism," which has been accepted as a standard social principle. Hofstede (1980; 1983) raised the concept of individualism-collectivism differences between cultures. Western cultures value independence, while Eastern cultures emphasize interdependence. The United States is called an individualistic culture, one which values individual rights. Therefore, it is believed that most Americans are self-oriented and emotionally independent, and their emphasis is on individual initiative, the right to privacy, autonomy, and individual decisions. Conversely, Chinese believe in collectivism, a focus which is rooted in thousands of years of Chinese cultural and social philosophy. For Chinese people, personal identity is based in the social system, and they are emotionally dependent on their institutions and organizations.

According to Markus and Kitayama (1991; 1994), collectivistic and individualistic cultures produce different conceptions of the "self." In many Western cultures, the dominant norms and values reinforce the idea of the "self" as independent, and the assessment of the "self" is based on individual achievements and characteristics. This cultural framework is thought to produce an independent, individualistic "self." By contrast, in many Eastern cultures, the

dominant cultural norms support the conceptions of the “self” as intertwined and interdependent with others. In these cultures, the “self” is evaluated in terms of one’s fit in the social setting and one’s fulfillment of social and cultural obligations (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; 1994). Such a cultural framework is said to produce an interdependent, collectivistic “self” (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; 1994).

Based on this cultural framework, local adjustments are needed in order for a teacher to apply any Western teaching approaches to Eastern cultures. ESL/EFL teachers should be aware of the diversity of students and their cultural orientations, and teachers should also have the necessary cultural sensitivity to help students learn to appreciate their home cultures while learning English.

Current English Writing Instruction and Classroom Practice in China

Overview of English Writing Instruction

The current-traditional approach, characterized by the organizational modes and an emphasis on correct form, became the standard for English writing instruction in China, India, and the Philippines with the assistance of British and American teachers in the early 1900s (You, 2004), and today it continues to have great influence in these countries. English language instruction in China mostly focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Writing, on the other hand, has been neglected compared to other skills. At most Chinese universities, writing has not been included in the current curriculum but exists chiefly as a by-product of reading classes.

L2 writing instruction in mainstream university English classes in China

often follows the principles of current-traditional rhetoric pedagogy and mostly focuses on written product. In a non-English speaking country such as China, English is taught under the general guidance of nationally sanctioned syllabi authorized by the Ministry of Education, which basically outlines the instructional goals for English education. According to the syllabus for non-major students released in 1999, general college English teaching aims at developing high ability in reading, and a moderate ability in listening, speaking, writing, and translation (You, 2004). The main goal for teaching English is to enable students to employ English as a means of information exchange (You, 2004). Therefore, English is mostly taught to help students comprehend English materials rather than expressing their own thoughts in English; instruction is geared more to the language itself, to issues such as vocabulary, syntax, and grammar, rather than to the macrostructures of written text. Moreover, English education did not receive enough attention until the early 1980s, when the Chinese government implemented a series of economic reforms and widened economic and educational exchanges with English-speaking countries.

In this traditional educational situation, students become recipients of a foreign language, rather than communicators in a language context. Consequently, students are taught to recognize words and phrases, understand sentence structures, and ultimately comprehend texts and get the needed information. With this pedagogical focus, the majority of students spend a large amount of time on rote memorization of words and phrases, grammar rules and sentence patterns. The ultimate goal of learning English is to use the language

correctly, and the teaching focus is on correction of forms. Teachers are the classroom authorities and students are the recipients of textbook-based knowledge. This traditional teaching style shares some features of the “banking concept” described by Freire (1998), since the teacher mostly transmits textbook knowledge while students receive, memorize and repeat what they learn. The term “banking method” is a vivid description of the traditional learning style which views knowledge as fixed and transmitted directly to the students.

In China, writing in mainstream university English classes is taught in reading classes as a means of reinforcing learned vocabulary and sentence patterns. Reading teachers usually go through the reading materials first, then assign certain topics related to the reading materials for students to write about, and students are expected to turn in their final drafts on a certain date. However, little attention is given to the composing process and little opportunity for revision is provided for students. Most students turn in their first drafts as their final drafts to the teacher—the only audience of their writing. Students are graded based on accuracy and correctness of their sentences and paragraphs, and there is very little feedback given on content or suggestions for revision. Furthermore, students seldom have opportunities to read their classmates’ papers or follow up on their own writing. Once they get a grade, the writing task is over; each paper is like a test rather than a learning activity.

The English education in China is test-oriented and places great emphasis on language accuracy. This also seems to be true of EFL language instructions in many other EFL countries. Hinkel (2002) summarizes the results of a number

of studies from the 1990s (Kohn, 1992; Lee and Scarcalla, 1992; Ahn, 1995; Fu and Poon, 1995; Namba, 1995; Tse, 1995), and states that there are severe shortcomings in national and standardized curricula for the teaching of writing in Asian countries like China, Japan and Korea. They claim that writing instruction in these countries fails to accomplish many desirable instructional objectives, and consequently that the teaching of writing in the Asian countries has much room for improvement. Hinkel (2002) states that there is a wide gap between the curricular expectations regarding learners' L2 writing proficiency and their actual skills in some Asian countries, because the educational goal of English teaching is geared toward achieving high scores in all types of examinations rather than developing language competence for L2 learners.

The Development of English Language Teaching

The concepts of the process approach and the genre-based approach, growing out of the North American context, are gradually permeating non-English speaking countries and areas (You, 2004). In China, Wang (1986) formally introduced the process approach into the Chinese English Language Teaching circle, emphasizing the recursive nature of writing. Since then, some Chinese ELT teachers and researchers have explored the implementation of the process approach and genre approach in a few Chinese educational contexts (You, 2004). The ELT circle believes that EFL writing teachers should make adjustments to adopt Western writing approaches to accommodate local context. For instance, EFL teachers need to be aware of educational traditions, student needs, and instructional goals and constraints that apply in any given context (You, 2004),

and make some applicable adjustments to assist language development.

More recently, a new wave of college ELT reform is underway in China, initiated by the new teaching requirements released by the Chinese Ministry of Education in January 2004. In this new policy statement, English education at the college level is conceptualized as the teaching not only of language knowledge and skills, but also of language learning strategies and cross-cultural communication skills. Among learning strategies, individualized learning, collaborative learning, and hyper-textual learning are to be emphasized (You, 2004).

Contemporary Western Writing Pedagogical Framework in an EFL Setting

The current study is intended to explore the applicable aspects of contemporary Western writing approaches at a Chinese university, based on the writing model provided by Silva (1990) as well as some insights gained from the theoretical base of current L2 writing research. The next sections will cover the L2 writer, the L1 reader, the L2 text, the contexts for L2 writing, and the interaction of these elements in an authentic EFL setting that incorporates contemporary Western writing theory.

Characteristics of the L2 Writer

Silva (1990) suggests that an L2 writing approach should address five basic elements. Among these, the role of L2 writer is of the great importance. Most EFL writers have learned English in non-English speaking countries with limited exposure to real, communicative English, so they basically rely on learning English solely from their English classes, which makes classroom

practice crucial to their achievements in English learning. Chinese students share similar experiences with other EFL students. Most Chinese students make tremendous effort to acquire adequate language proficiency in spite of many disadvantages, including lack of access to an authentic language environment, narrow exposure to the language in the form of textbook English, and unfamiliarity with L2 culture and L2 discourse.

Students have individual characteristics, varied language proficiency levels, and different attitudes and motivations toward L2 writing, which makes language teaching more challenging. EFL teachers need to pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of students' learning styles as they scaffold the learning process. In addition, students' prior learning experience must be taken into account. As mentioned before, traditional Chinese teachers often give lectures, while students patiently receive and memorize the textbook information. Therefore, Chinese EFL students are used to listening to lectures and taking notes rather than participating in classroom interaction and activities. This traditional learning style, familiar to most Chinese students, depends on rote-memorization instead of communication; thus, if a teacher wishes to introduce the elements of any student-centered pedagogy, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to motivate students and get them involved in classroom activities. The teacher must pay special attention to encouraging students' participation because Chinese students are found to prefer auditory and visual learning to group work (Reid, 1987).

Due to the influence of Confucian thinking, the teacher is the authority in

the class, is held in very high regard, and is viewed as deserving a high level of respect. This phenomenon can be an obstacle to the student-centered communicative classroom. Teachers may be reluctant to surrender their authority and students may be hesitant to assert themselves. Certain contemporary Western pedagogy approaches could provide not only a collaborative learning atmosphere, but also an opportunity for constructing knowledge in EFL classroom practice. For the application of contemporary Western writing theory and practice in Chinese educational contexts, teachers may need to help students become accustomed to collaborative learning and self-monitoring as part of their learning process.

L1 Reader—Audience of the L2 Text

Besides considering L2 writers' differences, the role of L1 readers in L2 writing pedagogy has become more important since the early 1990s. In her book, *Understanding ESL Writers* (1992), Leki describes ESL students' perceptions of writing in English: These students describe disappointment and frustration resulting from insufficient vocabulary, difficulty in finding alternative vocabulary, and lack of awareness of levels of language (p. 84-5). Most EFL students feel unsure about how L1 readers would react to their writing, and some feel they share little in common with the L1 audience in terms of culture, perception, and social values and norms. These factors increase writing apprehension among EFL students.

One contemporary Western approach, post-process theory, advocates classroom writing for real purposes and audiences like "real" writers do. As such,

students need to develop a sense of self, of others, and of situation, as they initiate a dialogue between self and audience (Breuch, 2002). Because EFL students have different linguistic, content, contextual and rhetorical schemata, they often have problems in fulfilling L1 audience's expectations. EFL students have special needs in terms of L1 audience, so Reid (1994) suggests teachers could act as "cultural informants as well as surrogate audiences" to ESL students writing (p. 280). Reid (1994) also proposes a series of activities to develop awareness of academic audience, such as analyzing the parameters of the assignment, identifying the expectations of that academic reader/evaluator, and discussing strategies to meet those expectations.

For EFL writing classes in China, a sense of audience needs to be addressed with particular effort. In many cases, English teachers and test-graders are the primary audiences of students writing. Students believe that if they meet the expectations of these evaluators, they will get good grades in their writing, which often makes students follow the rigid test criteria and not consider what makes good writing, what the writing purpose is, and how to reach the target audience. In order to develop a sense of broad audience in writing, collaborative drafting and peer reviewing can help students learn to approach a topic from different perspectives. Moreover, having students post their writing online could be one alternative to develop multiple interactions between self and audience in their writing process.

L2 Text—Genre and Discourse Communities

Characteristics of Chinese Writing

Kaplan's study (1966) analyzed the organization of paragraphs in ESL student essays among five cultural groups. Kaplan's work suggested that Anglo-American expository essays follow a linear development. In contrast, essays written in East Asian languages (in this study, Chinese, Thai, and Korean speakers were included as one group) use an indirect approach and come to the point only at the end. Therefore, Kaplan (1966) argues that Chinese as well as other Oriental writing is indirect, while Anglo-American English writing is more direct and straightforward. A topic in Oriental writing is not discussed directly but is approached from a variety of indirectly related views. Kaplan (1972) further explains that the indirectness in Chinese writing is influenced by the traditions of "eight-legged essay," which has constituted the principal framework for expository and persuasive writing in China. Other scholars agree with the influences of the eight-legged essay on Chinese writing. Cai (1993) explains that the length, organization, and topics for the eight-legged essay were derived from two classic Chinese texts entitled *Four Books* and *Five Classics*, which convey the Confucian philosophy and set the moral standards for society. According to Cai (1993), the eight parts in the "eight-legged" essay were *poti*, *chengti*, *qijiang*, *qigu*, *xugu*, *zhonggu*, *hougu*, and *dajie*. Translated literally, these are opening, amplification, preliminary exposition, first argument, second argument, third argument, final argument, and conclusion. Cai (1993) further explains that the

more recent four-part model of *Qi-Cheng-Jun-He* is commonly used for organizing essays in recent years. *Qi* prepares the reader for the topic, *cheng* introduces and develops the topic, *jun* turns to a seemingly unrelated subject, and *he* sums up the whole essay. In Chinese writing classes, Chinese students have been trained to follow the *qi-cheng-jun-he* model. In English classes, teachers also introduce a similar writing model to students, which consists of introducing a topic, discussing its advantages and disadvantages with some supporting examples, and then drawing a conclusion. This traditional "five-paragraph essay" textual organization is still dominant in English writing instruction in Chinese institutions, so students tend to follow this classic content-centered model whenever they write academic essays in English.

Contrastive Rhetoric between L1 Texts and L2 Texts

Contrastive rhetoric studies have found differences between Chinese and English writing. Besides organization, there are a few features in Chinese student writing worth mentioning. Cai (1993) states that Chinese students seem to avoid free expression of personal views and feelings. Instead, Chinese students use poetry, quotations, and other borrowed references to make their arguments in writing. As for the writing, Chinese writers tend to suggest and be indirect. They use rhetorical questions, analogies, and anecdotes to achieve their intentions. Concerning this phenomenon, Chinese students who are not used to expressing personal opinions directly in their writing have some connections with the influence of traditional Confucian philosophy, which stresses "living in harmony," and their familiarity with the rules of classical Chinese rhetoric.

The writer's voice in L2 texts also needs to be identified according to different writing tasks, purposes and audiences. For EFL teachers in China, it might take more time to develop personal voice in students' L2 writing. With this in mind, teachers may need to consider developing students' "cultural orientations toward self, others, society, and social interaction" (Connor, 1996, p. 41) in their writing. In EFL writing classes in China, teachers should provide students with linguistic, contextual and rhetorical schemata to scaffold the writing process. Only if L2 writers achieve some degree of language proficiency, and also have an adequate repertoire of voice types, are they able to interact with reader, text, and context and voice their own thoughts effectively. In practice, teacher-guided collaborative learning can help students analyze writing purposes and audiences, generate more ideas, negotiate a variety of writing styles and tones, and construct meaning in their own voices.

In summary, contrastive rhetoric studies have found differences between Chinese and English writing, and these differences are connected with a number of social, cultural, and political factors. Researchers of contrastive rhetoric suggest that ESL/ EFL writing teachers need to be aware of the sociocultural aspects of Chinese students writing in English.

Genre-Based Pedagogy

According to Silva's (1990) model of second language writing, L2 text is a crucial element that mediates interactions between L2 writer and L1 reader. In order to write in English fluently and accurately, EFL students need to have adequate knowledge of different types of genre, English discourse structures,

and linguistic components. Hyland (2003) proposes “genre-based pedagogies” as “a social response to process” in recent years. Hyland suggests that the teacher’s task is to assist students toward a command of language through “an awareness of target genres and an explicit grammar of linguistic choices” (p. 26).

In order to empower students with adequate English writing skills, the repertoire of language proficiency and knowledge of genre types should be built into and outside of the classroom. One key concern is using readings in the writing classes. Grabe (2003) states that multiple exposures to print leads to language knowledge that supports better writing abilities (p. 249). Kroll (2001) elaborates the advantages of using reading in writing class: readings provide “models” of L2 texts, provide input of “awareness of English language prose style,” and help students “develop and refine genre awareness” (p. 224-5).

In genre-based classrooms at Chinese universities, a range of methods could be employed to help students develop genre awareness. These practices can include reading extensively in multiple disciplines; investigating the texts and the contexts of different types of genre, especially those different from Chinese writing; encouraging writing in “many types of relevant genres and tasks”; developing “an awareness of text structure itself” (Grabe, 2003, p. 256); and developing appropriateness of genre. The goal is to teach students the use of register and style to reflect writing purposes and audiences. In summary, genre is to be used in “transparent, language-rich, and supportive contexts” (Hyland, 2003, p. 27) that will help students to learn the language most effectively.

Contexts for L2 Writing—Cultural, Social, and Situational Aspects of Writing

The contextual aspects of writing are the key concepts in a contemporary Western classroom. For any good writer, cultural, social and situational awareness of the world needs to be developed. Therefore, students need to develop critical thinking toward the world, cultural and social knowledge, and interaction between students and social institutions. In terms of L2 writing, Matsuda's (1997) "dynamic model of L2 writing" is helpful for understanding how writing context can facilitate ESL students' learning to match their beliefs with their readers. According to this model, the ESL writer and the L1 reader, with their different linguistic, educational, and cultural backgrounds, meet each other in the context of writing. Matsuda proposes that "each writing assignment needs to be placed in a real context of writing, involving a discourse community shared with real readers" (p. 58). He also suggests that teachers' responses should raise "awareness of the context of writing" and emphasize the "negotiation that occurs at the intersection of the writer's and the reader's backgrounds" (p. 58). Matsuda (1997) provides some examples that show students can learn how to negotiate the context of writing through a series of classroom activities, such as students' writing critical reviews of one another's essays, sharing with the whole class, and teachers responding to students' writing.

It is widely accepted that EFL students need adequate exposure to authentic language contexts to gain social awareness of a language. Thus, EFL writing teachers in China need to adjust the weight of reading and writing

assignments according to students' L2 proficiency levels, interests, and needs. Teachers could also select more authentic materials, instead of heavily depending on EFL textbooks, so that students will be able to not only build language competence, but also learn more about the target culture and society and gradually build their sociocultural knowledge of English and develop language appropriateness. Besides reading and writing materials, teachers can use a variety of teaching applications and media to facilitate developing language awareness, such as using English literature, songs and movies, having students read English electronic materials and keep an online journal, and conducting online tutoring in EFL writing classes.

Interaction in an Authentic EFL Setting

In this setting, writing will no longer be considered as language formation or as a few writing steps but as a real act situated within a sociocultural context. Researchers as early as Zamel (1982) surveyed several writing studies and stated that rhetorical form-focused writing instruction fails to recognize that writers write "both quantitatively more and qualitatively better when they are composing papers about topics that engage them" (p. 204). Zamel (1982) also suggested that, writing in an academic context should allow students to become engaged in a subject, and teachers should "provide them with a way into the topic" (p. 204). As writing researchers call for a new paradigm, teachers should design more real life writing assignments to help students understand and engage writing purposes, audiences, language and style, and contexts. It is also a challenge to empower students to interact with themselves, their audiences,

writing tasks and target discourses, and sociocultural contexts. Therefore, collaborative learning and multiple classroom interactions are highly recommended in the whole writing activity.

Building Adequate Writing Competence among EFL College Students

Components of Writing Proficiency

Canale and Swain (1980) outlined the components of L2 writing proficiency as the following: 1) grammatical competence involves competence in using the grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics of a language; 2) sociolinguistic competence enables students to vary their use of the language with respect to a number of variables, including topic, genre, audience and purpose; 3) discourse competence enables students to organize their texts cohesively and coherently; 4) strategic competence enables students to use strategies to stretch their competence to write effectively. All four competences interact to produce good writing, but writers sometimes develop one area of competence to a greater extent than the other three, possibly due to individual differences in learning writing.

Factors Affecting ESL/EFL Writing Development

Second language writing research suggests a set of factors that might affect ESL/EFL writing development. These factors are needs and objectives, motivation, authenticity, cultural and linguistic experiences, skill integration, reading as input for writing, and writing practice.

- Needs and Objectives: ESL writing development is enhanced when the instruction is explicitly designed to address students needs and

objectives.

- Motivation: Successful ESL/EFL writers have positive attitudes about writing. They do not feel overly anxious about writing. Writer's anxiety can directly interfere with the development of L2 writing skills.
- Authenticity: Writing for real purposes to convey authentic messages to real audiences also facilitates writing development.
- Cultural and Linguistic Experiences: Research has shown that writing practices are often tied to specific sets of beliefs and values of particular cultural groups (Street, 1984). Scarcella and Oxford (1992) suggest that one's cultural background does affect one's rhetorical organization in a second language, but that cultural background interacts with other variables—such as age, second language proficiency, and the ability to write in one's first language.
- Skill Integration: Researchers have stated that reading is essential for ESL/EFL writing development. Krashen (1982) considers reading a key source for the acquisition of writing proficiency.
- Writing Practice: No matter what we say about writing, learning to write requires writing frequently and constantly. The more experience students have writing in particular genres and contexts, the more confidence they gain in writing and the more fluent their writing becomes. Writing cannot be improved without sufficient practice in a continuous time period.

To summarize, these factors need to be taken into account when teachers

design writing courses to develop ESL/EFL writing proficiency.

Conclusion

The university students in today's China, in general, have acquired some amount of English proficiency to pass the English exams in order to enroll in universities, and they have developed images and self-identities as individuals. Growing up in the era of information technology, they are no longer like the traditional students in the past. Instead, the younger generation of students are more open to the world, more willing to take risks to explore the world, and they are also more willing to accept new things in their world. My writing workshop is my way to explore a new pedagogical application in my home university where I started building my English language proficiency. I was a good student in my generation back in the mid-1990s. However, the teaching and learning context has changed in the few years I was gone. So have the students. They are more independent individuals, having their own opinions about the outside world. Because of this trend, it is possible to try out some aspects of contemporary Western composition approaches in the college-level writing workshop. The key factor for a successful writing workshop, therefore, is to have students become aware of the interaction between their own thoughts and sociocultural writing contexts, and their ability to express and elaborate their ideas with language appropriateness and contextual knowledge.

L2 writing in this modern era, therefore, requires teachers to relinquish authority and to empower students. Teachers need to provide students with the tools to "examine any rhetorical situation, identify the social forces in play, and

respond appropriately in writing” (Sinor and Huston, 2004, p. 379). Thus, teachers should spend instructional time on the contextual aspects of writing, genre diversity, and the influences of society and power on writing.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will first lay out the research design for my study, then outline my writing workshop goals and pedagogical design. Finally, I will provide details on data collection, data analysis, and building trustworthiness into my study.

The Qualitative Nature of the Study

Marshall and Rossman (1995) state several needs for conducting scholarly research. These needs could be based on “personal experience with an issue, job-related problems, an adviser’s research agenda, and/or the scholarly literature” (Creswell, 1998, p. 94). The rationale of conducting scholarly research, suggested by Barritt (1986), is

> not the discovery of new elements, as in natural scientific study, but rather the heightening of awareness for experience which has been forgotten and overlooked. By heightening awareness and creating dialogue, it is hoped research can lead to better understanding of the way things appear to someone else and through that insight lead to improvements in practice. (p. 20)

This dissertation project is qualitative in design with naturalistic inquiry as the research method. Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the

study in a natural setting" (p. 15). Qualitative research attempts to explore people's beliefs and attitudes, feelings and perceptions regarding an experience or a phenomenon. Qualitative researchers are more interested in the real world than in artificial laboratory conditions, so their studies usually happen in uncontrolled, natural settings.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) show how science is limited by its dominant mode of investigation. In response to this, they propose an alternative paradigm, namely naturalistic inquiry. One of the principles of naturalistic inquiry is that the investigator studies a phenomenon in a natural setting and avoids manipulating research outcomes. The naturalistic paradigm proposes that reality should be seen as a "whole cloth" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 11). That is, "all aspects of reality are interrelated. To isolate one aspect from its context destroys much of its meaning" (p. 11). Lincoln and Guba refer to a central feature of naturalistic inquiry when they refer to "mutual simultaneous shaping" (p. 151). The key idea is that "many elements are implicated in any given action, and each element interacts with all of the others in ways that change them all while simultaneously resulting in something that we, as outside observers, label as outcomes or effects" (p. 151). Erlandson et al. echo this concept and state that all the factors observed in a certain context are "bound together in a whole cloth pattern" in which each part is "dependent on every other part" (p. 12). Each part is "both cause and effect of every other part", so any solution to the problem should be "a holistic one" that addresses the "overall pattern" related to the issue under study (Erlandson et al., p. 12).

The qualitative approach is suitable for conducting research studies on human participants because it involves interactions for meaning. This dissertation project applies the methods of one of the five qualitative traditions of inquiry—namely the case study. Creswell (1998) explains that a case study is “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). This system is “bounded by time and place,” and the case being studied can be “a program, an event, an activity, or individuals” (p. 61). For a case study, Creswell (1998) provides more details about the nature of the study site: the site(s) may be “programs, events, processes, activities, or multiple individuals” (p. 114). If the study is about multiple individuals, each is “defined as a case” and the study can be considered as a collective case study.

The present study grew from an initial set of questions that would provide the direction for the research as it began. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a practical definition of design in the naturalistic paradigm. They state that design means “planning for certain broad contingencies without, however, indicating exactly what will be done in relation to each” (p. 226). The naturalistic research paradigm recognizes the “complexity of the context” and “allows the design to emerge” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 73). The essence of naturalistic research for the researcher is to share “constructed realities with the stakeholders in that context” and to construct “new realities that enhance both the knowledge of the researcher and the knowledge and efficacy of the stakeholders” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 68). Thus the naturalistic research design “remains tentative until it is

implemented" (p. 68). Even after the research has been initiated, "the shape of subsequent phases of research will still be refined as additional information is learned from the social context itself" (p. 68). This study followed the essence of the naturalistic inquiry, so the tentative research design was constantly refined with additional insights gained throughout the research process.

Overview of the Study

Based on my English learning and teaching experience in China , I have been intrigued by a puzzling contrast: Chinese EFL students can achieve high scores in English reading, vocabulary and grammar tests, yet they cannot write good English essays. This phenomenon, in turn, raises a series of related questions: What factors make writing in English so difficult for them? Are any of the factors which affect their writing performance related to the current writing instruction? Alternatively, to the teaching approach? Or to the curriculum requirements?

Influenced by the traditional concept of language learning, which sees language as a complex system of grammar and sentence structures, English is mostly taught with the focus on correctness and accuracy in mainstream English classes in secondary schools and universities nationwide in China. On the other hand, a large number of English programs at university levels require English majors to achieve advanced proficiency not only in reading, but also in speaking, listening, writing and bilingual translation. Therefore, a big gap in pedagogical focus exists between general English instruction in secondary schools and English proficiency requirements at university levels. Many Chinese university

students are able to achieve average proficiency in reading English materials, but those students still have great difficulty in writing in English.

This dissertation study is designed to gain insights into the way English writing is taught at a Chinese university, to explore the views of teachers and students concerning the application of Western composition pedagogical approach in this educational context, and to gather information that would allow the researcher to look at the influence of this Western pedagogy on students' second language literacy development. At the same time, and more centrally, the proposed study aims at exploring the possibilities of applying the Western writing approach to university writing classes in China, by conducting a workshop that uses this approach, and learning how the Chinese participants react to and perceive this workshop experience and changes in their writing.

The research focused on students' attitudes and teachers' perceptions toward this writing approach. I did the study at a university in Beijing, P. R. China where I conducted a series of writing workshops during a 12-week term in the Spring semester of 2006. In the course of the study, I had been looking at the designed writing workshops from multiple perspectives: writing process, written products, and students' attitudes and EFL teachers' perceptions toward the Western composition pedagogy. The following qualitative data collection techniques were used in this study: surveys, interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis of written texts. Different sets of data were triangulated and integrated in order to see the workshop holistically. During the course of the study, data collection and data analysis were intertwined interactively throughout.

In the research process, I hoped to discover “the heterogeneous patterns and problems” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 82) that come up in the context of the study.

Research Setting

General Background of the English Program at BISU

The research was conducted at a university in Beijing, the People’s Republic of China. Specifically, the curriculum under study was the undergraduate English Major program in the English Department at Beijing International Studies University, where I graduated and taught English courses before I left to pursue graduate studies in the United States. I had hoped this connection would provide me with an insider’s perspective when conducting the research. The English Department at BISU consists of both graduate and undergraduate English major divisions. The curriculum I mostly focused on consists of the writing courses for undergraduate English major sophomore and junior students.

Under the current curriculum, freshman students attend English classes twelve hours a week, with six hours allocated to Basic English, which is a standard comprehensive English course integrated with reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Different from English curriculum at American Universities, the English Department does not offer writing courses to first-year English majors for some reason. Sophomores and juniors are offered six-hour and four-hour comprehensive English courses per week respectively, and the comprehensive English courses are highly emphasized in the curriculum. Writing as a separate course is only offered to sophomores and juniors; however, only two hours per

week are allocated to the writing class. In other words, the writing class fits into a curriculum in which students spend two hours per week on each of the following: Speaking, Listening, Translation, and Cultural Studies offered to students at different semesters during the four-year English study. Overall, the English curriculum places a great emphasis on developing students' reading ability. Writing, along with speaking and listening skills, is given secondary priority in this curriculum (See Appendix A).

English writing had been included in the Intensive Reading courses prior to this study. Traditionally, reading teachers have asked students to write, but for the main purpose of practicing language use or showing their comprehension of English texts. Since 1997, English writing has been split from the Intensive Reading course and has been a separate course in the English department at BISU.

In the English Department of BISU at the time of this study, there were 14 classes of third-year English majors. Each class was supposed to average 25 students yet most had several more. In order to meet the increasing demand of conducting writing courses, the Department asked a few teachers to combine two or three classes into one large group and teach them in one class session. Therefore, a few teachers ended up having 60 to 80 students in one session. The large class size made it difficult for both teachers and students. Those teachers were overwhelmed by student papers, so several teachers chose to respond to student papers selectively: they divided students into three groups and give comments to only one group at a time, alternating with the other two groups.

Students complained that they got very little feedback from the teacher, or they could not get individual help during their writing process. Naturally, they became frustrated and less motivated to make an effort to improve their writing. In most cases, they composed a first draft and turned it in as a final draft with very little revision. Their papers were graded according to criteria set by the teachers. Once they got a grade for their writing, the writing task was over; students never went back to revise a paper after it was graded.

Gaining Entry and Seeking Participants

At the beginning of the Spring semester of 2006, I discussed the intended study with the Assistant Dean of the English Department and obtained permission to conduct the study on site. Then I talked with the English faculty to get detailed information of the curriculum, the English courses and the students. Based on their accounts, I had some considerations when I started seeking participants for my study.

Naturalistic research calls for purposive sampling, which helps to "maximize the range of specific information" gathered; the sampling procedure is "governed by emerging insights" about the relevance of issues under investigation, and in choosing participants, the researcher "purposively seeks both the typical and the divergent data" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 33). Purposive sampling enriches the range of data on a topic, and better enables the researcher to identify "emerging themes" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 82). Therefore, purposive sampling was used to select the participants in this study.

From my experiences as an EFL learner, an EFL teacher, an ESL

graduate student and a doctoral candidate in Composition and TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I have experienced extensive English academic writing in both China and the United States. I believe English academic literacy should be developed at an early stage, in order to help EFL learners meet institutional requirements, career needs, and social purposes. Thus, the first college year seems to be a crucial time for these students to acquire the necessary academic literary skills. Therefore, I was originally interested in studying the phase at which EFL English majors develop their L2 academic literacy after their enrollment in BISU. However, there are no writing courses offered to freshmen in the current English curriculum at BISU; thus, freshmen students at this institution, in general, have little formal instruction in college-level academic English writing. Therefore, it might be difficult for them to accomplish the writing tasks of the workshop; they might not yet have a clear view regarding college-level writing. With these considerations in mind, I changed my original plan and decided to work with more advanced students who have had regular writing classes in the English Department.

Sophomores and juniors are offered regular English writing courses so they can draw on their experience in their current writing classes as a backdrop to the Western writing approach used in the workshop. One additional consideration further limited my plans for participant selection. I intended to conduct the writing workshop from late February to May 2006 for the whole 12-week period; during this time, participants would be making a considerable commitment of time and energy in this study—they would be expected to devote

two hours a week to attend the workshop and finish the writing assignments. They would also have some informal freewriting exercises to record their learning process. They would be interviewed twice during the study, and each interview would be about 30 to 45 minutes. The amount of time and work for the workshop might be a heavy demand on sophomores, particularly in the Spring semester, as they are required to take the English Proficiency Test Band 4 (EPT-4), which is the authorized English proficiency assessment for English majors held nationwide in April annually in China. This upcoming examination places considerable stress on sophomores, which might detract from their ability to participate meaningfully in the proposed workshop.

At any rate, since my research goal was to explore the students' experiences and attitudes toward Western composition approach, high-intermediate students would be ideal participants, as they might be more capable of accomplishing the writing tasks and activities in the writing workshop without having to struggle with too many language use problems. Furthermore, contemporary Western composition approach calls for writing for real audiences, purposes and contexts, which might be best achieved in this initial study by student writers who have adequate writing competence. Considering all of these factors, I decided that juniors from the English Department would be the most suitable participants.

Participants

Student Participants

A meeting was held to inform junior students of this project without the

presence of their writing teachers. At this meeting, I explained my study and invited students to participate in it voluntarily. Contact sheets were provided at this meeting and students were told that they could indicate their interest in this study and fill out these sheets with their contact information. If they were not interested in the study, they could also check the relevant item without having to leave contact information. All students present received a form in which they could choose from two options listed as follows:

(1) I have no interest in this project.

(2) I would like to participate in this project. My contact information is

_____.

All of these sheets were folded and turned in to me. Because there were no other teachers present, they would not be aware of which students were participants in the study, and there would be no any incentive in terms of class grades or extra credit for such participation. On the other hand, students did not feel pressed or obligated to participate in the project; if their teachers were present, they might have wanted to participate in order to impress their teachers. Therefore, I presumed these interested students wanted to participate for their own benefit.

I collected all the forms and contacted only the students who had indicated an interest in participating in the study. Those students were offered a consent form to sign and they were also allowed to keep a copy of the form (See Appendix H). There were 29 students who showed initial interest in this project, but only 24 showed up for the first workshop session, held one week after the

meeting. Only 16 students participated in the remaining sessions of the workshop and, thus, these participants' data will be presented in the later chapters in this dissertation.

The participants in this study were 16 junior English majors from different sections of English writing classes taught by several EFL teachers in the English Department at Beijing International Studies University. They are all native Mandarin speakers from various provinces across the country, aged between 20 and 24 years, and all had studied English as their first foreign language for between 9 and 13 years at the time of the study. I have used pseudonyms for these 16 participants.

Table 1
Demographic Information of Student Participants

Name	Age	Gender	Province of Origin	Years Learning English
Bingqing	21	Female	Sichuan	9
Bingyu	21	Female	Sichuan	9
Chunwei	24	Female	Zhejiang	10
Fengfeng	22	Female	Fujian	9
Guanwei	20	Female	Hainan	9
Hongyan	22	Female	Hebei	9
Huangmei	21	Female	Sichuan	9
Linnan	20	Female	Jilin	9
Linxing	21	Female	Fujian	9
Lipei	20	Female	Hubei	9
Liuyang	22	Female	Inner Mongolia	13
Wanying	21	Female	Guangxi	13
Xiaoai	20	Female	Beijing	12
Yani	21	Female	Inner Mongolia	11.5
Yushan	21	Male	Zhejiang	9
Zhaobing	22	Female	Henan	9

All participants took the National Matriculation Examination for university enrollment and attained at least 80 out of 100 points on the general English

proficiency test. After their enrollment in the English Department, they have had more exposure to English language, and they have been offered not only comprehensive English courses, but also Speaking, Listening, Translation, and Cultural Studies. Although these courses were taught mostly by Chinese English teachers, the class instruction was given in English. In addition, some sessions of oral English courses were taught by Native English speakers, so it was assumed that the majority of these junior students had achieved adequate English communicative competence, and they were, in general, more confident in expressing themselves in English than freshmen and sophomores.

Given this background, the participants in the study can be characterized as a relatively homogenous group of high-intermediate EFL learners. These students had passed the English Proficiency Test Band 4 (EPT-4) by the end of their sophomore year, so their communicative competence would give them more freedom to accomplish writing tasks in the designed workshop. Lastly, these students had already had regular writing classes with Chinese EFL teachers for three semesters by the time they attended my writing workshop. This experience might help them achieve a more in-depth understanding of the Western approach and collaborative learning involved, since they had experienced their regular writing classes to help provide a context for their new experiences in the workshop.

There were many more female students than male students in the English Department at BISU, so naturally I had hoped more male students would participate in the study. In fact, six male students showed up in the first workshop

session. However, after attending the first session, which covered some basic process-oriented writing activities, some students concluded that they had already experienced in their regular writing classes the kinds of activities introduced in the first session, so they chose to withdraw from the workshop after the first session. Only one male student remained in the workshop and he eventually reported his enjoyment of the whole process. In fact, this male student was considered the best writer in this group according to the L1 reader's feedback on students' final papers, which will be discussed in chapter four.

EFL Teacher Participants

There were four EFL writing teachers of Beijing International Studies University (BISU) who participated in the present study: two females and two males between the age of 35 and 50. They were recommended to me by the Chair of the English Department because these teachers were teaching College English Composition classes to third-year students in the English Department when I started my research back in the Spring semester of 2006.

As Table 2 shows, all of the teachers are Chinese and all of them have obtained a Master's degree in English with a focus on either ESL, TEFL/TESL, or Language Acquisition. One of them was currently working on a Ph.D. in English, emphasizing Second Language Acquisition. All four teachers have been teaching English writing for at least six years. I have used pseudonyms for these teachers.

The first participant, Yan, was a Chinese-English interpreter/translator before he got an M.A. degree in English Language Acquisition from Shanxi Teacher's University. He then joined the faculty of the English Department at

BISU in Fall 2000. Since then, he has been teaching English writing to second-

Table 2
Demographic Information of EFL Teacher Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Highest Degree	Years of Teaching English Writing
Yan	Male	35	MA in English/Language Acquisition (obtained in China), currently Ph.D. candidate in English/SLA (China)	6 years
Chen	Female	35	MA in English/ESL (obtained in Malaysia)	6 years
Wang	Male	40	MA in English/TEFL (obtained in China)	6 years
Lin	Female	50	MA in English/TESL (obtained in Australia)	More than 10 years

year English majors. Currently, he is also a Ph.D. candidate in Second Language Acquisition at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Yan has been active in a few research projects in the SLA field. For example, he attended a conference in Canada and did some collaborative research there in 2002. He also visited Seoul University in South Korea for about two months in 2002 for an international longitudinal research project on “immersion.” His overseas experience might have broadened his view of teaching in comparison to some senior teachers at BISU who have never been abroad.

The second participant, Chen, obtained her B.A. in English from the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing, China, a school chiefly for minorities in China. Then she obtained a Master’s degree in English as a Second Language from International Islamic University in Malaysia. There, she spent three years in studying, working, and living experience. She began teaching English in 2000, and by June 2006 had taught English writing in the English Department at BISU

for about six years.

The third participant, Wang, got his B.A. in English Education from Shanxi Teacher's University in 1989 and taught English in Shanxi province for four years. He then enrolled in the M.A. program in TEFL at Shanghai Foreign Studies University, which is one of the top universities specialized in foreign languages in China. After earning his M.A. degree, he again taught English in Shanxi until he joined the English Department at BISU in Fall 2001. Since then, he has been teaching English writing to the second-year students. His first time to teach writing to the third-year students was in the 2005-2006 academic year. Up to the time I interviewed him, in June 2006, he had no overseas study or work experience.

The fourth participant, Lin, received her B.A. in English from Beijing Second Foreign Languages Institute (now Beijing International Studies University) in 1982 and taught English for a year before she went for further studies. Lin was enrolled in the Master's program in TESL at Canberra College of Advanced Education (now Canberra University) in Australia from 1983 to 1985. She then resumed her teaching at BSFLI (BISU) after receiving her degree and has now been teaching English for about 20 years. Lin has taught the writing courses to Chinese university students for at least 10 years. During her teaching tenure, she had a two-year work experience in Canada and a six-month study as a visiting scholar at the University of Pittsburgh in the United States.

The Role of the L1 Reader

Silva's ESL writing model (1990) suggests that ESL writing instruction

should address five elements: L2 writer, L1 reader, L2 text, L2 writing context, and the interaction among these elements in writing. I intended to address these elements as much as possible in my workshop, so I invited an American writing teacher to assist me in this study. I wanted to let my workshop students have the experience of getting feedback from an L1 reader, since there were not many opportunities Chinese students could get feedback on their writing from native English speakers. I thought it would be helpful for these students to experience this kind of typical feedback activities in Western composition classes.

The L1 reader assisting in this study was a doctoral student and Teaching Associate in the English Department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania at the time he acted as the L1 reader for my workshop students in Spring 2006. During the workshop period, he taught first-year composition courses to American (L1) students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania while working on his dissertation. Prior to enrollment in graduate school, he had taught English in public schools in an East Asian country for five years. Having lived and worked in an East Asian country, this L1 reader had an understanding of Asian cultural and educational contexts, which also made him a ideal candidate for an L1 reader in this study.

Design of the Writing Workshop

Theoretical Basis of the Writing Workshop

The workshop was designed to be conducted in an EFL educational context, specifically in the English Department at Beijing International Studies University. The writing workshop intended to replicate in as practical a manner as possible the features of a contemporary Western composition class and its usual

writing pedagogy, along with some aspects of post-process theory which, in part, calls for writing for real audiences, purposes, and contexts. This contemporary Western writing pedagogy applied to L2 writing instruction at this Chinese university sought to address the roles of L2 writer, L1 reader, L2 text, and the context for L2 writing as well as interaction of these in this EFL setting, following Silva's L2 writing model (1990). This writing workshop aimed at leading students through the writing process, as suggested in contemporary Western pedagogy, and helping them develop social, cultural, and contextual language awareness in their writing. The underlying idea was to encourage students to express their thoughts and write for real audiences, purposes, and contexts.

Writing Workshop Goals and Objectives

The main goal of this series of contemporary Western writing workshop sessions was to develop Chinese students' writing abilities in English with adequate linguistic competence and contextual language awareness. The sessions were organized around the idea that literacy develops as a result of individual thought expression and development of meaningful understanding. Accordingly, the writing workshop focused on the development of ideas, the narration of experiences that students wish to express, and also the development of critical thinking. Rhetorical forms, such as grammar and sentence structure, were considered secondary to the more important goal of achieving thought expression and writing fluency. However, issues of form were also addressed as part of the writing process to meet EFL students' needs for language accuracy. Thus, the bulk of the workshop time was devoted to collaborative learning and

abundant feedback activities. In other words, developing writing content went before improving linguistic form.

The researcher had three objectives in conducting this writing workshop:

- To develop students' abilities to express thoughts, experiences and feelings in meaningful ways through writing;
- To raise students' language awareness of the social, cultural, and contextual aspects in their writing;
- To develop knowledge of the strategies and processes of writing in English, and to develop academic literacy for college level EFL language practice.

Writing Workshop Description

The workshop consisted of a variety of educational formats including mini-lectures, teacher-led class discussion, small group work, pair work and individual work. During the workshop, students experienced interactive classroom communication, collaborative learning and writing, and received abundant feedback from members of their discourse community.

During the 12-week period of the workshop, I met the students once a week for a two-hour workshop session, which focused on a variety of aspects of writing. These twelve workshops, in part, incorporated the strategies and theories of contemporary Western composition pedagogy, stressing writing for real audiences, purposes and contexts. I supported students' development in the writing process by being a collaborator and facilitator. During the 12-week period, students worked on two academic essays, and each essay was developed

through six weeks. I taught students a set of concepts to help them develop their essays: purpose, audience, and writing context; macrostructure; idea development; and paragraph construction. Each concept was taught and reinforced by various writing assignments. Workshop activities included brainstorming, collaborative drafting, peer reviewing, and teacher feedback.

Besides scaffolding the writing process, I helped students develop their critical awareness of audience, purpose, and writing contexts by being a cultural informant and a part of the prospective audience for students' L2 texts. In addition, a community of writers was built among students which was expected to develop broad audience awareness through effective peer response activities. The purpose of building a discourse community was to provide an opportunity for students to get used to giving and receiving helpful feedback. Moreover, this discourse community was expected to lead students to learn to consider their target audience and meet readers' expectations. Workshop activities aimed at raising students' awareness of writing purposes and contexts. Students' needs and concerns about English writing were also addressed in these workshops.

Data Collection

The main purpose of gathering data in a naturalistic inquiry is to "gain the ability to construct reality in ways that are consistent and compatible with the constructions of a setting's inhabitants" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 81). When gathering qualitative data, attention should be given to constructing "a comprehensive, holistic portrayal of the social and cultural dimensions of a particular context" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 85). Patton (1990) believes each

case should be treated as a unique entity with its own particular meaning to the context in order to obtain a holistic portrayal. In qualitative naturalistic research, interviews, observations, documents and artifacts are commonly used as four general data-gathering sources. Since the phenomena under study here was an exploration of EFL students' writing experiences and their attitudes toward a contemporary Western writing workshop, I used surveys and interviews, observations, and document analysis as major techniques to gain insights into the writing processes and behaviors in these workshops, and into the participants' perceptions about their experiences in the workshops.

There were three major sets of data sources in this study:

- Process data: I kept observational field notes and a retrospective log for each workshop session, and students were asked to do a five-minute freewriting at the end of each session, reflecting on what they learned in the workshop. This process data was gathered from students' freewriting, my field notes and retrospective log.
- Perception data: an initial survey was given to students at the beginning of the study, and two in-depth interviews were held with student participants, in the middle and at the end of the study. Also, "response sheets" were distributed to students to fill out at the end of each workshop session to get feedback from students about the lesson. One survey was distributed to some Chinese English writing teachers for juniors in the department and a follow-up interview was conducted with four of them who were recommended to participate in the study.

- Product data: samples of student writing from the workshop were used with permission and document analysis of written products were applied to assess students' final written products from multiple perspectives: content, organization, rhetorical stance, contextual appropriateness, and language use and style. I encouraged students to volunteer papers from their regular English classes, and we did some revising activities in the workshop and compared early and later drafts. These volunteered papers and revised texts were collected as supplementary materials.

Process Data

Field Notes and Student Written Responses

During the course of the writing workshop, I kept observational field notes and a retrospective log for each workshop session in order to record what happened in each session. The major focus was on students' writing behaviors and their writing process. I was interested in seeing what would happen when Chinese EFL students experienced a Western-rooted writing approach, how they viewed this approach, and what this approach could do in helping them to learn to write in English in academic settings.

Workshop participants were given a sheet of paper to write on to respond to what they had learned at the end of each session. The participants were given some guidelines to write about, focusing on the following aspects:

- What did you learn from this workshop session?

- What skills/techniques/writing strategies did you learn, or were able to practice further in today's session?
- What are your thoughts about the workshop activities in this session?

The length of student response was not specified in order to give the participants more freedom to fully express what they had experienced. They were asked to write in English, but they were allowed to use Chinese phrases to express their ideas when they could not think of a particular English word or phrase. Even so, all students wrote their responses in English, though some gave more details while a few others seemed to just briefly answer the three questions. Their written responses also included some of their evaluations of workshop sessions, so I took this part of the evaluations to triangulate with other perception data collected in the study.

Perception Data

Surveys

Whether for curriculum development in language programs or for other types of language research, surveys are commonly used to gather data. Brown (2001) states the advantages of using surveys in language research: survey research can describe, explore, and explain physical characteristics, phenomena, behaviors, attitudes and so forth. Surveys provide tools for in-depth investigation of people's experiences with language. Since this dissertation project aimed to explore students' experiences and their attitudes toward contemporary Western writing experiences, an initial survey was a good way to get to know the participants. Before I actually introduced the writing workshop, I conducted a brief

survey among the participants to identify the patterns of students' writing experiences, major obstacles, their concerns and needs, and their general impression of their regular writing classes.

Patton (1987) lists six types of questions that can be used in designing a survey: behavior/experience, opinion/value, feelings, knowledge, sensory, and demographic/background questions. Rossett (1982) suggests five basic question types covering major issues in a survey: problems, priorities, abilities, attitudes and solutions. To investigate Chinese students' writing behaviors, writing obstacles, and their attitudes toward their regular writing classes in the English Department at BISU, my survey included the following types of questions: demographic, experience, problems, priorities and attitudes questions.

- Demographic/background questions are usually used to elicit biographical information about the participants. The core questions included "How many years have you studied English?" and "How long have you been writing in English?"
- Behavior/experience questions seek to get at what happens under certain circumstances. In this research project, I wanted to find out what experiences students have had in writing English, how they behave, and exactly what occurs when they write in English. (See Appendix C.)
- Problems questions identify problems that the respondents perceive in a given context. In my project, the survey aimed at locating students' problems, major obstacles in their writing, so that I could understand

their writing behavior in the particular context.

- Priorities questions are usually used to find out which topics, functions, skills, activities in a language program which respondents believe to be most important. I wanted to find out what elements students gave priority to in their writing, so I could address major concerns with the activities in my workshop.
- Attitudes questions explore the participants' thoughts, impressions, and attitudes toward the phenomena being studied. In the survey, students were asked about their views and attitudes toward the current writing approach in their regular classes.

Students who volunteered to attend the writing workshop were given this initial survey at the beginning of the workshop. This initial survey aimed at locating the L2 writing difficulties and problems that students have before they began the workshop, and learning about the students' current writing behaviors and their strategies. The survey questions were written in English, and students responded by choosing from a list of multiple-choice answers provided or filling in the blanks with short answers.

Interviews

In qualitative naturalistic research, interviews play an important role in gathering rich data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that interviews allow the researcher to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future. Fetterman (1989) states that the researcher can learn to "savor the informant's every word for its cultural or subcultural connotations as well as for its denotative

meaning" (p. 48). Besides workshop observations, interviews were conducted with workshop participants and Junior-year English instructors in the English Department at BISU. Junior-year English instructors were asked about how they teach English writing in their classes, and their perceptions of the factors involved in contemporary Western writing in the Chinese context. Students who participated in the writing workshop were interviewed during week six and week twelve about their writing experiences and attitudes toward the writing workshops.

Interviews can take a variety of forms, ranging from those that are predetermined to those which are open-ended. Most commonly, case study interviews are of an open-ended nature where the researcher can ask respondents for the facts of a matter as well as their opinion about events. In this study, two semi-structured and open-ended interviews were conducted with the students in order to get more in-depth understanding about the students' writing behaviors, writing strategies, and their attitudes toward various aspects of contemporary Western writing approaches applied in the workshop. These two interviews were conducted in week six and week twelve—in the middle of and at the end of the study. Before conducting these interviews, I listed a set of basic questions and issues to be explored, but I also allowed new questions to emerge from the conversation. The interview questions were written in English, but in actual student interviews, all 16 students talked about their own ideas in Chinese as they were afraid of not being able to fully express their views in English. During each interview, the conversation was tape-recorded with the participants' permission; I also took notes about the major issues covered, as well as any non-

verbal cues I noticed during these conversations. All tape-recorded interviews were translated by me, and later transcribed and coded for further analysis. A list of initial interview questions appears in Appendix D, and contains such basic topics as the following:

- What do you like most in these workshops? Are there any aspects in the workshops that you don't like? Why?
- What are the major achievements you've gained by participating in these workshops? What writing strategies are most helpful to you?
- What do you think of the activities in these writing workshops (brainstorming, collaborative drafting, peer-reviewing, teacher-student conferencing, and L1 reader feedback)? Are they helpful in your writing? Would you like to have any of these activities more often in your regular writing classes? Why or why not?

In addition to two series of student interviews, I also conducted interviews with four EFL writing teachers participated in the study. These interviews were also semi-structured and open-ended. The aim of conducting teacher interviews was to get to know these teachers, their teaching philosophy, and thus to understand their classroom practice so as to provide a holistic view of current EFL writing instruction at this Chinese university. The interview questions were in English, but all four teachers naturally shared their ideas with me in Chinese, except using some English phrases occasionally in the conversations. The teacher interview guide included these following main questions:

- What concerns or problems, if any, do you have in teaching English

writing classes? What are the major problems in students' writing in English in your classes? How do you solve these problems?

- What is (are) the most important element(s) in your teaching of English writing to Chinese university students?
- In your opinion, how should writing teachers teach English writing to Chinese EFL university students? Please explain in detail.
- What do you think of these writing activities: brainstorming, collaborative drafting, peer- reviewing, teacher feedback, teacher conferencing, and multiple drafts)?
- Will they be helpful to your students in English writing? Do you think any of these activities could be used more often in your writing classes? Why or why not?

Product Data

Student Writing Samples

Students worked on two papers during the course of the workshop. Both pre- and post-revision texts from all 16 students attending the writing workshop were collected with the students' permission. The two sets of papers were kept as product data which were examined from the perspectives of content, organization, rhetorical stance, contextual appropriateness, and language use and style.

All of these data sources were triangulated to get a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. I would use these triangulated data to understand EFL students' writing processes, writing strategies and their attitudes toward a

contemporary Western writing approach, so I would be able to get a holistic picture of the application of a contemporary Western writing approach in the Chinese context.

Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is “an on-going process, not a one-time event” (Erlandson et. al., 1993, p. 111). Data from multiple sources were brought together and, as Erlandson et. al. advise, were “systematically analyzed in a process that proceeds parallel to data collection” (p. 81). According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) qualitative data analysis “involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned” (p. 127). Bogdan and Biklen (1997) characterize qualitative data analysis as “the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others” (p. 145). Huberman and Miles (1994) divide qualitative data analysis into three subordinate processes and argue that all three of these processes should be occurring before, during, and after data collection. These three subordinate processes are (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification (p. 428-429).

Data reduction is the process in which a large amount of data is reduced to manageable dimensions by choices in terms of “conceptual framework, research questions, cases, and instruments” (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p. 429). The data were gathered in this study included multiple sources: observational

field notes and students' freewriting texts, surveys and interviews, and pre- and post-texts of students writing in the workshop. According to the research focus, I made the decisions to categorize data into three major themes: experiences, strategies, and attitudes. These multiple data sources were disaggregated into smaller pieces to get the detailed information under three major themes, and then these data were categorized in detail under sub-categories.

Qualitative data display is the systematized collection and sorting of data which make possible "conclusion drawing and/or action taking" (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p. 429). Lynch (1992) suggests that "As with every stage of qualitative data collection and analysis, the coding of the data is an interactive process" (p. 78). For this study, transcribing and coding were used to organize and synthesize data so that informative patterns and themes could emerge.

Process Data

Field Notes and Student Written Responses

My observational field notes were records of the workshop activities and students' writing behaviors. The field notes were synthesized to get the best possible picture of what happened in the writing workshop sessions as I perceived them. Since my research focus was on students' attitudes toward a contemporary Western writing approach, I paid close attention to the patterns of students' writing behaviors and their writing processes recorded from field notes. Students' written responses were analyzed to learn their perspective on their writing processes and their initial evaluations on each workshop session, which have helped me identify the major themes emerging from the whole process. The

two sets of documents from both the researcher and the students were compared and categorized into major themes.

Perception Data

Surveys

Workshop participants were given a survey at the beginning of the workshop to identify their previous writing experience and attitudes toward English writing, their problems and concerns, and expected improvements in their writing from my workshop. After I collected this survey, I organized and categorized the data into a few themes: problems, priorities, and attitudes, and kept the survey as part of perception data for later analysis. According to students' needs and concerns, I placed more emphasis on the problematic issues while introducing the major concepts of contemporary Western writing when I conducted the workshop. Meanwhile, I distributed a survey to four EFL writing instructors in the English Department to learn about their teaching practices, as well as their concerns and perceptions on writing instruction in the department. I then categorized the data into concerns, practices, and perceptions, so that I could have a more comprehensive understanding from two perspectives. These two surveys were categorized into themes and kept as initial data, which were subsequently integrated with other data sources obtained from the course of the 12-week workshop.

Interviews

Two semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with workshop participants in week six and week twelve. The first interview was given

in the middle of the workshop so as to spot any problems regarding the writing workshop and to gather student perceptions at a point when they were midway through their experience. All interviews were transcribed and saved as perception data in a timely manner in order to understand students' writing behaviors and the relevant strategies they used during their writing processes. Based on the emergent patterns and concerns, I allocated some workshop time for addressing their key concerns, and tried to facilitate students' writing processes in the later part of the workshop. The second interview was conducted at the end of the study at week twelve, and aimed at finding the students' overall evaluation and attitudes toward this contemporary Western writing workshop, and their perceptions of changes in their writing or their future expectations about writing. All tape-recorded interviews were transcribed and coded into major themes and smaller categories, and the results were triangulated with process data and product data for a holistic understanding.

Four EFL teachers participated in the study had a follow-up interview. The interviews with teachers aimed at picturing the current mainstream writing practices in the curriculum, finding out the problems and concerns in teaching writing, and elaborating on teachers' perceptions on L2 writing approaches in the Chinese context. All interviews with teachers were translated, transcribed and coded into three major themes: concerns, practices, and perceptions, and were be integrated with the survey data.

Product Data

Text Analysis

Students worked on two essays during the 12-week workshop. They were encouraged to choose topics and concerns of personal interest to write about. They turned in their first drafts and their final drafts of the two essays at the end of the study. These pre- and post-texts were evaluated from multiple perspectives:

- Content: knowledge of subject, development of thesis and ideas.
- Organization: overall expression of ideas, transitions, paragraph unity and coherence.
- Rhetorical stance: writing purposes, audience expectations.
- Contextual appropriateness: cultural, social aspects of writing.
- Language use and style: sentence structures, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics.

The written products were evaluated holistically through the above mentioned aspects. I looked at both pre- and post-texts and categorized any changes within these major themes. These original texts and my analysis were then triangulated with process and perception data sources.

Trustworthiness

The naturalistic paradigm assumes that a valid inquiry has a set of combined qualities defined as “trustworthiness.” This means that a naturalistic inquiry should “demonstrate its truth value, provide the basis for applying it” and “allow for external judgments to be made about the consistency of its procedures

and the neutrality of its findings or decisions" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 29). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that terminology used in quantitative research is inappropriate for qualitative study. Instead, they propose using credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to deal with the key issues in qualitative research. As part of the research design, I tried to build trustworthiness into the study by using various combinations of strategies and data collection methods.

Credibility

Credibility involves demonstrating that the research is carried out in a way that maximizes the accuracy of identifying and describing the object(s) of study. According to Denzin (1994), credibility can be enhanced by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation and member-checking. In this study, I conducted the writing workshop during a 12-week period, and kept the observational journal for the whole study period. Moreover, triangulation was used to enhance the accuracy of the study. As Erlandson et al. (1993) point out, "triangulation enhances meaning through multiple sources and provides for thick description of relevant information" (p. 115). Denzin (1978) lists four categories of triangulation: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation. In this study, data from both teachers and students was triangulated, and methodological triangulation was also used, involving the use of multiple data-gathering procedures from surveys, interviews, written documents and so forth. After I transcribed all the interviews with participants, I emailed my version of the transcription to each participant to

confirm my understanding of their points regarding the interview questions. In other words, member-checking was conducted with all interviewees to verify the accuracy of the researcher's data to enhance the credibility of my study.

Transferability

In a traditional study, the researcher must ensure that findings can be generalized to the population, while in a naturalistic study, the obligation for demonstrating transferability belongs to those who would apply it to other context (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Davis (1992) defines transferability in qualitative research as the demonstration of the generalisability or applicability of the results of a study in one setting to other contexts. However, many qualitative studies are tightly bounded in their particular contexts, thus Erlandson et al. (1993) suggest using two strategies to facilitate transferability: thick description and purposive sampling.

Erlandson et al. (1993) explain that transferability in a naturalistic study depends on similarities between different contexts, so the researcher will collect detailed descriptions of data in the research context and report them with sufficient detail to allow judgments about transferability (p. 33). Davis (1992) agrees that the researcher is responsible for providing a thick description of a study so readers can determine for themselves if transferability is justified. As the principal investigator in this study, I provided sufficient description about the phenomena under study as well as other social and cultural information related to the research context. Purposive sampling was also used in my study, which is supposed to "maximize the range of specific information that can be obtained

from and about that context" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 33). However, as the findings from my study derive from a particular Chinese educational context, they may not be transferred to other contexts.

Dependability

Dependability is seen as the criterion of consistency in the naturalistic research paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Naturalistic researchers, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Denzin (1994), state that dependability can be enhanced through the use of overlapping methods, stepwise replications, and inquiry audit. In my study, multiple data-gathering methods were used to provide overlapping information. Stepwise replications involve using multiple data-gathering occasions at one site (Brown, 2001). In this study, data was gathered at the beginning, middle, and end of the study, so as to verify the consistency of the data and interpretations. I discussed the research methods, interpretations, and conclusions with my dissertation advisor and other colleagues to help ensure consistency in my interpretations of the data.

Confirmability

In a naturalistic study, confirmability involves the degree to which the data enable an external reviewer to make judgments about the products of the study (Erlandson et al., 1993). According to Denzin (1994), conformability builds on audit trails and involves the use of field notes, memos, diaries, and reflexive journals. In the study, besides observational field notes, I also kept what students briefly wrote on what they had learned or experienced from each workshop session on so-called evaluation forms. All of these data were kept as adequate

trails to enable an auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations are supported by the inquiry.

Researcher Bias

As an ESL graduate student pursuing a Ph.D. in Composition and TESOL at an American university, I have experienced American culture, distinct social customs and norms, and different educational beliefs and approaches. Given my English learning and teaching experiences in China, I could not keep from constantly comparing Chinese teaching pedagogies with the mainstream North American approaches. As an English major at a Chinese university, I was not taught formally and explicitly how to write academic papers in proper writing styles, let alone experiencing collaborative writing and multiple drafts in my writing process. I also found that the majority of Chinese students have great difficulties in writing English, so I assumed there were some problems in the current writing instruction in China. Therefore, I have been curious to see what would happen to Chinese students' writing when they were offered an opportunity to experience a Western writing approach. I assumed, based on my writing experiences in the U.S., that a contemporary Western writing approach would be beneficial to Chinese students, but I have been aware of my personal preference throughout the study and always tried to see the phenomenon holistically and objectively. I have been constantly aware of my own bias, so I allowed my participants to speak and write freely, whether they favored any particular contemporary Western activity or not.

In addition, I did keep in mind that even English writing pedagogy in China

has been influenced by ancient Chinese philosophy, traditional cultural heritage, and distinct social values and beliefs. There are many well-known pieces of writing in Chinese literature. Thus, a simple application of a particular Western writing approach is not likely to solve all the problems that Chinese students have with their writing, so any application will be subject to educational restrictions and social, cultural influences.

Summary

This study explores the possibilities of applying certain aspects of contemporary Western composition pedagogical approaches in college-level advanced EFL writing classes at a Chinese university. This naturalistic, qualitative inquiry began with a quest for a better understanding of teaching English writing in the Chinese context. The research focus was on students' attitudes toward their writing workshop experience and EFL teachers' perceptions of the Western-style writing pedagogy. The research design was to apply principles of qualitative method and naturalistic inquiry in a classroom setting. Through prolonged engagement in a collective case study, multiple data sources were collected and triangulated for better understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY RESULTS—DATA FROM TEACHER PERSPECTIVE

In this chapter, I will discuss the four EFL writing teachers' perceptions of applying some aspects of Western composition pedagogy in their writing classes. Their perceptions will be illustrated with specific details from interviews with them. The purpose of getting teacher perception is to try to gain better understanding on the EFL writing behavior and problems, and current writing practice in the classroom, which also sketches a whole picture of EFL writing instruction in the English Department at BISU.

Problems and Concerns in EFL Student English Writing

Chinese students in the English Department at BISU experienced a number of learning difficulties and problems in their English writing, and EFL teachers were aware of some important issues that students had faced. All four EFL teachers pointed out some of the common problems among their students, as well as expressing their concerns and offering suggestions on how to solve those problems. As EFL learners who mostly rely on textbooks and teachers for their learning, Chinese students have similar problems to those of other EFL students in other EFL situations.

Yan pointed out a few aspects of common problems: language use, text logic and lack of in-depth analysis on topics. Language use, including vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and punctuation has been one major obstacle for EFL students in the learning process, and students sometimes feel powerless when it comes to expressing themselves explicitly. Secondly, students are weak on logical

development in writing, typically in the paragraph coherence and textual unity. In addition, students are more test-oriented rather than being independent thinkers; therefore, they lack critical thinking in their writing, focused instead on just giving the teacher what he/she wants. In some cases, students can only write from their superficial understanding of a certain topic due to limited knowledge and lack of critical thinking. Moreover, Chinese students' writing is not always appropriate for the target audience due to a lack of background knowledge about the L1 reader's expectations and the target culture. Therefore, they write "Chinglish"—a style characterized as English translation of Chinese ideas, which is difficult for L1 readers to comprehend. As Yan stated, "Native English teachers could not understand their writing; only Chinese teachers can make a guess from the context."

When asked about common problems in the EFL writing classes, Chen pointed out three aspects teachers should address with patience. First, she mentioned students' attitudes towards English writing. Some students, especially those with low language proficiency, are afraid of writing classes, because they regard English writing as a "big headache." Thus, those students are reluctant to make any effort to revise drafts and so their writing shows little improvement between the first draft and the second draft. Second, students could have clear understanding of the features and textual frameworks for various writing tasks following explicit instruction. However, their limited language proficiency prevents them from expressing their ideas at will. Third, students lack critical thinking because they have been trained for so many years to just receive information

instead of create it. Thus, there is little creativity in their English writing.

Wang expressed his deep concern about the dilemma in English writing in today's EFL context in China. According to his observation through teaching, he has found the number one problem in writing to be the inadequacy of students' language ability and inability to express ideas explicitly. He stated that it is unfair to say Chinese students do not have their own critical ideas. On the contrary, he said, some students do have in-depth thinking but they feel very frustrated when they do not have adequate language proficiency to express their thinking at will. As a result, they tend to use simple language to express their ideas. Sometimes, their English writing appears naïve and less sophisticated compared with their actual thinking. It seems that some students conclude that they cannot write well because they do not have an adequate amount of vocabulary. In response, Wang stated his understanding in interviews with me. He cited some research that indicated there are about 3,000 words most frequently used in daily life for a majority of Native English college graduates. Therefore, Wang believes that, in order to be able to achieve effective self-expression, Chinese students should have good command of the most frequently used 3,000 words, including the chunks and collocations. However, Wang said, "some students are far away from self-expression, and I'm so concerned when I encounter some errors like the phrase 'be interested in' misused as 'be interested of' or other variations. Wang summarized two aspects of problems in vocabulary use: lack of chunks and collocations and limited amount of vocabulary. Given these problems, it is difficult for students to express their own ideas at will due to their limited language

proficiency. Besides language proficiency, Wang also places emphasis on the study of English textual models. According to Wang, if students achieve some degree of proficiency and follow the English textual models, the writing products should read like “English composition.” On the other hand, if students only have command of language while not knowing the English writing model, their writing may appear like “English meat on Chinese bones”—as Chinese contemporary writer Lin Yutang once remarked.

Lin showed her concerns about Chinese students writing in English when she stated that Chinese students have difficulties going beyond Chinese ways of thinking when they write in English, partly due to the language barrier and partly because they have been taught, quite understandably, to follow Chinese traditions in various aspects in their life. Thus, sometimes, their writing does not read like English prose, but as “Chinglish” in the sense of writing style. Moreover, Lin has been frustrated about a common phenomenon in the teaching and learning process: no matter how hard she tries to help students with their writing, it seems that there is only very limited improvement in the written products she gets from students during a single semester. Students can produce a paper that is “not too bad” if she constantly repeats the rules to them during their writing process. However, it seems that students tend to forget what they have learned about writing when it comes to the timed essay exams. In these exams, they write whatever they can—as though they can do nothing but fall back upon their basic level of understanding due to the stressful writing situation. Therefore, the timed essays show no improvement in their writing even after the whole

semester. Lin remarked: “I sometimes feel that my hard work doesn’t pay off.”

To summarize, all four writing teachers agreed that motivation plays an important role in student attitudes toward writing in English. If students see writing as a burden or headache and do not want to make efforts to improve their writing skills, they would never make improvement, let alone come to enjoy writing, no matter how hard teachers try to help them.

EFL Teachers’ Writing Class Practice

English writing was not an individual course in the English curriculum in the BISU English department before 1997. It had always been regarded as one of the basic skills to be developed as part of the comprehensive English course called “Intensive Reading.” Writing was used strictly to demonstrate comprehension of the texts that students had read. With more research in EFL-context language teaching, however, EFL teachers have realized the importance of writing in academic literacy development. Therefore, academic writing is now addressed through the “College English Composition” course and is now one of the core requirements for second-year students in the English department. At first, it was only required of second-year students. However, as its importance grew, the English writing course has become a continuous core requirement since 2005 for third-year students as well.

Similarly to many other universities across China, BISU follows the general syllabus set by the Department of Education, which outlines the general goals of English education and the proficiency levels English majors should achieve in four-year schooling. According to the general syllabus, English majors

should achieve “high-intermediate” proficiency in English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating skills so that they will be able to comprehend English texts and communicate with people of English-speaking countries. Based on these guidelines, EFL teachers have set up a specific writing course framework for second-year and third-year writing classes. Each individual writing teacher has some freedom to choose how to conduct classes as long as he/she achieves the specific objectives set in the teaching framework. In the second year, students are supposed to learn to produce different types of writing: description, narration, exposition, and argumentation. In addition, practical writing, such as business letters and application letters, is also included in the spring semester syllabus. For third-year students, the writing course is geared more toward academic types of writing, and this usually includes argumentative essays, book reviews, bibliographic research papers, and thesis writing.

Although all four EFL writing teachers shared some similar views on the problems and concerns about students’ writing, these four teachers had individual teaching styles and a particular class focus in terms of teaching English writing.

Yan’s Writing Class

In an EFL setting such as BISU, Yan is regarded as one of the most promising and well-informed instructors in the English Department. He follows the main emphasis of the general syllabus and the teaching framework within the department, while at the same time he has own concepts about teaching writing. For Yan, writing is very practical, so the writing course should be practical, too.

He describes his writing class as having a “task-based” format which is based on students’ writing papers.

Yan summarizes a few essential elements in his class which he believes are very important in teaching EFL writing: commenting, sample analyzing, modeling, and rewriting. He explained them this way in the interview: “Take a writing task as an example; first provide relevant knowledge and writing skills, then students write the first draft.” He typically devotes a quarter of his class time lecturing about writing strategies and three-quarters commenting on student writing. He usually holds a review session after the first draft, categorizing errors and recommending resources to the students, and then asks them to write the second draft. He selects good examples and lets students read them aloud in class. Specifically, he leads text analysis lessons on students’ drafts in class, having students discuss and comment on the example.

In text analysis, he focuses on both language and content. Then he provides a few “professional” models on topics similar to those of the students, asking students to read closely so they can learn to do in-depth analysis themselves—analysis which includes word choice/usage, vocabulary on the topic, and writing strategies used in the model. When he finds problems in student writing, he will recommend relevant books and materials to students. He states that the teacher is not a “dictionary” or “translating machine”, but someone who can provide resources for the writing process. He often facilitates group discussion in his classes, guiding students through their own text analysis, summarizing the pros and cons and rewriting on the topic.

Yan is happy to build two-way communication with his students, like opening office hours, responding to emails, and even communicating through text messages if needed. All in all, the important element, Yan believes, is to "provide ways to solve student problems." In his view, what is more important is to let students learn how to learn by themselves rather than what they can learn in the whole process.

Chen's Writing Class

Chen believes that three important factors need to be specifically addressed in the EFL writing classes: student attitudes, language proficiency, and development of critical thinking. In her class, Chen has been trying to find good ways to solve these problems. According to her statement in the interview, she was not sure "if what I [Chen] did would be effective for students' writing improvement, [but] I have been trying to help students in a few aspects." She helps students adjust their attitudes toward writing, letting them know that it is unlikely that they could improve their writing within a short time. Instead, students need to work for a longer time to see any improvement. Chen suggests that students recite a lot of good writing samples and recommends that students read authentic English materials, including available English newspapers like *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, etc. She also encourages students to read English texts with purposes: not only reading, but analyzing the linguistic and stylistic features of the reading materials. She thinks EFL students need exposure to good writing models, and she believes that reciting model essays sometimes can be beneficial to students' writing. According to Chen, students

need a certain amount of “good input” in order to produce “good output.”

Chen usually conducts her writing classes in the following manner: 1) she sets a goal for each unit, following the general syllabus; 2) she then provides theoretical input; 3) she initiates and facilitates group discussion, and students write the first draft followed by more group discussion and peer review activities. After students turn in the first draft, she comments on part of the students’ papers and categorizes the problems found in the first draft. She selects both good and inadequate writing samples and analyzes them in the class. By doing so, she hopes to call students attention to potential problems while also promoting the good features from the sample texts. In addition, she gives more feedback to weaker papers. Students then write the third draft as the final product. Then, they start a new unit after the above mentioned writing cycle.

Wang’s Writing Class

Wang believes there are two essential elements in EFL writing classes: continuous efforts to improve language proficiency, and gaining familiarity with English writing textual frameworks. Naturally, Wang has been emphasizing both language proficiency and English writing models in his writing classes. As for language proficiency, Wang encourages students to read more and recommends resources to students. Due to the limitations of the textbook, Wang also searches for other relevant resources and appropriate materials for class, and always keeps an eye on teaching methods and materials which he can use in class.

Wang typically follows the traditional method of teaching writing: introducing good writing models or framework, then analyzing sample writings in

class. At BISU, the third-year English curriculum focuses writing instruction on argumentative and thesis writing. In order to provide more information on these forms, Wang has introduced some classic writing models to students: the five-paragraph essay, the TWE essay exam model, and the GRE writing model etc. Like Chen, Wang also believes that students need good writing models to start with. They will then become familiar with a standard textual framework and can compose texts according to this framework. Then they can focus on more detailed language use in the text. Concerning language use, Wang often organizes “peer correction” sessions in class, having students read and find language errors in their classmate’s paper. According to Wang, students need to be trained to read peers’ papers from the teacher’s point of view, which can help them develop a sense of self-improvement in their own writing. In addition to the global framework, Wang also found information from the Internet on writing introductions, concluding, and even some information on writing style to provide models to students. Apparently, he hopes students will follow the fixed writing models but will fill in these models with their own ideas and with effective words which, in his opinion, can lead to a satisfactory writing product.

Wang also places great emphasis on student motivation in writing, which he seems to think is not high enough among a majority of his students. As Wang explained, students come to class with negative attitudes toward writing, so they tend to be less attentive in class; some students are reluctant to make any effort in composing English texts. On the other hand, Wang also criticized himself, saying that he did not provide enough encouragement to the students, and his

lecturing may not be interesting enough to keep students' full attention. Wang has not been taught explicitly about Western composition pedagogy but he has read some journal articles on Western composition pedagogy, such as the process approach, and has adapted some basic ideas to his writing classes.

Lin's Writing Class

Lin is one of the teachers who has taught the *College English Composition* course since it was first offered in the Fall 1997 semester. It has been open to second-year students for about 8 years. Since the academic year 2005-2006, *College English Composition* has been included in the third-year students' course requirements. Lin, an experienced writing teacher, was selected to teach this course to the Junior English majors.

Because Lin studied in both Australia in the 1980s and later in the U.S., she has been exposed to Western composition theories and practices at the university level. Her view of teaching writing is somewhat different from other teachers who have been trained in Chinese universities exclusively. Lin emphasizes "process writing" in her class and tries to create a student-centered classroom. Lin devotes a large amount of class time on analyzing selected students writings. According to her, students can be more motivated to write English texts if their good work is recognized in the class. Very often she lets students read aloud well-written texts, which might be an introduction, a concluding, a transitional paragraph, or a whole paper. Students regard this reading-aloud activity as an honor, recognizing their hard work. Besides student writing, Lin also provides professional writing samples to conduct in-depth text

analysis in class. She asks students to pay attention to the idea development, writing strategies, textual organization, and language use in these samples. As Lin stated in the interview, writing models could help students learn to analyze English texts from different perspectives and, at the same time, students can learn “textual organization patterns” and “ways of thinking” from sample texts. She requires her students to write several drafts with the purpose of “letting students find their errors in their paper by themselves.” In addition, Lin believes that teachers should provide more input in class (e.g. reading authentic materials extensively), and tells her students they should be aware of getting more such input outside of class.

EFL Teachers’ Perceptions of Western Composition Classroom Activities

Yan’s Perception

Yan has been teaching English writing since 2000. As a novice writing teacher, he had some anxiety over how to achieve effective teaching. He had observed some classes taught by experienced teachers in the department, and gradually developed his own teaching focus and style. Yan believes that writing is a process-oriented rather than product-driven activity, from which students are supposed to learn how to improve their writing as independent writers. He has been using some process approach activities, such as brainstorming, multiple drafting, peer reviewing, and providing teacher feedback. He believes that students should be trained to take charge of their own learning, and so teachers should provide resources to them as needed. As Yan is fond of saying that the “teacher is not a dictionary or a translating machine.” The most important

element of his teaching is to “provide solutions to the problems.”

In his class, Yan gives lectures followed by group work. Among some pre-writing activities, brainstorming is commonly used in the class. However, he thinks brainstorming is mostly helpful in the pre-writing stage. For collaborative drafting, he holds a balanced point of view. He has peer-review sessions frequently in class, which leads to group discussions, where students analyze their own writing then make plans for revising. Although Yan realizes the importance of teacher feedback, he can only respond to half the papers at one time and leaves the other half for next time. He comments on strong sections and points out the weaknesses in the paper, then gives global assessment of the paper. As for the teacher-student conference, he has not formally included it in his class schedule due to the large class size. However, he will talk to students in class if face-to-face discussion is needed; such in class talk is always more brief and more informal than the typical one-on-one conference conducted in American universities.

Yan places great emphasis on the role of multiple drafts in the writing process. According to Yan, “Writing multiple drafts is the essence of the whole composing process,” because in the process of rewriting and revising, students are given the opportunity to develop their ideas, broaden their point of view, strengthen their arguments, and improve the whole piece of writing. More importantly, students will discover their weaknesses in the paper, which requires them to find ways to solve the problems and make improvements. Therefore, students can learn to take charge of their own learning and become independent

and autonomous learners. Yan seems to be aware of on-going L2 writing research in the North American school contexts, and he presents himself as an open-minded teacher who is willing to adapt and adjust teaching methods for more effective teaching. During the interview, he also mentioned that some Chinese teachers had tried to implement certain methods used in Western writing classes in their writing classes. However, not all of these methods worked well in the Chinese school context for various reasons. For instance, large class size hinders doing in-depth peer reviews, responding to student papers and conducting one-on-one conferences.

Chen's Perception

Chen emphasizes improving students' language proficiency in and out of the English class. She believes that students need to be exposed to authentic language contexts to improve the quality of their writing. Besides the focus on language, she also applies some process-oriented activities in her writing classes which she thinks are very important in the overall writing process. She has used brainstorming to generate students' ideas on a topic, and has had students write collaboratively on a topic. She requires multiple drafts but acknowledges that students, especially the poorer writers, sometimes seem reluctant to make further efforts to improve their initial drafts. Teacher conferences, she stated, are very unlikely to be conducted outside the class. Instead, she pairs teacher conference with peer review together, and manages to have some individual communication with student writers in class. However, Chen mentioned a very interesting phenomenon: not every student likes discussing a paper with the

teacher; while good students like getting more feedback, less diligent or unprepared students tend to avoid the teacher even when they have the opportunity to talk with the teacher. When asked about the written feedback she gives to the students, Chen commented: “It’s a challenge to write feedback to student papers. Sometimes I just feel there is nothing new to write about after I have given all kinds of feedback.”

Wang’s Perception

Wang agrees, in principle, that most process-oriented activities are helpful in an EFL writing class. However, Wang stresses the importance of finding a good writing topic as an factor for successful writing classes. He thinks that if students are interested in the topic, they will exert themselves in the writing process and eventually produce good writing pieces. In his experience, Wang once used a hot issue concerning campus life to discuss in class: Peking University had lowered their admission criteria/test scores for male students as compared with female students in order to enroll more male students to balance the student population. He asked his students, “Is this a kind of gender discrimination?” This topic seemed to prompt students’ interest, and it provoked a four-week heated discussion in class. Students were actively brainstorming the topic, and also participated in the peer review session with strong motivation. Wang has tried collaborative drafting in class but discovered an unexpected result: the lazy students did not want to do their work, so the good students had to do more work to make a group paper acceptable. Peer review and teacher feedback are often used in Wang’s class. Peer reviewing covers ideas, textual

framework, logical development, and language use. Multiple drafts are required in the class, and the teacher comments on final drafts. Due to the large class size, teacher feedback is limited to global evaluation, and the teacher cannot provide feedback to every paper students submit, let alone conducting conferences with students. Besides, some students are not used to discuss their writing problems directly with a teacher. Some prefer to seek help from other sources. On the whole, Wang has been using common process-oriented activities in class except for one-on-one conferencing. He has office hours but very few students show up.

Lin's Perception

Lin has been trying to use some commonly practiced process writing activities in her classes, and she believes these activities are very helpful in the writing process. She uses brainstorming activity to show how to select a topic and how to narrow down a topic. According to her, students could learn effective ways to approach a topic through brainstorming and class discussion. As for peer review, she places emphasis on the value of self-improvement: students can identify their own errors in such aspects as textual organization, idea development and language use while reading peers' papers, thus she feels they are able to develop a sense of self-correction through frequent peer review activity. She strongly agrees with having teacher-student conference, but in practice, one-to-one conferencing is very unlikely to be held due to the large class size. Thus, she views teacher written feedback as a practical alternative for teacher conferencing. In her opinion, teaching conferencing is more important for weak writers, as they have more problems, so it is difficult to cover them by

written feedback. Therefore, she occasionally has face-to-face talks with those students who have many problems in their papers and gives suggestions of how to improve their papers. Multiple drafts, according to her, are the most important element for students, as these can provide an opportunity to let students develop their ideas, elaborate their arguments and polish their language use. More important, multiple drafts require students to write in steps, improve their writing in the process, so the students are able to recognize their progress in the writing process, which can boost their confidence in their English writing.

Lin stated that the Western teaching theory she learned in her MA program from Australia has some impact on her current teaching practice, especially on the way she organizes her classes. She tries to organize a student-centered classroom instead of a teacher-dominant class; she tries to make her role as a learning facilitator instead of being the “authority” in the class. In her opinion, Western teaching theories have gradually become part of her view of teaching, and these have somehow helped her to shape her own way of teaching. When she was asked if process writing is applicable to Chinese students, she stated that it is very applicable to the writing class. She gave an example of how to generate writing ideas: let students have group discussion followed by teacher-led brainstorming, which displays the emergent process of idea generation, so the students will have a clear understanding of the process, not just having the abstract concept of “brainstorming.” She said: “ I think students are gradually accepting the concept and the practice of process writing, as they can recognize the improvement in the paper along with the whole writing

process”. Of course, she also gave credit to the abundant analysis of student writing pieces, which she regards as an essential element in her class and also “an important part of process writing class”.

To summarize, all four teachers have been, more or less, trying out some process-oriented activities in their writing classes, and all stated that those activities are somewhat helpful in different writing stages to Chinese EFL students. However, some activities need to be implemented with more instruction and teacher guidance, such as peer review and collaborative drafting. In addition to facilitating writing process, EFL teachers still address the need to help students develop language proficiency and gain knowledge of social and cultural aspects of English language in authentic context.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY RESULTS—DATA FROM STUDENTS

In this chapter, I will present the detailed results from student participants during the whole workshop, including data collected in the workshop process, student perception, and student written products. By exploring student attitudes toward their workshop experience, some insights for the application of Western composition pedagogy in an EFL context can be offered.

Results from Surveys: Previous Writing Experiences and Attitudes

At the first workshop session, I distributed an initial survey to the students to get some general information about students' previous writing experiences and their attitudes toward writing in English. I wanted to understand students' experiences and attitudes in order to assess students' needs so as to provide necessary instruction and appropriate strategies in the workshop. What follows is the detailed results from the initial survey.

Students reported that their major sources of learning English were EFL textbooks and reading materials, English programs from radio, TV, the Internet, and English-language movies. They all agreed that they have certain difficulties in their English writing, and the main reason for their participation in the workshop was to learn some useful writing skills and improve their English writing. They stated that adequate English writing ability was very important to them, no matter what they wanted to do in the future. They all hoped to be able to improve their writing ability so they could achieve their goals in their future plans, such as studying abroad, attending graduate schools, or obtaining employment in China.

Previous Writing Experiences

According to the survey results, most students wrote in English only once in two weeks for their writing classes, and the only genres they had ever written were academic writing and personal writing. Only two out of sixteen students mentioned that they had ever written poetry and/or fiction for their own interests. As for the writing process, they reported that they usually wrote two drafts at the most before they turned in the final product.

Students also reported the major problems they have in their English writing, which involved aspects such as the following: 14 students stated that they had difficulty with English vocabulary; 11 students agreed they were inadequate in developing ideas; 8 students remarked that they were not familiar with English textual organization; 6 students thought they struggled in the composing process, and only 2 students mentioned in the survey that they had problems with English grammar. As for the writing process, 12 students reported that they group ideas before they wrote, while 10 students did some kind of overall planning in their writing; 11 of them indicated they revised their texts but only 7 of them did editing after they composed English texts. Concerning the teacher feedback, both oral and written, 9 students reported they got feedback “sometimes” while 4 students got it “often” and 3 students thought that they “seldom” got teacher feedback on their English writing. Based on the initial survey, 13 students stated the teacher helped them with textual organization; 10 students remarked on the teacher’s help regarding word choice and 9 students cited help on grammar; 6 students reported that their teacher helped them with

spelling; while only 2 of the 16 workshop students concluded that their teacher helped with the ideas in their writing. Overall, all 16 workshop students had experienced group writing in their regular English writing classes and 11 students reported that they had experienced brainstorming and peer reviewing previously. However, none of them had as yet experienced any teacher-student one-on-one conferencing in their previous writing classes.

As we can see from the survey results, students felt that teacher feedback seemed to be inadequate in terms of frequency—only 4 got feedback “often.” The feedback they did receive tended to focus on the language use in the text, such as word choice, grammar, and textual organization; surprisingly, only two students reported that they got help with the ideas in their writing. In terms of writing activities, the majority of students (11) had experienced brainstorming and peer reviewing and all of them had had some kind of group writing experience previously.

Previous Writing Attitudes

Of course, students had various beliefs and attitudes toward different aspects of English writing in their school context. Overall, we can see that they were aware of the problems in their writing; predominantly, these students hoped that they could get more feedback from the teacher. They also expressed their desire to learn more strategies to cope with difficulties and assist their process of English writing.

Table 3 gives a glimpse of students’ attitudes toward the English writing.

Table 3
Previous Attitudes toward Writing in English

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	No Strong Opinion	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Have nothing to write about		8	2		4	1	1
b. Have difficulty expressing ideas	1	2	4		2	5	1
c. Look up words in dictionary	1	2	2	1	7	2	1
d. Group discussion helps write better			2	2	5	6	1
e. Peer review is a waste of time	2	6	2	2	4		
f. Teacher only corrects errors		4	1		3	6	2
g. Teacher should give more feedback					1	4	11
h. Prefer to write in group than by oneself	1	4	1	3	2	4	1
i. Teacher should teach more strategies				4		7	5
j. Nervous about submitting papers		3	2	2	4	4	1

Results from Interviews: Workshop Writing Experiences and Attitudes

Throughout the workshop period, I interacted with students to understand their needs and concerns about their own writing process. I distributed an evaluation sheet after each workshop session, in order to get their immediate feedback with the goal of adjusting my workshop content with students' needs. Besides informal interactions and students' evaluation, I also received many insightful comments from the two rounds of student interviews.

I categorized the results from these multiple data sources into several themes: students' attitudes toward the activities they liked most, activities they

liked least, and toward specific writing strategies. These themes are discussed in the following sections.

Most Liked Workshop Activities and Student Attitudes

Idea Development and Writing Inspiration

The majority of students remarked that they like activities which could prompt idea development and provide inspiration for their writing. Wanying, an active participant in the workshop, stated that she liked freewriting and using the cubing framework as pre-writing activities, which she felt were very helpful for developing ideas and considering a topic from different perspectives. “I don’t think it’s difficult to write a good paper in terms of language use,” said Wanying, “but it’s very challenging to have some innovative ideas on my topic . . . so I welcome all activities which can help me in developing ideas and provide inspiration.” Similarly, Chunwei, who regarded herself as someone who “lacks new ideas,” stated that “using the cubing framework helped [her] to think more about a topic, and especially consider a topic from other perspectives which [she] could not do before.” Liuyang liked making concept maps after she discovered the practical aspect of a concept map in generating ideas and developing a thesis in the pre-writing activities. Students felt very motivated when they were engaged in these activities in the workshop.

Specific and Constructive Feedback

Students also reported that they liked activities from which they could get specific, constructive feedback to their individual writing pieces, such as during the teacher-student conference, through teacher oral and written feedback, the

L1 reader's specific feedback, and meaningful peer feedback. Due to the large size of their writing classes, students had very few opportunities to talk with their teacher about their own writing. What they usually do is to grab their teacher to talk a few minutes at the end of every class, but such brief communication cannot help them solve problems in their writing process. In the interview, Linnan gave her highest evaluation to the teacher-student conference, which she had never experienced in her regular writing class. She felt more confident of her writing during the conference because she could talk about her ideas and get direct feedback from a real audience (the teacher). These students are very unlikely to have individual conferences with their teacher, who has 60-75 students in one class session. With these numbers, the writing teacher has difficulty responding to all students' papers at one time. Therefore, the teacher may read only a third of students' papers and give feedback (rather generalized feedback, according to the workshop participants), while the another two-thirds cannot get any feedback from their teacher. For the next writing assignment, the teacher responds to a different third of students' papers, and reads the rest of the students' papers on the third assignment. As the student-participants stated, they turn in their early drafts as final products because they do not know how to make substantial improvement except for a few corrections of grammar and syntax.

In the workshop, however, we went through a very thorough feedback session consisting of peer review, my written feedback, one-on-one conferencing and L1 reader feedback—which was a special experience for most participants. As Bingqing stated, "I was truly engaged in these activities in the workshop. . . . I

did actively participate in peer reviewing and other activities." When I asked about her regular class, she said they have had some activities like brainstorming and peer-reviewing, but these activities in their regular class were "only the form but not the essence," because at least half of students went through the process superficially and quickly and then went on with their own activities in class, such as chatting, reading unrelated materials, or, at the extreme, feeding themselves with study materials for an exam on the same day. In my workshop, with the assumption that no grading was involved, the students felt less anxious and thus more motivated to participate, and so they found themselves truly engaged in the process. As a result, most of them did quite an amount of revision on their paper and produced some good papers at the end. Chunwei commented that teacher feedback gave her directions to follow in the process, which helped her revise and improve her writing. Bingyu stated that previously she did not like revising drafts because she did not know how to do it because her teacher gave so little feedback on revision.

Liuyang and Yani appreciated the L1 reader's feedback on their papers. They both remarked that the L1 reader's feedback helped them clarify the ambiguity of their writing, fully develop their ideas, and to some extent, learn how to meet an L1 reader's expectations. Their writing courses are taught by Chinese EFL teachers who demonstrate adequate knowledge and expertise. However, they are still non-native speakers who also learned English in China. According to the workshop students, they seldom had a chance to have a native speaker read their papers, so they were not sure about the L1 reader's expectations of

their writing before the workshop. Yushan remarked:

> I think the L1 reader's feedback helped me clarify my ideas and make my writing understandable to a general audience . . . but it would be much better if we could talk face to face so I could discuss some issues he pointed out on my paper. The L1 reader's feedback helped me not only in language use but also in adjusting ways of thinking in my writing.

Wanying also liked having the L1 reader's written feedback on her paper, but like Yushan, she regretted that it was only in written format, so she could not have direct communication with her audience. "I liked it in general," said Wanying, "but I prefer to have face-to-face talk so I can explain a few issues he questioned in the written feedback, like my writing purpose and the voice of my paper." Others voiced a similar view of the usefulness of the L1 reader's feedback.

Writing on Own Interests and Needs

In this workshop, students were given the freedom to choose their own topics, which promoted their interest in writing and increased their confidence in English writing. In their regular classes, teachers usually assign a topic and students come up with a piece of writing only for a grade. While in this workshop, students were motivated to explore their interests, which made a big difference in the final written product. In the early part of workshop, one participant, Lipei, gave me the impression that she had many ideas but always made general statements in her writing without support for her ideas. I pointed out the problem to her in my written feedback, which increased her awareness in the writing.

When it came to the final paper, Lipei had a strong urge to write about the marriage values of female college students in modern China. Driven by her strong interest and concern, she engaged herself in a meaningful and productive writing process. She asked other students for their opinions, found relevant sources on the topic, and developed valid and sufficient evidence for her arguments. This writing task showed her a way of finding effective and solid evidence to support her general statements. Other participants also agreed that they liked writing on topics in something about which they have an interest, are concerned with, or to fulfill personal or life needs instead of writing about something far away from their daily life just to get a grade.

Learning Practical Writing Strategies

Students reported that they liked learning specific writing strategies which could be easily practiced or used in their future writing tasks. Most of them pointed out that they learned some useful writing skills and techniques from my workshop, but they still need some practice to truly grasp these skills so they can use them in the future writing. Yani liked the lesson called “ten ways of developing good arguments” which I taught, and said she could understand more with the concrete examples we discussed. Liuyang also liked the practical skills which she could apply later, such as the six perspectives of the “cubing framework.” Linnan liked “developing voice in writing,” which she thought was very fascinating, while at the same time she remarked that “voice is something beyond my reach so far, but I hope I can have my own voice in my writing in the future . . . .” Bingyu preferred practical learning to theory-oriented lecturing:

> I like these practical skills you taught in this workshop, which can be applied to real writing tasks, such as 'ways to create smooth transitions in the text.' These are very helpful in my composing process. In my regular writing class, I'm taught a lot of theories, but I usually do not pay much attention to them as theories are sort of boring…

In fact, Bingyu's sentiments are commonly shared among the third-year students at BISU. Students do not like learning theory only; they want to have concrete examples to show how to apply these techniques in their writing. Yani and Liuyang both mentioned similar ideas in the first interview I conducted in the sixth week: they needed examples to truly understand certain writing techniques and they needed to be given chances to practice these skills in and out of the class. Yushan commented that he had learned some useful writing techniques but that the workshop was not long enough. If it could be longer, like "two or three semesters," he suggested, "my writing could be much better if I followed the process we had in this workshop." Bingyu wished that the writing skills from my workshop could have been taught to them earlier, and should be taught systematically from the first year composition course to the third year writing course. "I wish I could have learned these skills earlier," she remarked. "I hope Teacher [the researcher] can come back to our university to teach writing courses to other students, who could benefit from what you have taught us in the workshop. I'm not a good student, but I appreciate your efforts to help us."

Least Liked Workshop Activities and Student Attitudes

Throughout the workshop period, I interacted with students to understand their needs and concerns about their own writing process. After each workshop session I distributed a short evaluation sheet in order to get students' immediate feedback with the goal of combining my planned workshop content with activities to meet students' needs. Besides informal interactions and students' evaluation, I got many insightful comments from two rounds of student interviews. These students offered their positive feedback on certain features of the workshop. At the same time, they also pointed out some negative views of certain workshop experiences, which acts as a good supplement to understand the phenomenon holistically.

Peer Reviewing

Some students had critical views of peer reviewing, as they sometimes could not experience it as a meaningful activity. Hongyan had experienced peer reviewing in her regular classes, but she had been disappointed by the little feedback she got from her peers. She thought it was a waste of time because her peers either left her paper alone, had nothing to say about it, or just corrected a few proofreading problems on the paper. Liuyang also remarked that peer reviewing had some limitations, as "most peers are no better than me. I did not know how to revise my paper, and they did not know either." I tried to provide guidance in the workshop to help them work meaningfully through each other's papers. I provided them with a worksheet, then joined each group from time to time to make sure they were on task. I also provided linguistic help, as well as

giving some cultural information to the students. What we did in the workshop was to meaningfully go through their writing processes, which made a different experience for them. Some students gave an overall positive evaluation to peer-reviewing. It seems to be a helpful activity in itself; but it depended on who did the peer review with them. Linnan described her experience as the following: “I usually read peer’s paper very carefully, and raise questions and ideas for revisions; however, what I get back on my paper is much less than what I offer, so I prefer to do peer reviewing with another good student.” In fact, Linnan and Yushan have been reading each other’s paper, giving ideas and comments on the topic. According to Yushan, meaningful peer review could “clarify my own thinking” and “make my paper understandable”; he likes peers to respond actively, thus they can “point out a lot of things to revise.”

Collaborative Drafting

In my workshop, I assigned a collaborative writing task where students wrote about certain topics in small groups. I expected that they would have less anxiety and thus more motivation to write as a team. However, it turned out to be one thing they did not like about the workshop. Wanying was an active participant and considered that collaborative drafting was quite new to her; she felt it could be used as in-class exercise which could “promote writing interest” but was not suitable for “serious papers.” She explained that each writer has a different writing style, has a different focus and viewpoint, so it would be difficult for members of a small group to compromise on ideas and writing focus. If they have to write a paper through collaborative drafting, the final paper has to be

pieced together, which feels “unnatural” and does not flow. Liuyang expressed similar ideas about collaborative drafting: they could produce a group paper, but it felt like something “pieced together,” and it may have little “embedded connection and logical development.” Yushan had his own experience: he contributed a good portion of text on their group topic of “TV and Media,” but he was forced to take out one section of his text because other group members labeled it as “irrelevant” to the main focus. Of course, Yushan was upset about this as his peers had cut out the section which he regarded as the most well-written and clearly articulated one of the whole paper.

Writing in Class and Sharing it in Class

Not all of the 16 students liked impromptu writing in the class for various reasons. Wanying did not like writing in class because she needed to be in a good “writing zone” to produce satisfactory text. She did not like being restricted in time and place when she had something to say on a certain topic. Chunwei is an introvert, and is naturally less eager to be put on the spot in class. She did not like sharing her impromptu in-class writing because she was not confident in her initial draft which was produced under time pressure. A few other students also had similar opinions which might have something to do with cultural influences. Chinese culture praises modesty and humbleness, so students worry about being considered by their peers as “showing off.” Another factor is connected with the notion of “face” in Chinese culture. Students feel comfortable if their papers are read as good examples but will feel they are “losing face” in class if the papers are not well-written. This situation goes to the shared attitude toward

in-class paper sharing.

Attitudes on Specific Writing Strategies

A number of writing strategies were introduced or practiced in the workshop. Some were very helpful and inspiring, so students naturally tended to give more remarks on them. A few turned out less helpful; therefore, students seemed not to care much, thus giving fewer comments on them. Table 4 gives a summary of various responses to different strategies based on student attitudes toward this writing workshop. In the following section I will discuss a few of them about which students had more comments.

Table 4
Summary of Workshop Writing Strategies and Student Perceptions

Writing Activity / Strategy	*Pros*	*Cons*
Freewriting	Provided inspiration for writing; deal with writer's block.	Sometimes not very effective when trying to get more ideas.
Analyzing writing purpose & identifying target audience	Provided a way of considering purpose and audience before writing; raised awareness about real writing context.	Students needed to know the appropriate forms and styles for different writing genres; otherwise, it will be useless.
Considering a topic from different perspectives by using cubing framework	Provided different angles to think about a topic; broadened students' minds and promoted different ways of thinking. It is very helpful for those who hold fixed ways of viewing things.	Some students said it was still very broad and abstract. A few are still not fully sure how to use it when they approach a topic, due to limited practice.
Collaborative writing in a group	It's interesting when used to prompt writing interest or used to brainstorm ideas before writing.	It's not suitable for serious writing tasks. Each writer may have different focus and style so it would be difficult to try to piece everything together.
Ways of developing an argument	Very helpful for developing broad & abstract statements into specific & concrete details with support/evidence.	Some said they were not sure how to choose, not sure which could make the most effective argument.

Finding your voice in writing	Very inspiring. This draws their attention to more complex & delicate elements of writing. They could identify "personal style" from "detached approach" in two *Newsweek* articles.	Some students said "voice" was a high-level requirement for EFL writers; one student comment that voice is beyond her reach at this level; their main goal is to first be able to express ideas explicitly.
Considering reader's expectation /Imagining writer-reader dialogues	Raised awareness about writing; let students learn to think of a topic from reader's perspective so they can adjust writer's stance/attitude toward a topic.	One student thought writing was a personal activity and seldom imagines reader's response when she writes.
Opening, concluding and transitions in the text	Provided a variety of forms/ways to open & conclude the text, and a few ways to create smooth transitions between paragraphs. EFL students regard them as helpful tips.	In general, it's helpful. But real writing has no fixed forms. Instruction and practice on individual writing style could be helpful here.
Teacher-student conference	Provided good opportunity to talk about writing, solve problems in the process, and give specific and individual feedback to students.	Requires time, energy and smooth communication. Sometimes it is unlikely to be implemented, especially for large classes.
Peer reviewing	It is a good supplement to teacher feedback; it also provides broader audience for writing texts.	Requires active and enthusiastic participation as well as knowledge of writing conventions, etc., otherwise, students will get little from this activity. Students need to be trained how to give good feedback, perhaps by reviewing a text together as a class.
L1 reader's feedback (written)	Provided good opportunity to let "real" reader/L1 reader respond to L2 texts; students get a lot of constructive feedback to make their ideas more explicit, and to make their expression more colloquial.	Not every L2 writer can get L1 reader's feedback in authentic EFL setting. While L1 reader's written feedback was helpful, some students said it would be much better to have a face-to-face talk with L1 reader about their writing.

Analyzing Writing Purpose and Identifying Target Audience

Students reported one significant benefit from attending this workshop. They became much more aware of the importance of understanding their writing purpose and learned to identify the target audience before composing the draft.

According to information students shared about their previous writing experiences, most of them shared some common perceptions. No matter what the writing task was, they had been writing solely to get a grade. The purpose of writing in their previous experience, therefore, was to finish the assignment and get a grade for the task and, naturally, the only audience for their writing was the teacher, who had power to give a grade on their papers. Therefore, students wrote for the teacher; in order to get a good grade, and they tended to write what they believed the teacher liked about the topic. As a result, their writing became an exercise in guessing what the teacher wanted to read; it was a mechanical process which held little interest for them as writers.

One session of the workshop was spent on analyzing writing purpose and identifying the target audience. To illustrate the difference, I asked the students to write an argumentative essay or a letter to a friend, both on the same topic—the 2008 Summer Olympics Games being held in Beijing. Students seemed to be interested in this topic so they became quite engaged in the task and began to sort out the differences between the two types of writing. By drawing their attention to and making comparisons between the two writing styles, students learned to analyze how to write differently based on these different writing tasks. Linnan described her experience in her interview, remarking that she had seldom considered purpose and audience previously as she had mostly written for herself (personal diary) and for the teacher (writing assignments). After attending the workshop, she said she became more “aware of [her] target audience,” so she might now be able to apply the appropriate language and writing style to a

certain writing task. Wanying agreed that she learned to consider her audience:

> I write what I want to write. I think writing is very personal, so it has nothing to do with others . . . . I seldom considered writing purpose and audience, but now I'm aware of them and I try to consider what my reader's expectations might be before I write.

However, awareness is just the first step in good writing; students also need to have good command of appropriate forms and styles for different writing genres. Hongyan showed her concerns in the interview: she is aware that each writing task has a different focus and style which, if given enough attention, can be identified before composing. Having learned this important aspect of writing, she nevertheless indicated that her real challenges in writing are having a good command of adequate vocabulary and being able to write her own ideas in the appropriate form and style. Yushan also explained this commonly shared obstacle among EFL students:

> I know I should write in informal style, but I could not find the equivalent words for it, so I just use the words I learned from the text book. That's why my teacher [the researcher] said I have many big words in my letter to an editor. And sometimes, I can't distinguish formal words from informal words, so I'm not sure which word to use in my paper…

In other words, analyzing purpose and audience provided a way of raising awareness about the real writing context to participants in the workshop while, at the same time, a variety of appropriate forms and styles for different writing

genres were felt to be important to the students. Based on their command of adequate linguistic forms and appropriate contextual knowledge, EFL students will be able to have more freedom in their English writing.

Considering a Topic from Different Perspectives

Among all the challenges and difficulties commonly shared by a majority of EFL/ESL students, critical thinking and considering topics from multiple perspectives are at the top of the list. In the workshop, I included a session focused on developing EFL students' critical thinking ability—specifically, to learn to consider a topic from different perspectives by using the "cubing" framework (Hedge, 2005). After I introduced the six elements of the cubing framework—describing, comparing, analyzing, associating, arguing, and applying—students seemed to be confused, so I provided more explanation and helped with group discussions. Students gradually generated some ideas and categorized them on their worksheets under the six perspectives. Then they grouped and selected ideas for their collaborative drafting.

In their interviews, students shared their thoughts about the experience of using the cubing framework. More than half of the students regarded it as an inspiring activity, as the cubing framework provided different angles to think about a topic, broadened their minds, and promoted different ways of thinking. Chunwei regarded herself as someone who usually holds fixed ways of viewing things, so she was inspired to brainstorm the assigned topic from each of the six perspectives. Yushan remarked that using the cubing framework helped him to generate more possible ideas related to a certain topic, although not all of the

ideas would be illustrated in the final draft. However, Yushan commented that using the cubing framework did “inspire me and provide different angles to think about a topic . . . as I tend to follow my own way of thinking toward a topic.” Due to the limited time in the workshop, students only had a one-time session using this framework, which also led to some comments from students. Bingqing reported that it was her first time to know about the “cubing framework,” but the equivalent six perspectives were still “broad and abstract,” so she was still “not sure how to use it in my writing.” Linnan agreed that cubing framework was inspiring, but she was still not able to “use it intentionally/deliberately in my writing process.”

Ways of Developing an Argument

Throughout the writing workshop, I responded to all of the writing assignments we had. In doing so, I found some interesting patterns appearing in the drafts and some commonly shared problems in their writing. The participants were highly motivated learners with a strong desire to improve their writing. They had a lot of good ideas but their arguments seemed to be thin and general: they tended to assert their ideas without providing effective support. I have found this pattern not only in my workshop participants’ papers, but also in other students’ papers from my prior teaching experience. Thus, I devoted a workshop session to how to develop good arguments. In that session, I provided students with ten different ways to lend support to general statements: explaining cause and effect, quoting from authority, reducing to absurdity, using signs, using statistics, induction, deduction, using common sense, using analogy, and giving definition.

This session provided students with concrete examples to develop broad and abstract statements into well-supported arguments utilizing specific details and evidence.

Lipei tended to make general assertions of her ideas, and she was one who especially benefited from this session. She reflected that she had become aware of the unsupported statements in her paper, and so she tried to support her statements by providing some evidence. She recalled one session which left a deep impression on her:

> Ms. He used a cause-effect chain to support the statement that "we can learn more when praised than being disapproved by others." She used the following chain to develop main point into specific details: Get praise from others—approve one's capability—boost self-confidence—feel motivated to learn more—enhance learning. On the other hand, if people encounter disagreement—get frustrated—have pessimistic attitude—lose interest or motivation to learn—inhibit learning.

Lipei called this session the "most impressive" one:

> I felt very much inspired in that session. I was telling myself at that time: I have thought about some relevant ideas on this topic, but why I could not develop my ideas into such a logical chain? My ideas were jumping here and there without logical order . . . . If I was [*sic*] aware of using particular ways to develop my ideas, my arguments would be more effective with clear logic.

Due to the limited time for more practice, some students reported that it was very helpful to learn these ten ways of developing arguments; but at the same time again, they still felt they needed more practice to truly grasp these skills. Fengfeng thought it was good to have ten ways to develop an argument, but she was not sure which angle she should choose so she could make the most effective argument. Xiaoai commented that, for her, there seemed to be some ambiguities in two of the methods—"reducing to absurdity" and "using signs"—so she could not use them until she had a more in-depth understanding of them. On the whole, students welcomed the writing strategies introduced in the workshop; however, they needed to be given more opportunities to practice them, to hone their skills, and to truly turn these skills into assets.

Finding Own Voice in Writing

The purpose of my writing workshop was not only to help the students write for real purpose and audience, but also to develop a sense of their role as writers who write for real life communications. Therefore, one of my workshop sessions was focused on finding the writer's voice, which is a more complex and delicate element of writing. I used two articles from *Newsweek* to let students read and compare them in detail: vocabulary use, ways of making points, text structures, and tone of voice. Students seemed confused at the beginning: I noticed that one young woman frowned and a few of them had some serious looks on their face. I immediately broke the silence and gave more explanations on the task, then I guided them to finish the first task. At that point, students seemed to understand how to analyze these two articles, and they gradually

came up with their own findings to distinguish two writing styles. Apparently, the activities in the session drew their attention to the more complex and delicate elements of writing. Students were able to distinguish the “personal style” in one article from the “detached approach” used in the other.

When asked about the “voice” session in the interviews, students gave their thoughts on the concept and related activities. Most of them had never been formally introduced to the concept of “voice” in their school setting, so it was quite new to them. They could sense the different writing styles in the two articles I provided, but still the concept of “voice” was intriguing to them. These students, EFL writers who learn English mostly from textbooks, have difficulties in all aspects of language use—vocabulary, grammar, syntax and more. For them, the first and most important goal of English writing is be able to express ideas explicitly. As Yushan stated in his interview, “voice is a high-level requirement for me. Trying to have a voice in the paper is very difficult. I think what I wish to achieve in my writing is to be able to express myself with confidence.” Linnan spoke out her thoughts: “Voice is beyond my reach at this level; if I could, of course, I wish my voice could be identified in my paper.”

Considering Reader’s Expectations

One goal of my workshop was to raise students’ awareness on writing—to draw their attention to real writing, specifically, writing purpose and audience, writing context and target culture. I had one session focused on achieving this goal. We wrote writing plans on chosen topics, in which students were asked to consider the following elements: (1) writing purpose and target audience,

(2) appropriate writing style and voice, (3) writer's stance/attitude, (4) thesis statement and main ideas, (5) relevant information about the topic, (6) questions they have on their topic. Then we had an activity called "Imagining writer-reader dialogues," which I hoped would help students write relevant content by imagining the reader's questions. I asked students to visualize their readers and imagine the questions that readers might ask about the specific topics; then I asked them to exchange papers and write down their questions from the imagined reader's perspective. This seemed to be interesting to them, as I observed that all of them were quite engaged in their group discussion; some were excited about getting the reader's expectations right and addressing the readers' concerns in their writing plan. In the final interview, Lipei described her feelings about this session:

> I used to write outlines for my papers, but I felt a well-thought writing plan is more helpful as the one I wrote in the workshop. I was very sure about what I would write in my draft after my writing plan. Writing an overall plan helps us become aware of audience and purpose, reader's expectation, and lay out the basic elements in my writing. If possible, I would hope we can have more similar activities in my regular classes.

As for the activity "Imagining writer-reader dialogues", Xiaoai thought it was "so cool" to have a good guess of reader's questions; Linxing got some questions which she had not expected, so she had to address these issues on her paper. She said: "It's good to have a reader's view when I'm composing, so I

can add necessary components in my paper." This activity let students learn to think of a topic from the reader's perspective so that they could make necessary adjustment of the writer's stance/attitude accordingly. Of course, Wanying liked writing for herself: "writing is a personal activity, and I write what I feel like writing. I'm not used to having to think about reader's response." However, the majority of students agreed that having a reader in mind helped them to address more issues which could be relevant to a broad community of readers.

Student Written Evaluations of Workshop Sessions

In this chapter, a detailed account of students' attitudes toward specific writing activities and their workshop experience was reported, which was mostly drawn from interviews with the 16 participants. However, in a qualitative study, interview data alone is not enough to understand the phenomenon, therefore other data sources should be triangulated to provide a holistic picture. Maxwell (1996) explains that triangulation of data collection methods reduces the risk that the conclusions will "reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific method, and it allows you to gain a better assessment of the validity and generality of the explanations that you develop" (p. 75-76). In my study, three main data were collected to provide different sources to understand the phenomenon. Therefore, to provide a more complete picture of the writing workshop, I would like to present some relevant data, drawn specifically from student writing, session response/evaluation sheets, and my research log. These data will allow readers to see the writing workshop from a global perspective, and will help provide a holistic evaluation to the workshop and the study.

After attending each session of the process-oriented writing workshop, students reported some of their feelings, attitudes and perceptions of this writing experience on a written “response sheet” based on the day’s experience. This instrument was included so that participants could give prompt feedback in the form of written statements. These evaluations were meant to supplement the information from the interviews, which was summarized in the previous chapter. Even though some of their views in the evaluation were similar to their interview responses, I will report some relevant feedback from those evaluation sheets. Besides the written evaluations, I also talked informally with students about the workshop content after some sessions; hence, I was able to gain some working data from these informal chats. In addition, I kept a research log on the workshop process. These sources allowed me to triangulate data to provide more details for evaluating the study. The following is a report of some specific comments from session response/evaluation sheets, informal chat with students, and my observation log.

Strategies to Get Started

Several students recalled that they used to have to struggle hard to approach a topic. To be specific, whenever they were given a topic to write about, very often they had to wrack their brains to find something to write. They did not do overall planning, so they wrote following their train of thought and ended the text when they were out of ideas. Some felt that the resulting paper was not satisfactory, yet in our talks early in the workshop period, they did not know how they could improve their drafts.

At an early meeting of my workshop, I introduced some techniques to fight "writer's block" such as freewriting, clustering, and making concept maps. After attending this session, students remarked that they had learned some useful skills to approach a topic, and they had also learned certain effective ways to break a topic into ideas and chunks, which would eventually become developed paragraphs in their draft. As Liuyang remarked in her evaluation of this session, she learned "how to approach a topic and compose a draft step by step, but with clear direction in mind." It seemed to her that there were more steps in the process, but the process was more effective than before. In spite of the increased complexity of the writing process, Liuyang emphasized that she could now actually produce a draft more quickly, as well as with more confidence. She used to spend at least half day composing the first draft, but now she felt that she would need only a few hours to write a draft after experiencing the workshop.

Raising Awareness about Writing

One objective of this writing workshop was to raise students' awareness of the social, cultural, and contextual aspects in their writing, specifically, to raise awareness about writing in terms of writing purpose, intended audience, and the reader's expectations. I devoted two workshop sessions on these aspects of writing, and did some meaningful activities to draw students' attention to the nature of writing: Why am I writing? Who am I writing to?

After the session "writing purpose and audience," some students commented that they had become aware of these two elements before they composed, so they would consciously consider the appropriate format and style

to set the essay. Yani wrote on her evaluation sheet: “It’s pretty helpful to enable me to make sure why I write and who I want to present my writing to. It’s useful to help me form clear thinking.” Linxing commented: “I haven’t paid much attention to the writing style before. But today, through the contrast of words and phrases from formal and informal writing, I have gotten some clearer ideas.”

Taking Charge of Their Own Learning in the Writing Process

Historically, Asian students, including Chinese students, are regarded as inactive classroom learners (Cai, 1993). Asian students are often described as quiet and shy in class, obedient to the teacher’s authority, reserved in expressing personal opinions, and afraid of being different from the majority. It is with similar presumptions that I went back to my home university to explore student attitudes toward certain aspects of Western composition pedagogy. However, during the workshop process, I encountered some surprisingly strong personal opinions. The student participants sometimes seemed eager to express their views about the conduct of the workshop. These students seemed not to fit into the typical stereotype of Chinese students; on the contrary, they took charge of their own learning, knew what they wanted, and showed their own concerns and perceptions about English writing. In contrast to the traditional image, most participants were quite willing to talk about their attitudes. They expressed some of their opinions when they reflected on their learning experience on the evaluation sheets.

These students shared some perspectives they had on the workshop experience and how to improve English writing:

- Some of these writing skills are similar to Chinese composition drafting, so the most important is to practice with passion and keep on trying . . . (Linnan)
- This writing class is cool, and I feel something fresh. But I would like to learn more about considering a topic from different perspectives and organizing ideas in a logic way. (Yani)

At times, they offered perspectives that were quite opposite to my own, as when Zhuyi insisted that the classical idea of memorizing poetry still ranks high in his inventory of learning techniques:

- I think the best way to improve writing skill is to memorize. The most effective way is to analyze poems. Maybe some poems will be given us next time, but the poems should be the masterpieces. (Zhuyi)

Zhuyi suggested learning poems in writing classes, and he expected to improve his writing by memorizing classic poetry. In the workshop, I did provide some authentic English texts as writing models for the students. However, the purpose of my workshop focused more on developing the students' capability for self-expression in academic writing, so I did not have extra time to introduce poetry although this student had made some suggestions on the evaluation sheet. Unfortunately, Zhuyi dropped out of the workshop after the first session, probably because the workshop content and teaching style did not meet his expectations.

When I held the session on different essay types, Yani reflected on her experience that day on the evaluation sheet, offering a suggestion for my own pedagogical practice: "This lesson helps me renew some special techniques in

developing different types of essay… It's very helpful, but I think it'll be better if the teacher could give some detailed examples to exemplify different writing techniques." Commenting on the same session, Lipei wrote: "This session is informative and useful. Maybe we could do some training on different writing tasks?"

All the examples above gave me the impression that Chinese college students today are no longer such passive recipients in their classrooms. On the contrary, they become active learners in the class and are willing to take part in the decision-making for their own learning. As their workshop teacher and the researcher in this project, I was very happy to see these positive changes in the Chinese students of the current generation, and I was glad to find out that some Western composition approaches are already being introduced to EFL writing class in China today to help students overcome writing apprehension and be able to express their ideas with strong command of English language and adequate learning strategies.

Learning Specific Strategies and Applying to Own Writing

When I first introduced myself to the group of third-year students, they seemed very curious and interested in my project. Obviously, my educational background attracted their attention and aroused curiosity among them. I was one of them several years ago, but I made my way to America through my perseverance and my academic achievement a few years after graduation. I first gained my M.A. degree, and then continued my graduate studies in a doctoral program at an American university. Now I had come back to my home university

to conduct my dissertation research. My experience was very exceptional among the majority of Chinese college graduates at that time, which seemed to intrigue students at BISU. The 24 students who attended the first workshop session approached the meeting with curiosity and a set of very diverse expectations.

In that first session, I was eager to share with them the spirit of what I had learned in my graduate training in America and a number of books I had read on composition studies. With some enthusiasm, I gave them a brief introduction of L1 writing theory—the cognitive process of writing (Flower and Hayes, 1981), as well as mentioning some widely used writing terms such as brainstorming, drafting, and peer reviewing. Although they seemed willing to participate in the freewriting activity for the day's workshop, they became less attentive when I talked about writing theory. From their non-verbal signals, I suspected that they did not care about writing theory, and I was right! On the evaluation sheets I distributed at the end of the workshop session, a few students left comments:

- The writing theory is important, but I wish it could be presented in a more interesting way.
- Familiar things were presented in a more interesting way. But I really anticipate some new things that provide me with different perceptions on English writing.
- It's, to some extent, similar to the activities in our writing class—brainstorming and group discussion.
- They are very useful. However, I have experienced these activities in my regular writing class. The goal of your workshop seems different

from my purpose to enlarge vocabulary and diction.

- Freewriting is the most impressive activity in today's workshop. It inspires me a lot and I'll further practice it. Other skills have not had such strong impact on me, as I have already gotten a little knowledge about them to some extent.

Another student even drew a hasty conclusion after this first warm-up session: "There is nothing special in foreign teaching style in English writing."

After getting responses like these, I was rather upset and I felt a sense of failure and disappointment at that moment. I was so eager to introduce to them what I had worked hard to learn, but they had returned my enthusiasm with some discouraging remarks. I became upset because some students did not have the patience to see what the workshop was really like. They seemed to have only a superficial understanding of the "writing process," and were willing to dismiss the workshop based solely on hasty conclusions after only one session. Of course, I tried to step back and not let my emotions interfere with my research process. Seeing the workshop from the objective perspective as a researcher, I expected that some students might withdraw from the project. In the second session, only 16 of the original 24 students attended; however, they all stayed through the entire twelve weeks of the workshop.

These 16 students had some basic ideas of the common practices in "process writing" originating from Western composition pedagogy, so terms like "brainstorming" and "peer reviewing" were not new to them. However, in their regular writing classes, they did not get to fully use such strategies to help them

write. To be more specific, brainstorming sometimes could become chatting, and peer reviewing usually turned out to be error correction when the students were asked to do these activities in their writing classes. In some cases, their teacher lectured on general rules about certain aspects of writing, but students did not get the chance to put these in practice. Therefore, students seemed to have been taught the terms, have known the rules, but they apparently still did not know how to apply these rules to their writing. This phenomenon had caused a dilemma for both teachers and students: teachers were disappointed because they had taught the lesson but students still produced poor writing; and students were frustrated because they could not improve their writing even though they had been taking writing classes. As the time went by, students tended to lose their motivation for writing.

In my workshop, I constantly reminded myself of the fact that writing is an on-going activity which needs quite an amount of time and effort to improve. My 12-week workshop could not solve the problem, but I hoped it could provide them some ways to overcome difficulties, to facilitate students in understanding and using the process, and to empower students to monitor their own learning so they could become life-long passionate writers. My workshop was conducted with a focus on teaching strategies and applications. In fact, the participants commented that they were excited to be able to learn something practical and fully apply what they learned to their own writing.

The following comments were taken from the evaluation sheets on the session “Ten ways to develop an argument”:

- I learned several specific methods in developing an argument and make it more persuasive.
- They are very helpful. One step further towards producing a good argument.
- I have always wanted to improve my argumentative writing, but did not know how to do it. I will practice these ten ways on purpose later, as I did get benefit from them.
- The examples showed me the exact way to develop a cause-effect argument.
- It gave me an enlightment [*sic*] of how to develop a point into a good paragraph.
- I learned some new ways to develop an argument. I like using analogy mostly.
- Today's session is very informative. These methods, especially the most frequently used ones are very helpful for a solid and sound argumentation. I'll try to use them as much as I can in my writing.
- It is practical and interesting. I think these ideas can be of great use in my future writing. Teacher's instruction and guidance are also very helpful.

The student participants responded very well to the session on developing arguments. However, they became confused on certain intangible aspects of writing in my workshop, "developing own voice in writing." Voice was one of the most difficult aspects of writing for them to understand. The following are some

comments reflected on that session:

- It is interesting and new, but a little bit complicated.
- In our regular writing classes, we seldom consider voice in daily writing. This session has called our attention to this element.
- Thought provoking and enlightening. Trigger me to learn from other writers.
- I think it is a skill of high demand—not easy to do it, but I will try my best. I hope one day readers could recognize me in my writing!
- Creating a voice in my writing is difficult. It seems to be beyond my reach.
- I understand the idea of voice in writing, but I still wonder how to handle the “voice” flexibly… maybe I need more practice.

Students also reflected on their learning experience when we had the last session. Chunwei wrote: “Though I have not yet acquired all the skills you taught us, I will try to practice using them in my future writing.” Yani also expressed her attitude toward the workshop:

> I really appreciate the opportunity and I have learned a lot indeed. This workshop opens me a window to American academic writing. I’m sure it will benefit me a lot in my future study in the U.S.!

At that time, Yani was planning to apply to a graduate school in America, which gave her more motivation to participate in my workshop. She was happy to learn the writing strategies and some common practices widely used in American universities. The workshop experience, to some extent, helped her to achieve her

goal—she enrolled in a graduate program at an university in the U.S. after her B.A. graduation. Later, she reported in an email to me that my workshop helped her quickly adjust her writing to meet the criteria of American academic writing at her institution. Her success in academic writing gave me a sense of achievement: I was glad to be able to facilitate her process of becoming a good writer.

Student Writing Samples in the Workshop

Since the study grew out of an initial quest for ways to teach ESL/EFL writing effectively, I naturally wanted to look at student writing to see whether they made some progress through the writing process. Students were given the freedom to choose their own topics, so their topics covered issues in education, employment, technology, life, and some social phenomena. After they chose their topics, I asked them to make a writing plan, outlining their initial thinking toward certain topics. The writing plan would address the following components in their chosen topics: writing purpose and target audience, author's attitude toward the topic, intended writing style and tone of voice, thesis, relevant knowledge, and also questions on their topic. By writing an initial plan, students were given an opportunity to approach a topic from an interactive beginning in a recursive writing process. After students wrote their first drafts, we had a peer review session. In addition, I responded individually to their papers and provided detailed written feedback. Before I gave back their papers, I held one-on-one conferences. In these meetings, we talked about the problems I had noticed and I made suggestions for revisions.

Then students wrote second drafts, and I sent electronic copies of their

second drafts to the L1 reader in my study—an American writing teacher in the U.S., who kindly agreed to help me with the project—to respond to my students' papers as the L1 reader. After he finished responding to all papers, making marks and writing comments by hand as he would do for his L1 students, he scanned the papers and sent the files to me via e-mail. We wanted to have students read his comments, so I printed out all papers and gave them back to the students. It turned out that students liked his detailed written feedback, and commented that the L1 reader's feedback was very helpful for their final revisions. Several students said, however, that they would have preferred face-to-face discussion with the L1 reader, as they believed that some issues could be clarified only by face-to-face discussion, not by the written feedback.

After getting the L1 reader feedback, students made further revision to address some issues the L1 reader raised in written feedback, which generally addressed the content and ideas in their paper more than grammar and syntax issues. I collected all four files of each student: the writing plan, two drafts, and their final paper. These were the written products from this workshop. After the first draft, we had a peer review session, held one-on-one conferences, had L1 reader feedback, then students produced their third drafts, which seemed to have improved in various aspects, such as focus, organization, language. Generally, all 16 students made some changes in their drafts based on the feedback they got from peers, me and the L1 reader. There were a range of improvements in their writing; however, more than half of these 16 students did more detailed revisions on their paper, while a few of them seemed to only have time to do

sentence-level revision and editing. In the next section are some examples of their revisions.

Sample Revisions Selected among Different Student Writers

On the Textual Transitions

Linnan is a highly motivated English learner and a passionate student writer. She likes writing and writes both in Chinese and English on a daily basis. She participated in my workshop with great enthusiasm to improve her English writing. She chose to write on education in the rural areas in China, as she had been concerned about the inadequacy of rural education based on her relative's experience. In order to help her audience understand this particular circumstance, she gave a vivid description of what a rural classroom looks like to open her topic, adding her cousin's schooling experience; then she went on to the educational situation in the rural areas in China.

First Draft (Linnan)

> *All his three girls finally returned to house and saved money for the younger brother's tuition. 7 years passed, my three cousins got married to local people and lived the same life as their parents', struggling repetitively and mechanically for life and their children, expecting to change the fortune through education on the next generation.*
>
> *So I was lucky, for possessing poor but education-oriented parents, for achieving the chance to receive a better education, for acquiring an easier and better way of living than my cousins'. But I cannot help thinking every night, about the education in rural areas and many children who*

may have the same fortune as my three cousins'.

In this first draft, Linnan talked about her cousins' experience and then switched to her own experience with little transition, so readers felt there was a gap between the two paragraphs. Moreover, there was little transition between "my cousins" experience and the many children in the rural area, hence readers might feel a sudden switch from one part to the next part. Concerned with this problem, Linnan made some changes on her paper.

Third Draft (Linnan)

> *Seven years passed, my three cousins got married to local people and lived the same life as their parents', struggling routinely for life and their children were expected to change the fortune through education on the next generation. Their younger brother now is pursuing his study in senior high school with the education condition still poor and severe.*
>
> *My cousins are just three of 8,0930,000 rural people. Such a great number of people make up 2/3 of the Chinese population and 1/4 of the world's population is now still living in a condition of poor education.*

In her third draft, Linnan created a natural smooth transition to bridge the gap, connecting the personal family story with the broad picture, the rural education to be discussed in the next part of her essay. The transition did give readers a better account of her individual experience and the general situation in the rural areas in China, which created stronger empathy in her readers.

On Providing Details to Improve Clarity and Reinforce Arguments

What is a good piece of writing? A quick answer might be writing that is

clear, concise, and concrete. When it comes to a specific piece, sometimes certain details might be needed to explain, clarify, or reinforce some statements. In my workshop, Huang wrote on American home schooling, and she added some details to explain her points, therefore her arguments became stronger.

First Draft (Huangmei)

> *In-home teaching deprives children of their school living which means getting along with their counterparts and many others. Most probably, these isolated children would not be able to compromise, to tolerate, to forgive, to be responsible, and so on. Will they suffer psychological problems? When they finally grow up to enter society, will they be able to handle it smoothly?*

Third Draft (Huangmei)

> *Despite its contributions, there are also some disadvantages with home schooling. It deprives children of their school life which means getting along with their counterparts and many others. For home-schooled children, the people they have contacted with in daily life are largely confined to their parents, relatives and neighbors, most of whom love them. Generally, living with these amiable people differs a lot from interacting with those counterparts, for the latter requires equality and tolerance to keep harmonious relations. Hence, most of these isolated children probably would not be able to compromise, to tolerate, to forgive, to be responsible, and so on. Will they suffer psychological problems? When they finally grow up to enter society, will they be able to cope with*

life smoothly?

Huangmei added a detailed explanation on her statement “getting along with their counterparts,” so readers could understand why children sometimes need to be able “to compromise, to tolerate, to forgive” if they go to regular school instead of home schooling. The detail provided not only explanation, but also presented a clear cause-effect relationship between the lines to provide a logical explanation to the issues she discussed in the text.

Another good example is from Linnan’s essay on education in rural area in China. She expressed her deep concern for those students who could not attend the university by describing what the situation would be for them.

First Draft (Linnan)

> *Once these rural students failed to go to university, it is more difficult to get them back on farm since they have stayed in school for 12 years, they do not know how to manage the farm work, thus dropping into a very embarrassing situation.*

As readers, we might ask the writer, “What is the ‘very embarrassing situation’?” We might want to know more about it. Considering the reader’s expectations, Linnan added some details to make her statement clear.

Third Draft (Linnan)

> *Once these rural students fail to go to university, it is more difficult to get them back on farm since they have stayed in school for 12 years, so they do not know how to do the farm work and dislike enduring the hardship. <u>Many of them are encountered with the discrimination from their</u>*

neighbors, for their failure in costly study for 12 years. They may go to the extreme and commit suicide under such an embarrassing situation.

The situation she describes might be exaggerated to some extent; however, the added details do explain very well about the “embarrassing situation” for those students. She expected that detail would arouse empathy among her readers. Hence, readers might share the writer’s concerns on this topic.

On Providing Vivid Descriptions

All sixteen students produced a paper on topics of interest to them. The majority of students chose argumentative writing, as they have some experience in writing arguments. However, a few students wrote expository papers, and one student wrote a personal narrative on love between parents and children. The following are two examples which I enjoyed reading.

First Draft (Liuyang)

As I grew up, my feelings about music is changing. To me, music is another group of water—tea. Whenever I taste tea, I would have a different understanding of tea. As music, each time I enjoy a certain kind of music, my feeling varies, too. There are strong tea and soft one, like music, which has hard one and soft one. Also, the certain taste and color of tea equals to a certain kind of music. The green tea, especially BiLuoChun, is so delicate and exquisite that it just like the soft tune played on the violin. The WuLong tea is warmer, like the sonata. PuEr tea contains much fervor that it could make your blood boil!

In her first draft, Liuyang made some comparisons between tea and music, which was a good starting point. However, it still needed some illustrations to make natural connections between the particular type of tea and different music types. When we had our conference, I suggested providing more illustrations, and so she did.

Third Draft (Liuyang)

> *As I grew up, my feelings toward music is changing. To me, music is another group of water—tea. Whenever tasting tea, I would have a different understanding of it. As music, each time I enjoy a certain kind of music, my feeling varies, too. There are strong tea and mild one, like music, which has hard one and soft one. Also, the certain taste and color of tea equal to a certain kind of music. The green tea, especially the BiLuoChun, is so delicate and exquisite that it is just like the soft tune played on the Erhu. The WuLong tea is warmer, like the sonata from a piano. The PuEr tea contains much fervor that it could make your blood boil just like hip-hop!*

Given her strong interest on music, Liuyang compared her passion with an important element in life—water. Growing up in a tea country like China, Liuyang seemed to draw a picture of music and the country's famous tea by giving vivid descriptions through metaphors. In addition, she did a good job connecting Western culture with Chinese culture through the "soft tune from Erhu," a traditional Chinese stringed instrument, a sonata from a piano, and even bringing in hip-hop from American culture.

Bingqing chose to write about the greatest love in the world—love between parents and children, especially “love across distance.” She attended university in Beijing, which is thousands of miles from her hometown. She wanted to express her love and gratitude to her parents.

First Draft (Bingqing)

> *It was time to say goodbye. Walking through the access to the station, I heard my father’s cell ringing and I turned back only to catch the sight that they were standing in the crowd and watching me with a solicitous and concerned air. I looked back again. They were still standing there and watching me. After turning a corner, they came out of my sight. I took a deep breath and held the swelling tears.*

Third Draft (Bingqing)

> *Finally, it was time to say goodbye. Walking through the entrance to the station, I heard my father’s cell ringing so I turned back: <u>they were standing in the crowd, watching me. I walked on and looked back again—still standing there, watching me.</u> I didn’t have the courage to look at them once again, fearing that they would recognize my unwillingness to leave and worry about me. After I turned a corner, they were out of my sight. <u>With love and reluctance combined with the uncertainty of the future, a heavy feeling rose up in me. Knowing I would be alone by myself again, I took a deep breath and held back the swelling tears.</u>*

By describing the particular moment and focusing on the specific scene, Bingqing drew a vivid picture in front of readers—a picture of love across a great

distance.

On Providing Supporting Evidence to General Assertions

Throughout the whole workshop, I had been reading all students' writing pieces, either short notes or full essays. I had an impression that some students tended to make general assertions without providing adequate supporting details. Students agreed that they tended to draw conclusions from their own assumptions or life experiences, so they were not accustomed to looking for supporting evidence from appropriate sources. Based on the students' needs, I devoted one workshop session specifically to developing general statements into good paragraphs with sufficient support. Students learned various ways to develop an argument, so they made some progress on their final papers. Here are some examples from students:

First Draft (Lipei)

> *Comparing with boys, there are fewer equal opportunities for girls to compete with boys: many jobs are for boys and even the same types of work are rewarded in different ways. So many girls lose hope to live independently and concede to their fate.*

In her first draft, Lipei gave some statements on employment opportunities between boys and girls, which seemed to come from her own assumptions or life knowledge. As we read through her paper, as readers, we might be wondering about two things: How do you know there are fewer opportunities for girls? And, if they are rewarded in different ways, how different? and in what ways?

I gave suggestions on providing some evidence to support this statement,

and she went on looking for relevant materials to backup her assertions. Later she came up with a survey result to support her point:

Third Draft (Lipei)

> *Comparing with boys, there are fewer equal opportunities for girls to compete with boys: many jobs are for boys and even the same types of work are rewarded in different ways. A national survey conducted by the China Youth Association in 2004 shows that the employment rate for female college graduates is lower than male graduates, approximately 8 percent. So there is no doubt that many girls lose hope to stand on her feet and concede to their fate.*

The survey result, added as supporting evidence, made her statement strong and persuasive; therefore, readers accept the assertion she made above. Unfortunately, she still did not provide further details to elaborate how girls are treated differently in their workplace even if they do the same kind of jobs as boys, as she stated in her essay, probably due to the limited time and energy devoted to this workshop. But she learned how making changes moved her writing in a positive direction which she became aware of after attending the workshop.

Another example is from Yushan's essay on his deep concerns about future employment after graduation, which is a source of frustration for quite a number of undergraduates. For them, if they stay in school, they can always say "I'm working on a degree"; upon graduation, there are no more excuses for being free from job responsibilities. Parents hope that college graduates will make their

way to success in their careers and in life. Yushan wrote his draft like this:

First Draft (Yushan)

> *We should aim to absorb as much knowledge as possible to broaden our horizons. Being limited to a realm of small range in knowledge will breed self-conceit and nearsightedness. Many great writers devoured numerous books in various fields before they could spin their own masterpieces.*

Yushan made a general assertion how "many great writers" produced their "own masterpieces," with no support. I pointed this out in our conference. Yushan said he was aware of the rules but just did not pay enough attention to it when he composed the draft. On his third draft, he definitely provided the support.

Third Draft (Yushan)

> *Knowing only a little range of knowledge will breed self-conceit and nearsightedness. Many great writers devoured numerous books in various fields before they could spin their own masterpieces. Milton, for instance, created the greatest epic poem* Paradise Lost *after years of reading and eventful life experience.*

Revision of Opening Paragraph

In my workshop, I had one session on how to develop effective opening and concluding paragraphs, including creating smooth transitions in the text. My purpose was to draw students' attention to the strong impact a good opening could make for the readers. Students learned some ways to open or to conclude a text in order to achieve different writing purposes. The following is an example

from Liuyang's essay "Water and Music":

First Draft (Liuyang)

> *Mr. Aldous Huxley revealed the essence of the dripping water – music in the article Water Music. According to his vivid and subtle description and deep thought, we could taste the rhythm of dripping water with him.*

Third Draft (Liuyang)

> *Aldous Huxley, in his essay Water Music, revealed the essence of dripping water —music. Listening to the sound of dripping water during the night, one can feel the special rhythm in quietness: tee-ta, tee-ta, tee-ta. Sometimes, the rhythm can change as one likes: tee-ta –tee, tee-ta-tee. It is a kind of tune already existing in one's heart. Along with his vivid and subtle description and deep thinking, one can taste the rhythm of dripping water rhythmically, and find the relationship between the two factors clearly—music originates from water.*

In Liuyang's first draft, she introduced the main theme of her essay, water and music, by briefly citing Huxley's article. However, the opening was general and abstract, and readers could not really "taste the rhythm of dripping water." In her third draft she added a vivid description of dripping water rhythm, which immediately created a picture in the mind. We seem to hear water dripping from the roof at night, and surely, we can "feel the special rhythm in quietness." In her third draft, this opening provides a natural connection between the two essential elements in the essay.

Although a 12-week workshop could not solve the various problems they have in their writing, at least to some extent, these examples above illustrate that the workshop helped these students become more aware of the factors at work in their writing and learn ways to better shape their writing for different audiences and purposes.

Main Achievements from the Writing Workshop

The main goals of this workshop were to develop these Chinese students' writing abilities, to raise their contextual language awareness in English writing, to build their knowledge of writing strategies, and to facilitate their academic literacy development for college-level EFL language practice. The content of my workshop sessions was designed to serve these central purposes. Although true academic literacy could not be built up in just ten workshop sessions, my short-term goal was to provide strategies to these students and to improve their application in practice. While their writing abilities could not be improved in one semester, students needed to learn how to monitor their own learning and become independent writers in their lifelong journey.

Given these goals, I feel that my writing workshop accomplished its purpose for four reasons: 1) students became aware of the context of writing itself; 2) students learned specific strategies to apply to their writing; 3) workshop activities provided ways and directions for students to follow to handle writing tasks; 4) students became more confident in English writing. I will incorporate student views given in the interviews to further explain the overall achievements after the workshop.

Two workshop sessions were devoted to raising awareness about writing. Students reported that they became more aware of writing purpose and audience after being exposed to the explicit instruction during those sessions. They used to have vague ideas about writing; for them, the purpose of writing was to finish assignments as quickly as possible and get a good grade. After the sessions, students discovered some meaningful purposes for writing and became more motivated to write. They learned to consider their intended audience and imagine what that audience already knew about the topic. In addition, they became interested in addressing the reader's expectations in their writing. For the majority of Chinese EFL students, accomplishing writing tasks has been based on one fixed model: linear and monologic. In my workshop, the writing process was deliberately recursive and dialogic. Some students regard writing as self-expression only, which had little to do with readers. Through the workshop activities they learned to consider readers' perspectives so they could approach a topic from a balanced viewpoint. By facilitating the writing process and building a community of multiple readers, students experienced abundant feedback and enjoyed the writer-reader dialogues as part of their process.

Second, students learned specific strategies to apply to their writing, which helped them develop their initial thoughts into full written texts by meaningfully going through the steps of their own writing process. They learned how to approach a topic, how to select ideas and develop these ideas into paragraphs; they became more aware of what to do and how to do it when they encountered problems in the process. It seemed to them that there were more steps involved

in the process, but the composing process was more effective. Throughout the whole workshop, I tried to provide more opportunities to help students apply what they had just learned to real practice. Moreover, they reported that it was exciting to finally be able to overcome writing difficulties by applying some learned strategies.

Third, workshop activities provided ways and directions for students to follow to handle writing tasks. Now when they get a writing task, they will be accustomed to doing some overall planning, then drafting and shaping ideas, and then revising for the final drafts. Students commented that through the workshop activities the writing process has become less tedious, less laborious, and more effective, more manageable, with clearer direction and better understanding of each step. Thus, students learned to set up their own writing plan and monitor their writing process by following some directions.

Lastly, students became more confident in English writing. Some students stated that they liked writing but often got frustrated due to inadequate language proficiency and lack of writing strategies. While attending the workshop, they learned how to analyze a topic, determine a way to approach a topic, and fully develop their initial notes into a complete draft. Thus, they felt more confident and more capable of handling a writing task than they were before the workshop.

The workshop experience was also a learning experience for me. I immersed myself into a real teaching and learning context in ways I had never done before. When I previously taught at BISU, I naturally followed the prescribed pedagogy; after I attended graduate classes in the U.S., I gained substantial

knowledge of composition theories and current practices, which prompted me to apply some new teaching techniques within the Chinese EFL context. Through prolonged engagement in the research setting, I have learned something meaningful for myself and for my future teaching practice, which will be shared in details in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

In the previous chapters, three sets of data from different sources were presented. Among the data collected from the study, interview data, student evaluations and student pre- and post-texts were reported with details. The entire data set provided some general ideas about the study results. In this chapter, I will first link the research results with my research questions in order to clarify the relationship between my original goals and the study results. I will then review what I see as the central achievements of the workshop. Later, I will also present further discussion of the results.

Through this workshop inquiry I sought to answer my central research questions:

1. How would students react to specific activities if some aspects of contemporary Western writing approach were applied to a college-level writing workshop at a Chinese University judging from their own expressed views?

My purpose in the workshop was to apply certain aspects of Western composition pedagogical approaches to EFL writing instruction in a Chinese context. In my workshop, I selected a set of writing activities/strategies to facilitate student writing process. As I mentioned in chapter three, students in my research setting, the English Department at BISU, had some experience with basic process writing activities, such as brainstorming, group discussion, and peer review. Therefore, when I introduced these terms to them in my workshop,

students treated them as something they have known, so they did not seem to show a lot enthusiasm for these activities. Therefore, these terms were not new for them. In the workshop, students did not seem to show enthusiasm for these activities. However, a few concepts were quite new to them, like “using the cubing framework” and “finding voice in writing,” so they naturally paid more attention to them and also seemed to have more comments on these activities.

2. What would be the students’ attitudes toward this writing workshop experience? Which activities would they favor, and which would they find problematic?

The majority of students reported positive attitudes toward the workshop, although they showed a range of interest in certain activities during the course of the workshop. The interview data showed that the majority of participants welcomed activities that helped them approach a topic, develop their thoughts, and get constructive feedback from different readers.

Some activities worked very well for them, such as freewriting to fight writer’s block, one-on-one conferencing between the teacher and the student, and getting an L1 reader’s feedback. Some activities did not work as well as expected, such as collaborative drafting and peer reviewing in particular. Overall, the 16 students participating in my workshop liked the workshop experience. They reported they learned specific writing strategies and gained more confidence in English writing.

3. What would be the Chinese English teachers’ perceptions toward incorporating some aspects of contemporary Western writing approach

in college-level writing classes?

The four EFL teachers in my study had applied some commonly used process writing activities in their writing classes to some extent. Based on their teaching experiences and their own beliefs, all four EFL teachers agreed that some aspects of Western composition pedagogical approaches were beneficial to Chinese EFL students. One commented that students were gradually accepting some process-oriented writing instruction. However, due to the traditional EFL context, developing fluency in writing and building appropriate writing competence was, of course, among their top concerns when it came to the EFL writing instruction.

4. How could such an approach, if found to benefit students, best be integrated into the Chinese educational context (judging from students' responses to the workshop referred to in the first question)?

The Chinese students in my workshop gained some benefits from the process writing instruction; however, systematic, explicit and in-depth writing instruction and adequate opportunities for further practice would be needed to fully implement the application of process writing pedagogy in college-level advanced writing classes in Chinese universities. Therefore, more well-trained EFL teachers, those who have knowledge of ESL/EFL teaching approaches and current classroom practices, would be needed to conduct such writing classes. Advanced competent student writers could be trained to do peer-tutoring for the majority of EFL students. L1 readers would be in demand to build an authentic discourse community. Lastly, EFL teachers are encouraged to make adaptations

to teach English writing based on their course requirements, students' needs, and local teaching and learning contexts.

Three sets of data were collected to answer these questions: process data which reported students' experience in the whole workshop; perception data, mostly from interviews, which told about student attitude and teacher perception; and product data from student writing which, along with my research log and observational field notes, were triangulated to evaluate the effectiveness of this workshop.

Overall Discussion and Interpretation

The Concept of Writing and Learning to Write

My home university, Beijing International Studies University, is regarded in China as a prestigious school specializing in foreign language education, a place where students can immerse themselves in more intensive and authentic foreign language learning contexts. Due to its specialized education, students are selected based on their good performance on the standard national university entrance exams and on their oral proficiency. Like many students at BISU, my workshop participants were the top students in their local high schools from different provinces in China, so they had fairly high levels of both self-esteem and motivation to achieve academic success. However, due to the traditional focus on reading rather than writing, most of them had limited experience in writing English except for those basic writing tasks assigned by the teachers. In their regular writing classes, teachers mostly focused on writing the academic essay, so students had very little experience with other types of writing such as personal

writing, business writing, or creative writing. Thus, for some students, the concept of writing meant only writing essays and their goal of learning writing was to write with good vocabulary, and correct grammar and syntax. Given this background, I encountered some interesting reactions after the first workshop session.

Some students had the idea that the purpose of writing was to just write good essays, so there was no need to understand *how* we learn to write, that is, what we might go through in the process. All that mattered, they believed, was to write a standard five-paragraph essay in their timed essay exams so they could have good grades in their writing classes. This idea might explain why some students seemed to not be interested in my lecture on basic writing theory in the first session and why some of them dropped out after the first session. One student dropped, as she explained in the evaluation sheet, because my workshop seemed different from her goal of merely enlarging her English vocabulary and improving her spoken diction. A few others indicated that they withdrew because they thought they already knew some of the terms I mentioned in the first workshop. Others stated they had already experienced such activities as “brainstorming” and “group discussion” in their regular classes, so there was “nothing new” about my workshop.

In fact, a key concept which played a tricky role in my workshop was the abstract idea of “something new.” I encountered some students who stated they wanted to “learn new ways” of English writing from Western composition pedagogy—which was the main reason they decided to participate in my workshop. I suppose it was good motivation for them to pursue new knowledge,

new strategies, and new ways of thinking. However, their notion of “new” seemed to build upon their definition of “old,” which has some contradictory connotations: Where does the new come from? Does the new have connections with the old? Do we need to get rid of the old in order to use the new? In my workshop, I encountered students who had two ways of thinking regarding the notion of “new.” On the one hand, some students seemed almost too eager to uncritically seek novelty for its own sake. In their minds, new ways of writing meant something they had never heard of before—it would be better if it came from Mars—and it should be totally new. In contrast, others seemed to misunderstand what was truly “new”; these students, having heard terms like ‘brainstorming’ and ‘peer review,’ simply assumed that these activities were no longer new for them, thus there was no need to learn them again from my workshop. This last group seemed to lack the patience to stay with what they saw in the first session as something known, hence it was ‘old’ for them.

In today’s China, the college English curriculum does require students to take necessary writing classes to acquire the knowledge and skills to accomplish their academic writing tasks, however, the course range is, for the most part, limited to essay writing instruction and basic research writing knowledge—a narrow range especially compared to the variety of writing courses offered at universities in the United States. But even though these Chinese students at BISU had experienced some kind of brainstorming and group discussion in their regular writing classes, it seemed as though their conclusion about the workshop was hasty. They seemed to believe they could not learn anything new from my

workshop because my workshop was *also* about brainstorming and group discussion activities. These students perhaps had a superficial understanding of writing and had a vague distinction between the content of writing knowledge and the means to acquire that knowledge. Even though they had experienced some brainstorming and group discussions in their regular classes, does this mean they have acquired strong writing skills and thus no longer need to "learn how to write"? Obviously, this is not true when it comes to the essence of learning how to write in academic settings.

The 16 students who stayed through my entire workshop seemed to hold a different view toward their writing. They appeared motivated and eager to learn more about English writing. In fact, a few of them already liked writing and were good writers in their classes, so they participated actively in the workshop. Some of them seemed to understand that learning to write requires long-term effort and requires adequate practice. A few of these students commented that they needed more practice to improve their writing abilities and they would like to keep on writing in English beyond their undergraduate studies. In conducting the study, I came to realize how important this attitude was to help students maintain active participation in the course of the whole workshop.

Overcoming Writing Apprehension and Applying Writing Strategies

The students in my home university (BISU) had experienced some process writing activities such as brainstorming and group discussion in their regular writing classes. So what made my writing workshop different from their own writing classes? What attracted them to stay in my workshop and eventually

gain some benefit from it? I believe I can attribute this phenomenon to three main characteristics of my workshop design: systematic content, specific writing strategies, and scaffolding activities.

As far as the workshop content, I had a systematic design which covered the essential elements in a writing course. I drew students' attention to the writing context—identifying writing purpose, audience and reader-expectation—to raise awareness of writing. I taught them to consider a topic from different perspectives to develop their critical thinking. I demonstrated ten ways to develop a good argument with my own writing plans and detailed illustrations. I laid out a model text framework by teaching opening, concluding, and creating transitions in a written text. I also drew their attention to the concept of voice in writing, which was a new to them. A few of these writing elements had never been introduced to them in their classes, such as developing voice in writing and considering the reader's expectations. While some of them were mentioned in their writing classes but were not effectively applied to practice. For instance, students told me that they had experienced peer review activity, but it was very superficial—very often it turned out to be simply an exercise in error correction. Therefore, students still seemed to be confused due to the lack of clear instruction and adequate practice. Specifically, they were told to develop critical thinking, but did not know how to do it. They were assigned to write argumentative essays, but had not been given instruction explicitly on how to develop their arguments step by step, in what ways they could develop general statements into detailed points with appropriate support. That was the reason students commented that they had

learned new ideas of writing, developed awareness of writing context, and gained substantial knowledge of writing elements in my workshop.

The workshop students also welcomed specific writing strategies and scaffolding activities. Like many EFL students, my participants had difficulties when it came to approaching a writing task, and they very often got stuck at the beginning of the process. I introduced strategies to fight writer's block, which helped them overcome their apprehension and move one-step forward to approaching their topic. In order to get them used to critical thinking, I introduced the "cubing framework" to guide them in considering a topic from six perspectives. Those strategies helped them become more aware of the key elements in writing so that they could monitor their own writing process and eventually become independent writers. Scaffolding activities like collaborative writing and writer-reader dialogues also helped students engage in the process and take control of their writing.

The Recursive Writing Process in the Workshop

Another characteristic of my writing workshop was that students received abundant, constructive feedback from peers, teacher, and an L1 reader. This experience absolutely motivated students to fully develop their ideas, elaborate their thoughts and articulate their inner voice. For them, detailed teacher feedback was very precious, something they seldom got in their regular classes, and getting an L1 reader's feedback was a luxury. Due to the large class size, their writing teachers could not respond to their papers in detail, so they had never expected to receive such thorough feedback in my workshop. Bingqing, for

example, specifically commented in the interview that she was very impressed with the amount and depth of the feedback I gave on her paper. In most cases, they expected a lot less, having gotten used to the situation in their writing classes.

The students were also appreciative that they got feedback from an L1 reader, as they all believed that native-English speakers have more power in terms of language use and text comprehension. As much ESL writing research has pointed out, appropriate use of articles and prepositions is a big challenge for the ESL/EFL population because their usage is so subtle, thus making it difficult to master in comparatively short time period. Therefore, it is obvious that we can often distinguish native speakers from non-native speakers by their use of articles and prepositions in writing. Many Chinese teachers of English are well-educated and very proficient in English language use, while they may not be very familiar with certain cultural, social knowledge and ordinary interactions such as slang expressions and colloquialisms. In order to have students experience real L1 reader feedback, I invited an American writing teacher to comment on my students' essays. As it turned out, my students seemed to trust native speakers more than their Chinese English teachers. My workshop provided an opportunity for my students to fully experience peer feedback, teacher feedback, and L1 feedback, which was also an attraction for the student participants.

Conflict and Convergence between Chinese Traditional Learning and Western Classroom Learning

The Fundamental Principles behind Chinese and American Composition

Writing Purposes and Values

As I mentioned in chapter two, traditional Chinese education has been concerned about teaching moral principles to students. Teachers serve as role models, assisting in developing talent in students. Writing served as a means of conveying moral lessons and passing on these principles from generation to generation. In terms of content, Chinese writers usually convey social beliefs and cultural values in their writing, and they are not expected to present too much criticism toward society. Therefore, students are encouraged to express socially shared and accepted ideas for the good of the whole group, not what is individual and personal. Influenced by this philosophy, Chinese students have been known to be rather reluctant to assert themselves in class, let alone to impose their personal opinions on their peers.

Western culture seems to value original thought more than Chinese culture does, therefore, Western composition often calls for seeking answers for original inquiries. Following this philosophy, writers are allowed to question the unknown and share their personal opinions on it. They could take stances on whatever they personally feel is right and can argue the validity and reliability by providing relevant evidence to support their ideas.

My workshop students are a new generation of Chinese in modern China, which has gained more and more attention from the world. Students' beliefs and

values are mostly shaped by Chinese traditions, while still being influenced by some Western ideologies and popular cultures. As a result, they are in the challenging situation where they encounter two systems of cultural values and social beliefs, and are faced with trying to find the balance between the conflicts and convergence of the two.

The Chinese Way of Thinking

One EFL teacher participant, Lin, shared her concerns on the L2 texts of Chinese EFL writers. She remarked that Chinese students have difficulty going beyond the Chinese way of thinking, so they tend to write “Chinglish” rather than English in their papers. Hearing this kind of remark, I cannot help thinking about certain questions: What exactly is the Chinese way of thinking? Should Chinese students try to write like American students? Would they sacrifice their Chinese identity by trying to emulate native English writing? Is it possible to achieve the native-like writing ability for Chinese EFL writers?

We have to look at this phenomenon from a few perspectives. First, the Chinese way of thinking in writing is influenced by the traditional Chinese culture and philosophy, which values modesty and humility as individual traits. A Chinese writer, therefore, should not portray him/herself in the writing with strong assertions and aggressive arguments. Thus, Chinese composition applies a variety of techniques to achieve the writing purpose with a degree of indirectness. Chinese students tend to express commonly shared ideas in their writing so as to avoid possible conflicts with others. Students are encouraged to use poetry, quotations and other borrowed material to make their arguments, which is one of

the valued characteristics in Chinese composition.

Therefore, some teachers have concluded that Chinese students lack critical thinking when writing in English. In my workshop study, two of the EFL teachers actually raised the issue of critical thinking when they shared their concerns on EFL writing in China. I would agree with them: students are hesitant to express any new ideas because they do not want to be judged as “weird” or “aggressive”; it is safe for them to take a stance that most people would agree with. Another factor might be the fact that students are not taught to read and write critically in their other classes, at least not given explicit instruction on this issue. On another note, this might have something to do with in the language ability—students may not be able to write out their ideas due to in the limited English proficiency. A few students even remarked that they do have ideas on a variety of issues, but they just have difficulty in making these ideas stand out in written form. They thought it was unfair to state that Chinese students lack critical thinking. While in America, I noticed that the college curriculum often emphasizes critical literacy; first-year composition classes often includes critical reading and writing as one of the essential parts of academic training. I would say, therefore, that it is unfair to put the blame on Chinese students; teachers should address the critical literacy development in their writing instruction, as well as in their classes.

Rhetorical Patterns between Chinese and American Composition

One EFL teacher, Wang, emphasized that teachers should teach students a variety of English writing models—standard textual organization and format,

and help students become familiar with these models. Wang believes that, students would be able to compose good English drafts as long as they have adequate amount of vocabulary and mastery of different English writing models. I agree with this statement to some extent. In fact, ESL writing research has pointed out that rhetorical organization is one of the biggest problems ESL/EFL students encounter in their writing. Specifically, ESL/EFL students may not be familiar with organizing essays in a way that makes sense to an American academic audience, due to the different rhetorical traditions between their first language and the English writing, which makes L2 writing more laborious.

As mentioned in chapter two, Kaplan (1966) introduced the notion of "contrastive rhetoric" to the world of writing research. He drew diagrams to show how people from different cultures write differently: for example, English writing is direct and linear; "Oriental" writing is circular; Russian writing is zigzagged. The notion drew attention to inter-cultural rhetoric as well as the criticism of over-simplifying the rhetorical patterns in different cultures, which do have some common features across the same cultural group. However, the assumption tends to be over-generalized on writing behaviors which obviously involve several factors, such as cultural background, social beliefs and values, educational practices, and rhetorical traditions in different cultures.

The Chinese composition usually opens up a topic and discusses the related issues by using borrowed references and draws a conclusion at the end. The basic framework consists of four parts: introduction, development, turning point, and conclusion. A good writing piece would have a good opening, have

development that is easy to follow, and gets to the main point naturally at the conclusion. Readers would not feel that the writer tries to impose his/her ideas on them; instead a good writer can engage readers to follow the development and draw a conclusion together with the writer at the end of their reading. Like some other Asian cultures, circularity in writing is appreciated as a poetic way of writing, thus EFL students sometimes bring up the indirectness in their English papers when they first come to America. Of course, this culturally rooted writing style sometimes causes misunderstanding between ESL/EFL writers and American readers: ESL writers are sometimes shocked by the directness and openness of much American writing, and have little idea whether they should change their writing style; American readers sometimes are frustrated by the circularity in ESL/EFL papers and wonder why those students could not get to the point more directly. Therefore, ESL/EFL students need time and necessary practice to adjust their writing to meet the expectation of American readers.

The Chinese students in my workshop had limited exposure to different English genres, so naturally they were not familiar with the textual organizations of each genre type. Having realized how important it is to their writing, they welcomed the workshop session which focused on identifying writing tasks and finding the appropriate textual organization to match the writing tasks. To be able to have control of various genres and have sufficient knowledge of different discourse, systematic and explicit instruction would be needed, in addition to extensive reading and constant writing. My workshop session did raise students' awareness about different types of writing; however, the workshop time was too

short to provide extended instruction on different patterns of textual organization. Therefore, I hope that my students can gradually build on their knowledge of discourse communities in their learning process with the instruction I provided in the workshop session as a starting point.

Different Expectations between L2 Writers and L1 Reader

Different cultural backgrounds certainly seemed to play a role between L2 writers and the L1 reader in my workshop. Asian cultures seem to share a common practice in writing—engaging readers to participate in comprehending the text. In other words, writers are not supposed to reveal direct statements in writing, and readers are expected to participate in comprehending the text and make their own interpretations while reading. American writing tends to tell the readers more directly what the author wishes to convey. Therefore, different expectations can occur between the L2 writers and L1 reader: an L1 reader might feel like asking for more explanation on certain issues, while L2 writers might hold the view that “It’s the reader’s job to follow my paper.”

These different expectations could also be seen in my workshop. After getting the feedback from the American writing teacher, these L2 writers expressed a dilemma they have: when they did not provide enough details, the L1 reader asked for further explanation, yet when they deliberately wrote more, the L1 reader sometimes commented that the extra text was redundant. Thus, a few students felt it to be difficult to meet the L1 reader’s expectation. On the other hand, students seemed to need more guidance to revise their paper even with the written feedback on their paper. For example, the L1 reader commented that

a student used a set of formal, “big” words for letter writing and suggested using informal vocabulary; the student stated that he did not know much of colloquial phrases, how could he make changes according to the L1 reader’s feedback?

Naturally, EFL students would expect an L1 reader to give more explicit suggestions on their paper. The L1 reader noted that he commented on the EFL students’ papers in the same way he did with the papers of his native English speaking students. In other words, the L1 reader responded to these EFL students’ papers focusing on content, instead of on language use—as EFL teachers usually do while reading student writing. My workshop participants liked the idea of getting a L1 reader’s feedback, but at the same time they expressed that they also needed some help in terms of language use and writing style, which might be unexpected to American readers. Therefore, it seemed that my workshop participants expected the L1 reader not only to give feedback on content, but also to provide some help in language use, writing style and cultural knowledge. Of course, these expectations are not easily met in the limited form of teacher written feedback, and maybe it is one of the reasons that students would like to have a face-to-face talk with the L1 reader.

Conflicts between Chinese Educational Traditions and Western Pedagogy

Individual Learning Style

Historically, the Chinese educational philosophy emphasized learning through choral recitation and memorization, passed on from generation to generation, and this approach still has great influence in teaching and learning practices in today’s China. However, with the development of English language

teaching, some Western concepts in writing pedagogy are being introduced to Chinese EFL teachers and students, such as collaborative learning. Even so, the majority of Chinese students seem to still prefer the traditional learning to the Western learning style, therefore they have some difficulty adapting Western learning activities due to their long training in traditional pedagogy. Furthermore, some teachers also believe in traditional teaching philosophy, so they tend to encourage students to recite good sample writing pieces in order to write well in English, so there has been a common practice among students to memorize writing models, especially in elementary and secondary schools. Surprisingly, at my home university in Beijing, I found that some students still had a strong preference to the traditional learning strategies like choral memorization; for example, Zhuyi, who had attended the first workshop session and later dropped out of the study, still believed that memorizing poetry could improve his own English writing. Seeing this situation from a Chinese perspective, I could understand why this student clung to this tradition: he, and many others, had been taught to do so since they were at a very young age. In contrast, if we view this from an American perspective, would you agree with the idea? Would you ask your students to memorize poetry to improve their writing?

Peer Review Activities

It seemed that my workshop students did not respond enthusiastically to the peer review activity—like their L1 counterparts, according to some studies. Peer review seemed to be problematic even with native English speakers. For Chinese students, peer review was not an activity they were used to doing in

their regular classes. However, on this point, cultural factors may have made them especially resistant, as discussed in chapter five. In addition, the Chinese emphasis on group harmony and modesty may have played an important role here. One explanation might be connected with the students' home culture, which has a great influence on students' preference in teaching methods. Traditional Chinese philosophy praises modesty, humility, and group harmony. Chinese students, therefore, are usually reluctant to be seen as assertive or "showing off"; they avoid situations where they may appear superior to their peers. A decade ago, English writing was chiefly assigned in China to practice language formation and the use of learned grammar rules. The teacher was the only reviewer of their writing, checking to see if their sentence patterns were correct.

Now, process writing is being introduced in school settings, so some Chinese students can get the opportunity to experience such a Western writing process. However, in the school setting of my study, the application of process writing instruction is very superficial, thus far, and is limited. As reported from student interviews, peer-review was not a class routine; even if they were assigned to do peer review in class, very often this activity turned out to be peer correction—students just corrected errors in peers' papers. This situation may have something to do with culture. Critically reviewing peers' work may cause some arguments between individuals or within the group and might disrupt the group harmony in some way, which is not what is wanted in the class. Some students may not welcome critiques by their peers, either. Some students may

give preference to their teachers' feedback because, in their eyes, the teacher is still the authority.

In addition to cultural influence, student attitude toward peer review may have something to do with their understanding of the role of peer review. In their eyes, peer review is something unimportant and very often not helpful. Their attitude toward peer review can be seen from a few perspectives: 1) student language ability and knowledge of writing, 2) student attitude toward peers, 3) teacher influence. First, some students do not like peer review because they feel incapable of giving feedback due to limited language ability. Besides, they may not know how to improve peer's paper themselves, with similar limited knowledge of writing. Therefore, even if they are willing to do it, the result might be still unsatisfactory. Second, academic competition very often exists among peers, therefore students might be reluctant to do peer review or do it with reservation as they want to keep good ideas for themselves and do better than their peers. Third, some teachers may also unconsciously convey a negative message to students regarding peer review activity. In my study, an EFL teacher had mentioned peer review as "peer correction" during the interview with me. If teacher understands this concept as "peer correction," we could imagine the influence students might get from their teacher. It is not difficult to predict that both teacher and students treat this review activity as error correction.

In the student interviews, when these students are asked to do peer-review in class, they most likely will not oppose it out of respect for the teacher. My workshop students stated that they might be only passively cooperative, or

tend to be generally uncritical in their feedback to their peers just to get through the task—which is similar to what many L1 students report. They will go through the process but may not offer any substantial or useful suggestions for improving their peer's work. In my workshop, I made effort to let students understand that we were learning to be real readers for real world written texts: we considered reader' expectations as writers, and also conducted reader-writer dialogues between students. The goal was to reinterpret the role of peer review and demonstrate how to do meaningful review among peers. Students felt the peer review in my workshop was much more effective than what they did in the class. Based on this experience, I would suggest that teachers need to help build appropriate understanding of the role of peer review, and provide specific guidelines to scaffold the process, so that students could follow the protocol to practice giving meaningful peer feedback. Gradually, students might learn to give helpful suggestions to their peers with more confidence.

Collaborative Writing

The workshop students also did not show much enthusiasm for the collaborative writing assignment they did during my workshop. This surprised me, given that Asian students typically are used to working in groups. I presumed that my workshop students might like collaborative writing, which provides an opportunity to be able to brainstorm ideas together, collaborate on drafts, and finalize their work with their collective wisdom. In addition, I thought collaborative writing might reduce the pressure of individually composing a draft. Moreover, I felt that the students could benefit from the multiple intelligences of their group.

As it turned out, however, students felt some inconvenience in composing within their group.

The chief problem, as indicated in their interviews and surveys, was a lack of confidence in the quality of their peers' work and a lack of coherence when combining different writing pieces. They did not trust their peers' work to be up to their own standards. This result did not seem compatible with traditional Chinese culture, which values cooperation and team work. Because China is a country of "collectivism," compared to the American focus on "individualism," I was surprised at this result. It seemed very natural to expect more collaborative work from these students but at least in this particular workshop, students did not enjoy collaborative drafting.

From the previous chapters, we understand that these workshop students had been introduced to some commonly used process writing activities in their regular classes, and they started to understand some of the concepts in process writing. However, that exposure did not mean that they fully understood the essence of process writing. For example, students might have been familiar with two common terms—*brainstorming* and *group discussion*—while some other concepts and terms were quite new to them, such as *voice in writing* and developing *critical thinking* in writing. As discussed in previous chapters, the majority of Chinese EFL students were still struggling with achieving writing fluency, and I hoped that a sense of voice would eventually emerge in their writing with the development of writing proficiency. In my workshop, students gradually realized how much they had *not* learned in their regular class: they had

only been introduced to some concepts. However, due to a superficial understanding and limited practice in their class, they did not truly benefit from particular writing activities. Therefore, in the whole workshop, certain activities were more welcome than other activates. And yet, overall, the workshop students accepted and integrated some aspects of a Western writing approach in their writing.

Writing Fluency vs. Writer's Voice

For the majority of EFL Chinese students, writing in English has never been an easy task. As for reading English texts, students feel that they can always make a guess if they cannot follow the materials. However, writing in English seems intimidating, as the students very often encounter all kinds of difficulties, which they cannot overcome by guessing. The situation definitely increase their apprehension toward writing. In addition to this, students do not get sufficient instruction on academic writing due to the focus on teaching other skills, such as reading, which makes L2 writing even more frustrating and painful.

The student participants joined my workshop with the same goal in mind—learn to write better and write well. Students had concerns about different aspects in writing, but they seemed to agree that achieving writing fluency is the ultimate goal for them. In America, by contrast, English writing research and practice have been fully developed, and researchers started exploring writing in broader contexts—looking at its social, cultural, political, and situational aspects. Aspects of writing such as voice and style are still being studied. It may be easier to encourage L1 students to develop their personal voice in writing; however, in

the EFL world, voice in writing is such a novel idea, which sounds so abstract to these students. Even now in the academic world, writing specialists are still defining what voice is, therefore, it is a difficult concept to understand and definitely an intangible skill to grasp. It is usually beyond the reach of less advanced students.

Some researchers consider voice in writing to be something akin to having an “accent” in writing. This accent usually can tell a reader who the writer is, just as we can guess the writer’s origin from by the accent in their speaking. They argue that the writer’s voice and identity should be allowed to remain in their writing. Elbow (2009) addressed the issue of voice in L2 writing in a session at the Conference on College Composition and Communication on March 13, 2009, arguing that requiring Chinese writers to write so as to sound like American writers is a form of anti-cultural awareness. There should not be a requirement for Chinese students to shift identities in order to “sound” like American students. As the workshop turned out, Chinese identities still exist in the students’ papers; the L1 reader in my study also mentioned this as a good quality of my students’ writing. The important issue that teachers should address, according to Elbow, is how to find a good balance between keeping the students’ Chinese identity and still developing their English writing proficiency. I hope that voice will emerge eventually in L2 texts among Chinese students as we seek ways to build L2 academic literacy.

With the formal introduction and the application of process writing in a Chinese educational context, conflicts between Chinese and Western learning

styles have intertwined, and hopefully they will evolve into an effective teaching approach that empowers Chinese students in their English writing.

Adapting and Tailoring Writing Courses for ESL/EFL Students

In chapter two, I discussed factors affecting ESL/EFL writing development based on current second language writing research. These factors are needs and objectives, motivation, authenticity, cultural and linguistic experiences, skill integration, reading as input for writing, and writing practice. These factors need to be taken into account when teachers design writing courses to develop ESL/EFL writing proficiency. Adaptations and considerations may need to be made and applied to the ESL/EFL writing instruction based on specific courses, writing contexts, and teaching settings.

Building Adequate Writing Proficiency

Students in ESL programs in colleges and universities in the U.S. discover that their survival in academic settings heavily depends on their ability to write well. Professors evaluate students based, in part, on their written work, and those students with strong writing skills usually achieve success and thus advance academically. Moreover, writing-focused courses such as College Writing and Research Writing are typically offered in the first and second years of many universities and colleges across the U.S., which shows how important writing is for academic success. In contrast, in China, writing in English has only recently received the necessary attention; now writing courses have been added to the college English curriculum as a requirement in most universities in the past 10 years. Therefore, writing research and practice in China are still young, and are

attempting to seek ways to better meet the needs of institutional requirements and practical applications in the society. My workshop students are among the large number of college students and adult learners who have been struggling with English writing and have the motivation to improve their writing, as they expressed in their interviews. Admittedly, they are luckier to have writing courses, at least, than students from my generation who did not get formal instruction on academic writing and who stumbled through the learning process. However, problems still exist, as the four EFL teachers stated in interviews. Again, the crucial question would be: Despite all kinds of problems in L2 writing, how can we help EFL students build their writing proficiency?

In chapter two, I reviewed the four components of L2 writing proficiency outlined by Canale and Swain (1980): 1) grammatical competence, 2) sociolinguistic competence, 3) discourse competence, 4) strategic competence. All four competences interact to produce good writing. I will discuss how these four components are at work at this EFL setting in China.

Interactions among Four Components of Writing Proficiency

Like many EFL students, my workshop participants felt inferior in their English writing: they are good at comprehending texts, know English grammar well, and have acquired a certain amount of vocabulary, although this does not assure they can use these words properly in different linguistic contexts. In other words, they may know the rules well, but do not “have an ear” for real language use. We teachers should not put the blame on EFL students—considering that it usually takes five to eight years for a child to become competent in a second

language under the best possible learning conditions based on second language acquisition theory.

As an EFL group at a Chinese university, my workshop participants had developed some degree of writing competence in their time learning English as a foreign language, an average of nine years. However, their previous English learning experience was heavily focused on reading comprehension, grammar, and syntax. As a result, students were able to develop grammatical competence through reading from textbooks, abridged books and limited authentic English materials. This grammatical competence seemed to give students a certain ability to compose English texts with some grammar knowledge and limited linguistic structures. However, the competence seemed to be far from enough; even a few strong writers in the group stated that they could not find the right words to explicitly express themselves from time to time. This was one of the reasons that they felt inferior in writing more than in any other English skill. Even through these students know the grammar rules well, they still do not have the native speaker's feel for the language use in real contexts. From a teacher's perspective, all four EFL teachers shared similar concerns about actual language use in students' writing.

Some aspects of discourse competence have been introduced to these students in their regular writing classes, such as the ways to organize different types of essays. However, students did not get systematic instruction on discourse patterns, and what they were taught were just pieces of information here and there. Thus, students did not form a clear understanding in their minds.

In addition, students did not have sufficient practice to truly get a feel for applying the different English discourse patterns. What students lack in their regular English writing classes are instruction in sociolinguistic competence and the application of strategic competence. Having done some research on the English curriculum at BISU before I conducted my writing workshop, I felt that I would need to raise awareness on these two crucial elements on writing proficiency. Therefore, I had sessions on writing for real purposes, audiences and contexts, as well as sessions for applying strategies to facilitate different writing stages in the process. It came as no surprise when one EFL teacher, Yan, pointed out a major writing problem among students: lack of knowledge of appropriate writing style and format. The statement confirmed my own presumption. Of course, my sessions seemed to draw students' attention to some fundamental issues that had been neglected in their regular classes.

From the interviews and other data sources, I could see that students welcomed the instruction that set out the principles for varying their writing according to such factors as topic, purpose and audience. However, being able to vary writing styles requires good control of various genres and knowledge of different discourse types, topics that definitely need more systematic and sufficient instruction for a sustained time period.

The fourth component of writing proficiency, strategic competence, was another focus in my workshop. Again, I learned from students' previous writing experience that their drafting process was rather laborious and painful. Therefore, I paid attention to providing effective strategies to assist every stage of their

writing process. Students agreed that those strategies helped them to stretch their competence to write more effectively: they learned to select strategies that best fit the particular texts they were composing at the brainstorming, drafting, composing, revising or editing stages. By applying these strategies, they became more capable of navigating their way to accomplish a writing task.

To summarize, writing proficiency cannot be fully developed without addressing these four components. In EFL teaching in China, grammatical competence has been over-emphasized, while the other three competences have been neglected to some extent. That is why students gave positive feedback toward their experiences in my workshop, and felt that these activities raised their awareness on writing and developing writing competence.

Concluding Remarks

Adapting writing classes for ESL/EFL students does not mean teachers should set lower requirements for those students, nor does it mean teachers should make course content and materials easier. Instead, it is very important for teachers to understand their students and value their cultural and literacy backgrounds; to sympathize and care about their students for both personal growth and academic development; and to anticipate and predict problems in their writing, so that teachers can provide help and support accordingly; thus teachers can adapt and adjust the writing courses to the students. Finally, teachers should always inspire and empower their students to achieve academic excellence and become independent writers in their continued life-long learning.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In chapters four and five, I presented detailed data that show the results of this empirical study. In chapter six, I offered discussion of these results, and related them back to the original research questions for the study. In this chapter, I look at this study holistically to draw conclusions and provide implications for pedagogical practice and future research.

Conclusions

Overall, students' attitudes show that their likes and dislikes for workshop writing activities and strategies have some similarities with those of L1 students, as I have observed in mainstream L1 composition classes at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The 16 Chinese EFL students in the workshop most welcomed those writing activities which prompt original thinking, broaden and develop ideas, and provide constructive feedback through interactions with peers, the teacher, and an L1 reader.

Students' attitudes also show a trend of increasing acceptance of peer reviewing and collaborative writing. Although the majority of students reported that they did not have meaningful peer review activities in their regular classes due to various reasons, students expressed their excitement at having the opportunity to experience a real peer review session following the guidelines I provided in the workshop. Although one peer-review session is far from enough to provide sufficient practice for students, my workshop did provide students clear ideas of what to do and how to do it in the session. As many writing

researchers have pointed out, both L1 and L2 student writers have a certain reluctance to do peer review activities in the class for different reasons, for example, perceived ineffectiveness of peer review or superficial peer feedback. In addition to these factors, lack of adequate language competence is also a factor which adversely undermines effective peer review among the majority of Chinese EFL students, as students have difficulties identifying the errors in the papers. On the other hand, strong writers seemed more willing to do peer review and will actually be able to give some useful comments on their peers' paper. This situation was seen in my workshop students: a few good students reported that they had already formed a group to get ready to do peer review regularly in their future. They stated peer review is very helpful for revising their papers.

Moreover, students especially welcomed learning practical writing strategies to facilitate their own writing processes. My goal was to provide students with necessary skills and stratagems to facilitate their writing, so that they could apply effective strategies to help themselves accomplish the writing tasks. The long term goal is to train students to become autonomous learners and independent writers in their life-long learning. As we can see from the study results, students wanted to learn practical strategies to help them when they are out of class without the help from teacher and their peers.

Teachers' perceptions indicate that some aspects of Western composition pedagogy are beneficial to EFL writers in China if applied appropriately in the class. Other factors, however, should also be addressed in the EFL writing classroom: 1) adjusting students' attitudes toward English writing, 2) developing

language proficiency, appropriate contextual knowledge, and critical thinking, and 3) encouraging problem-solving skills and teaching effective learning strategies to help students become autonomous learners and independent writers in the lifelong continued learning.

Implications for Current EFL Writing Practice

The study confirms that some aspects of contemporary Western writing pedagogy can be beneficial to intermediate-level Chinese EFL writers. Obstacles exist, however. The large class sizes adversely affect teacher conferencing, peer review, multiple drafting and teacher feedback. All require a large investment of time. In addition, it might take some time to implement a process pedagogy due to the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, for instance, conflicts between linear thinking and critical thinking. Nevertheless, if advantages outweigh disadvantages in college ELT reform, it is worth trying some writing approaches even with cultural adaptations and linguistic and contextual considerations according to the EFL teaching/learning contexts.

Adjusting Students' Attitudes toward English Writing

Motivation plays an important role in building a positive attitude toward English writing. The workshop results showed that when students were intensely involved in their writing, they could make rapid progress toward more effective expression. Therefore, teachers should encourage student involvement and support students' interest. Activities can be included in the university that might help students feel connected and motivated.

The English department could invite guest speakers, perhaps popular

authors, to give talks on writing in general and their own writing experiences in particular; even discussing writing in Chinese or Chinese author and students could be valuable. This would allow students to understand that learning to write is not easy and that students need long-term effort for their writing skills to become proficient. It is often the case that popular literary figures have more impact on young people. If they can motivate students, students tend to admire them and perhaps develop real interests in writing in English and make more efforts in learning to write better. The goal, of course, is to explore the possibility of extending writing outside of the classroom. Other invited guests could be visiting teachers and scholars, business people, and other native English speakers who could meet with EFL students. It is common in some university programs in the U.S. for a visiting writer to come for a semester or a year to work with poetry or fiction writing students one-on-one or in small groups or workshops. Similar exchanges could be arranged in an EFL context, such as what I did in my workshop. I tried to simulate this opportunity by inviting an L1 reader to exchange written communication with my workshop students.

In addition, other school activities could help develop students' interests in English, such as establishing English clubs. In such clubs, students could read and write following their own interests. For example, they could read romance, horror and sci-fi novels, watch TV shows and the books from which they have been made, or watch English movies with subtitles, activities and texts not usually offered in their regular classes. These activities could supplement academic English learning at school, which would facilitate students' learning in

more authentic language contexts. I believe the goal of learning a foreign language is not limited to developing proficient language competence, but also includes understanding the target culture, and the life and people in that culture. Experiencing, as closely as possible, an authentic context for that language is the best way to introduce these students to that target language's world.

Providing Support for Writing Competence Development

The study results showed that building EFL writing competence needs to address linguistic aspects and contextual knowledge in writing. In an EFL context like China, teaching writing should include a few essential elements: developing language proficiency, appropriate contextual knowledge, and critical thinking.

Both teachers and students in my study were aware of the effect of the language barrier in composing English texts. In fact, having adequate language proficiency is the basis of effective self-expression. Therefore, it is necessary to build language competence in and out of the class. Teachers should encourage students to read English-language books, magazines, and online materials extensively. Such reading of authentic English texts can provide multiple language contexts to reinforce language learning in meaningful contexts. Also, by reading a lot, students will become familiar with different discourse features in various genres, which will be very helpful to building their contextual knowledge in writing. Another element is critical thinking, which needs to be addressed in the college-level English classes. New generation of Chinese students are taking charge of their learning, and they could be independent writers with critical thinking abilities if they are encouraged to do so and are given instruction.

Considering Realistic Teaching Context

It is very important to get students engaged in classroom activities in any teaching context, especially for those students who are learning not in their native language but in a foreign language. Therefore, having a small class size works better in the learning context, as students can fully participate in the class activity and can seek help from the teacher when needed. In countries where EFL is taught, it is more crucial to give students adequate exposure to English and appropriate amount of time to practice in and out of class. However, in most cases in Chinese universities, English is taught in large classes—where all kinds of problems occur, as I have described in previous chapters.

If we cannot make classes smaller, there might be some alternative ways of helping students improve their English writing. For instance, EFL teachers or well-trained writing instructors could conduct writing workshops outside of the regular curriculum, similar to what I did in this study. Such workshops can teach students effective writing strategies and give students opportunities to practice different types of writing. Moreover, a writing lab, now common on most campuses in American colleges and universities, could also be established at Chinese universities to provide assistance to students. Since students still regard teachers as the authorities, it would be best to have a few faculty members—including native English speakers, if available—take turns holding one-on-one writing conferences at the writing lab. This might provide motivation to write better and attract more students to the writing lab.

If large class sizes affect teacher conferencing, peer review, and teacher

feedback, students can form their own writing support group, build a peer review academic community and invite available L1 readers to join the online discourse community. Moreover, sufficient time should be allowed to apply a process-oriented approach in mainstream English classes.

Once students become more comfortable with these one-on-one tutorial sessions, peer-tutoring groups could be set up to let students gradually get used to giving meaningful peer review. Since EFL students seem to trust that good students are also good writers, we could build an interactive writing community on campus. Let English majors help non-English majors, experienced writers help inexperienced writers, and so on. For ESL students in U.S. schools, getting L1 reader feedback is a lot easier: students can ask for a native English speaker as their tutor when they sign up for a tutoring session at the campus writing lab. However, the case might be difficult for EFL students who are studying outside the U.S. One possible alternative might be to set up a system for online peer-tutoring or some kind of pen-pal program with appropriate native English speakers in academic settings, or an alternative project—a similar kind of exchange could be set up such as what I arranged for my workshop students and an L1 reader.

Making Cultural Adaptations

Increasing Student Acceptance of Peer Review

As stated in chapter two, Chinese education originated from traditional schools following the principles of Confucian thinking which encourages group harmony and collectivism in social behaviors. Chinese students have been

trained to be friendly to peers, and always be ready to do team work for the good of a whole group since they first enrolled in elementary school. Therefore, it is quite challenging for them to engage in critical peer review activity. Hence, students tend to be reluctant to do the work, or they just give neutral or superficial comments. As English writing instructors try to apply some Western composition approaches to the English classes in China, teachers need to make some cultural adaptations to serve the local learning context. For example, before asking students to do peer review in class, teachers need to first make students feel comfortable about giving personal comments on a paper. This could be done by having students practice commenting on a writing sample from an unknown author; students could give objective opinions on ways to improve the piece. A typical writing sample from a former student, presented anonymously, may be more useful for this purpose than a sample from a professional writer. Once they feel confident to share their comments, the teacher can guide them to look at their peer's paper with an objective lens. It will take some time to train students to become comfortable and competent to do peer review activity; however, students might feel empowered in the writing process once they learn how to improve their paper through meaningful interaction with peers.

Increasing Student Acceptance of Collaborative Learning

EFL students need practical training to conduct meaningful collaboration with peers. Improving language competence is among the crucial elements for long-term writing proficiency. Teachers should provide guidance to help students

build on their linguistic repertories in and out of the class. Once students have adequate language competence, they will feel more confident to contribute their portion of work to the group project. As students feel more capable of getting involved in the collaborative work, they will be more willing to participate in the group work. Instead of asking students to each write a portion of a group paper, teachers could assign a group project in which students collaborate, perhaps in brainstorming or gathering data and sharing research, but write individual papers. Therefore, students could have some control over their individual work but still benefit from collaborative learning. Moreover, teachers should encourage students to interact and collaborate with others outside of the class as well, as learning is not limited to the classroom—learning can happen anytime with meaningful interaction with peers, teachers and the academic community.

Implications for Future Research

Individualized Learning and Collaborative Learning

My study results have shown that students welcomed learning practical writing strategies and problem-solving skills to help them overcome writing difficulty and facilitate their writing process. In fact, the new wave of college ELT reform underway in China also seems to echo this result. Even the National English education syllabus released by Chinese Ministry of Education in 2004 states the importance of teaching learning strategies: College English education, besides teaching language knowledge and skills, also needs to emphasize learning strategies such as individualized learning, collaborative learning and hyper-textual learning.

Since my research focus was on student attitude and teacher perception toward a process-oriented writing approach as a whole, I did not do in-depth analysis on the aspects of individual learning and collaborative learning activities in my workshop. This part of study could be addressed in future research.

In the majority of EFL contexts, students have very limited exposure to authentic English; they often interact only with limited learning materials designed for EFL learners, which are not always helpful to language learning. The best way to learn a foreign language, experts says, is to immerse oneself into an authentic language context; thus, teachers should encourage students to take every opportunity to learn on their own. As second language acquisition theory points out, there are individual differences among L2 learners. Students are different in learning styles with regard to multiple intelligences and individual preference. Teachers should recognize these differences and try to scaffold individualized learning, which focuses on developing students' strength and talent through various communication modes. On the other hand, students need to acquire the necessary learning skills—inquiring, seeking answers, problem-solving skills—to learn on their own. Therefore, teachers should provide the necessary assistance in training students to become autonomous learners and independent writers.

If students do not feel motivated to learn on their own, study groups could be formed among students to help them keep on track with the subject they are learning. Some students need to have constant motivation to advance in their studies; learning in a group setting could helpful for them. Through group

collaboration, strong writers could help other students with both the content and language in the writing process.

Hyper-Textual Learning

In today's China, with rapid economic growth and the frequent educational and cultural exchanges between China and Western countries, learning English has become a dominant trend among students, adult learners, and full-time office workers. However, not everyone could have the time to receive formal English instruction, so a lot of English learners have to seek different ways to learn English. Some of them turn to the Internet, which provides many learning resources online. Adult learners could have easy access to English materials once they have an Internet connection.

In addition to online resources, other types of interactive learning are gaining popularity among English learners. These include various multimedia learning software, which could provide multiple language contexts to reinforce language skills through intensive listening, speaking, reading, and writing practice at the convenience of the learners. I observed an interactive oral communication session at a private language training school in the central business district of Beijing, where my college friend is the school principal. According to her, a large number of "white collar" office staff are learning English communication skills through these online courses on weekends. It seems that hyper-textual learning is becoming a trend among adult learners. Moreover, hyper-textual learning is also permeating college campuses, where students are more open-minded and exposed to all kinds of information and familiar with

modern technology. Teachers could encourage students to make use of online resources, and multimedia course materials to improve language ability. The ultimate goal is to engage students in active, interactive, and autonomous learning process in their life-long continued learning.

Future research in EFL writing could address hyper-textual learning in an authentic interactive context. It would be interesting to find out how EFL students think of hyper-textual learning compared with Chinese traditional learning. Which would students choose—memorizing classic poems or interacting with a native English speaker for real life communication?

Implications for Current Teaching Practice in the U.S.

Although this study was set in China and focused on the teaching of English writing in a Chinese university, these results also can be useful for understanding the teaching of writing to ESL students in U.S. schools. There are some similarities between EFL writing behavior and ESL writing patterns with regard to the writing process, knowledge of writing, and the application of writing strategies. Because my workshop study aimed to provide data that would allow writing teachers to rethink the nature of L2 writing, the results of this study showed a collective L2 writing behavior in an EFL setting, which I believe has implications for the current practice in ESL composition classes and more diverse composition classes at all levels to a broad audience in the U.S.— ESL students, international students, and Generation 1.5 students who attend institutions of higher education across the United States.

Teaching Writing to ESL and International Students

ESL writers are writers for whom English is their second (or third or fourth, etc.) language. This means that ESL writers are not necessarily international students, though they do make up the majority of the students who are called “L2 writers.” International or EFL students, those who have studied English through formal instruction in their home countries before enrolling in academic institutions in America, might know the grammar rules of the language quite well yet do not have an ear for actual practices like ESL students do.

Some common problems exist in L2 writing texts among the majority of ESL/EFL students. Both struggle with rhetorical organization, word choice, grammar and usage, as well as documentation and citation styles. One of the biggest problems is the rhetorical organization of a written piece. Studies in contrastive rhetoric show that English writing is direct when approaching a topic, while “oriental” writing is circular and indirect. Therefore, students have great difficulty trying to adjust their ways of organizing their essays to meet the criteria for American academia. To help these students become familiar with rhetorical organization, providing a variety of writing models with different rhetorical styles and explicit instructions would be helpful when teaching ESL writing. ESL students also share problems in grammar and usage: relative clauses, word order at the global level; local errors such as missing articles, wrong prepositions, or using literally translated words which sound awkward to native speakers. Of course, mastery of articles is a high-level skill that is acquired in the later stages of language learning, and one effective way to help students is to deal with these

errors in the context of a paper with explicit instruction. In the long run, teachers should encourage ESL students to expose themselves to authentic language contexts as much as possible through a variety of communication modes.

Another issue that needs to be addressed in ESL writing is documenting sources in the paper. My workshop students also lacked knowledge of appropriate documentation. Students from some Asian countries, including China, may have very little formal instruction on citing sources, thus, ESL/EFL students sometimes tend to use borrowed sources in their paper without citing them. They are often unaware that doing so is improper. For this problem, teachers should raise their awareness of documentation and provide explicit instruction on how to document the sources in appropriate styles.

To summarize, ESL and international students in American institutions of higher education share some problems in their English writing. They also have some specific needs related to their writing in English. Therefore, ESL writing teachers should identify students' needs and provide relevant support and instruction. In addition to building language competence, explicit instruction, extensive writing practices with sufficient feedback, and effective learning strategies are also needed to help students develop academic literacy and promote critical literacy to be successful in college and in their professional careers beyond.

Teaching Writing to Generation 1.5 Students

There is an increasing number of ESL learners in the U.S.: from adult immigrants with limited English proficiency to the children of immigrants who are

referred to as “Generation 1.5,” as well as international students who came to the U.S. to earn a degree or participate in exchange programs. They have something in common in terms of language ability, cultural and linguistic heritage. However, each still has unique characteristics and specific needs regarding learning English. Teachers should identify these diverse needs and provide help and support as needed.

According to Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999), Generation 1.5 students are different from traditional ESL students who have had limited exposure to English and to U.S. education. They are also different from international students who have learned English formally, and are literate in their native language. Generation 1.5 students, however, have specific learning needs different from those of ESL and international students. They are familiar with U.S. culture and schooling, but usually have limited or no literacy in their first language. They may be very competent in everyday social interactions, however, their writing still demonstrates some characteristics of second language writers, as academic writing often requires competence in various linguistic structures and familiarity with rhetorical styles. Usually, the writing problems associated with Generation 1.5 learners are not as easily identifiable as those of ESL students; rather, they more typically resemble the writing problems of some native speakers who are first generation college students or who did not grow up in families that read a lot. Therefore, Generation 1.5 students still need formal instruction when it comes to college writing, and a few elements should be taken into account, such as explore students’ prior literacy experiences, build their academic literacy, develop

their critical literacy, identify and meet their diverse needs.

As I observed, students' prior literacy experiences have some effects on students' attitudes toward their current English writing: good literacy experiences led to positive attitudes and high motivation. Therefore, understanding students' prior literacy experiences would provide a better idea of your students, their identity and the way they see writing and writing classes. A large number of ESL students have received school education in both their home country and in the U.S., so they still have some EFL features in their ways of thinking. For example, Generation 1.5 students of Asian origin may still not be used to the typical student-centered class in American schools, and teachers may need to encourage and engage them in critical reading and writing activity to develop critical literacy. These students still need to build a linguistic repertoire and learn a variety of rhetorical styles so that their academic literacy could be built through formal instruction. Lastly, Generation 1.5 students also have individual diverse needs, depending on their prior literacy experience and cultural heritage. Therefore, teachers should identify and try to meet students' individual needs. For example, Thonus (2003) recommends that writing instruction for Generation 1.5 students should emphasize learning *how* to write rather than *what* to write.

Limitations of the Study

The biggest challenge I faced in my workshop was that students dropped out after the first session, which made the number of participants smaller than my initial expectation. The students who remained in the workshop were among the most highly motivated and talented advanced students, attending a prestigious,

highly selective university which specialized in foreign-language study. The university is also located the capital of China, Beijing, which houses several prestigious universities in different disciplines attended by the most talented students from all over the country. Therefore, the workshop students were not “typical” EFL learners. Perhaps the more typical students were those who chose not to continue with the workshop, or who never volunteered for the workshop in the first place. This could happen with any workshop which is not part of their regular course requirements. However, these factors do need to be kept in mind as potential limitations for studies such as this one.

Generally, one needs to take into account that this study has certain features in the research design:

- The study is tightly embedded in the research setting and its unique cultural and educational contexts.
- The participants were EFL third-year English majors, who were self-selected and highly motivated students.
- The study is a collective case study, which involved 16 students in the whole course.

Given these limitations, the interpretations and findings cannot be generalized to other research contexts. The experiences and attitudes of these students might be different from those of non-English majors, students at other institutions, or other EFL cultural groups, or other ESL students. In particular, since the participants in this study were self-selected, and thus tended to be highly motivated, their experiences and attitudes might be influenced by their

existing competence in accomplishing writing tasks and their desire to improve their writing skills. The findings might not apply to less motivated students. This study was a collective case study involving 16 participants. The results, therefore, might be influenced by such factors as individual differences in students' personalities, learning styles, and their writing abilities. Cultural influence and learning environment might be two other factors to be considered in any future research.

The study could not provide information that was not explicitly given in the data collected or the proposed means of analysis. For instance, I am fully aware that writing is a long-term skill, and understand that it is difficult to significantly improve in a relatively short time. Thus, the research focus was not to determine whether any improvements in students' writing could be measured but, rather, to investigate students' attitudes toward this new writing experience. The study did not attempt to use rigorous methods of writing assessment in analyzing the students' writings and did not provide definitive information on the improvement that students may have shown in their writing, beyond the qualitative description of any changes that could be observed.

In addition, the study depended heavily on the self-expression of student attitudes and opinions. However, as we know from life experience, people's attitudes may have little to do with their actual behaviors. In other words, people's attitudes sometimes are different from their actions. In my workshop study, I explored students' attitudes toward a Western style pedagogy and students expressed their personal opinions on different aspects of it. However, no matter

what their attitudes were, positive or negative, their attitudes seemed to have little correlation to their writing performance. That is to say, positive attitudes did not guarantee a large degree of writing improvement; on the other hand, negative attitudes did not result in no improvement in post-revision texts either. These do not necessarily spell themselves out in improved writing effectiveness. Though I tried to foresee this objection in looking at student writing samples, I did not establish systematic links between student attitudes and writing improvement. Some students made substantial improvement on their final drafts, which might be the results of writing, rewriting, and revising on a certain piece of writing. The one thing that could be said is that if students' attitudes suggested they were motivated to write and rewrite, and they applied some strategies to improve their writing in this process, then the positive attitudes could motivate them to seek ways to improve their writing, thus their writing may actually improve to some extent.

Reflections on the Writing Workshop

This dissertation project came from my quest to understand how EFL teachers might more effectively teach English writing in the EFL/ESL contexts. My inquiry was based on my personal experience in learning English as a foreign language in China. Looking back to my learning experience, fortunately, I did not have great difficulty in learning English in my secondary education. As a matter of fact, I enjoyed learning English and I was very proud of my good performance on my English tests when I was in middle school and high school. All of these positive learning experiences finally led me to my dream: enrollment in a

prestigious university specialized in foreign language education. Upon my enrollment in Beijing International Studies University, I received abundant intensive training in English listening, speaking, reading, and bilingual translation, but not much formal training in English writing due to the pedagogical focus at that time, which was more focused on comprehending received information than on producing written texts in English. I learned to write by reading and analyzing English writing samples from EFL text books, by imitating English prose from limited authentic English materials, by reading aloud in the mornings to get the sense of language flow, by reciting good essays to build up my language repertoire. This is how I learned to develop my English writing ability in the mid-1990s. I was one of those who managed to have joyful learning experiences; however, some of my peers seemed to have a lot of problems in their English learning. When I became an English lecturer at my home university, BISU, I was assigned to teach mainstream basic English classes: reading, listening and speaking; there were very few writing classes available to students. Therefore, I observed that hundreds of students suffered frustrating learning processes regarding English writing. Gradually, I became concerned about the problem and have always wanted to find effective ways to help students overcome their learning difficulties, to provide scaffolding to help them achieve fluency in their English writing.

My experience as a doctoral student in America has helped me develop my own academic writing into more professional, informative and research-oriented scholarly work. I attributed this improvement to the Western composition

pedagogy I was exposed to in the U.S. It was in the frequent writing process experiences that I grew stronger and stronger in my scholarly writing. Therefore, I have been eager to help other Chinese students achieve writing competency, which eventually turned out to be my dissertation work.

Looking back to the writing workshop that I conducted in China, I have gained some valuable insights from this experience. Before I went back to conduct the research, I continued to assume that Chinese students still have extensive English classes in reading, listening and even speaking but lack much formal writing instruction from regular academic writing classes. Thus, I was eager to introduce some aspects of contemporary Western composition pedagogy to the students at my home university. This idea was based on the assumption that they did not receive formal writing instruction. I believed they had not been introduced to the key concepts of process-writing as I had been. Things turned out a little differently from what I expected: the English department at BISU started offering regular writing classes to the second-year students starting in 1997, then decided to extend the writing classes to third-year students starting in 2005. Moreover, students had been introduced to some of the concepts and a few classroom activities from their composition textbooks and from their teachers who had been influenced by the process-oriented writing pedagogy originating in the Western composition approach. The reality I discovered upon my return to BISU did not hinder my plan to conduct the writing workshop, but it did actually have some influence on student attitude toward my workshop and writing activities in it.

As part of the present study, I hope to have helped to identify the ways in which the positive features of contemporary Western composition pedagogy can be effectively adopted in the Chinese cultural context. At the same time, some factors about the Chinese educational context might need to be taken into consideration in the study, such as traditional Chinese philosophy, for example, Confucianism and its influence in education, the role of teachers and students, and the traditional classroom participation framework. I hope that this dissertation project can effectively incorporate the principles of a process-oriented approach, with some aspects of Chinese writing heritage added, into the Chinese educational scene. I hope that EFL students could ultimately benefit from the application of some aspects of the Western composition approach and gradually develop competence in their English writing.

Since finishing the writing workshop, I have been able to stay in contact with some of the student participants after their B.A. graduation. Quite a few of them have gone on to graduate schools in Beijing, continuing to write academic papers in English. Two of them enrolled in graduate schools in the U.S., learning to write scholarly papers to meet the American academic requirements in their institutions. A few other students started their work at business companies, travel agencies, and other public service offices, still using their English skills to fulfill work duties. I wish them all well. I also hope what I have taught them in the workshop could somehow help them to be better writers in English, the strategies I have taught could help them to overcome difficulties in their writing, so that they can keep on writing in English along their individual life journey.

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APPENDIX A

ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AT BISU

The undergraduate English Curriculum in the English Department at Beijing International Studies University consists of the following courses:

	Freshman Courses	Sophomore Courses	Junior Courses	Senior Courses
Comprehensive English Course	6 hrs/wk	6 hrs/wk	4 hrs/wk	
Listening Comprehension	2 hrs/wk	2 hrs/wk		
English Speaking	2 hrs/wk	2 hrs/wk		
Literature and Culture	2 hrs/wk	2 hrs/wk	2 hrs/wk	2 hrs/wk
College Writing		2 hrs/wk	2 hrs/wk	
Oral Interpretation			2 hrs/wk	
Written Translation I			2 hrs/wk	
Written Translation II				2 hrs/wk
English Newspaper Reading				2 hrs/wk
Literary Style Study				2 hrs/wk

APPENDIX B

WRITING WORKSHOP PLAN

Workshop Themes and Activities by Session

Session One

Theme: Getting to know students and helping students get used to real communication

The aim of this workshop is to provide an opportunity to write extensively to the teacher as participator in real communication, and draw students' attention to the audience and purpose of their writing. This workshop is the starting point of an exploration of writing for real communication with audience and purpose in mind.

Mini-lesson:

(1) Cognitive Process Theory of Writing (Flower and Hayes, 1981).

(2) Writing technique 1. Fighting writer's block- freewriting/ automatic writing

(3) Introduce the concept of "idea generation" and then two types of "concept map/ mind map"—spider map and flow chart

(4) Explain the concept of "literacy": more than reading and writing, connected with language use in various modes (film, TV show, music, lyrics etc.) All are literacy experiences. We understand literacy experience as the language involved in it.

Activity: Using spider map/flow chart to brainstorm personal L1 and L2 literacy development in the workshop.

Writing prompts: What literacy experiences have helped make you who you are today? What literacy experiences have had significant influence on you?

Writing assignment: Write a literacy autobiography and share it in the next workshop.

Session Two

Theme: Raising awareness about writing (I)—audience and writing purpose

Focus: Analyzing writing purpose and identifying target audience.

Mini-lesson: Before writing, the skilled writer in real life considers two important questions: (1) What is the purpose of this piece of writing?

(2) Who am I writing this for?

Task: Guide students how to start a writing task, and have students learn to analyze their writing purpose and identify the target audience at the beginning of the writing process.

The teacher can have them work in groups and consider their understanding of writing purposes and audiences according to different writing tasks.

Give writing tasks on the board:

a. A postcard to the family
b. A memo to the teacher requesting for a leave
c. A letter of complaint to a manufacturer
d. An academic paper for publication in a Journal

(Spontaneous writing ---------- planned writing).

Activity: Changing styles for different audiences and purposes.

The teacher will provide an article of Beijing's host of 2008 Olympic Games and some writing prompts for students, and ask them to choose to write on this topic from two alternatives:

(1) An essay on the topic for the “Readers’ Opinions” column in *The New York Times.*

(2) A letter to an American friend who is interested in visiting Beijing in the near future, and also interested in knowing the updates in Beijing regarding the 2008 Olympic Games.

Session Three

Theme: Identifying different types of writing tasks

Mini-lesson: Essay types and their characteristics

Here are the Writing tasks I use to get them figure out the different essay types.

(1) Describing certain group of people, e.g.: vegetarians, bookworms.

(The descriptive essay: dominant impressions. A good description has two strong elements: a dominant impression and appropriate supporting details.)

(2) Write about someone’s life story, e.g.: Chairman Mao’s life, or my grandmother’s life.

(The narrative essay: description with narrative.)

(3) Write an essay on the concept of “happiness”.

(The definition essay: literal and extended meaning.)

(4) Write an essay on the types of people’s professions, e.g.: doctor, lawyer, teacher, businessman, office clerk, etc. And also write on the types of personalities, e.g.: extroversion and introversion, extrovert and introvert.

(The classification essay: classify people, things into different categories.)

(5) Write about a variety of eating customs from different regions, e.g.: Asia, North-America, and Europe.

(The comparison-and-contrast essay: comparing and contrasting for similarities and differences.)

(6) Write about China's industrial development and modernization and the results of the increase of water and air pollution.

(The cause-and-effect essay: state reasons and outcomes)

(7) Writing an argument on the use of animals for entertainment or as pets.

(The argument essay: facts and opinions, using specific evidence and examples to support opinions).

Mini-lesson: Introduce two other kinds of graphic organizers to organize ideas: Network Tree and Fishbone Map.

Network Tree: Used to show causal information, a hierarchy or branching procedures.

Fishbone Map: Used to show casual interaction of a complex event or complex phenomenon.

After this mini-lesson, I will ask students to form a few groups, brainstorm and write on one of the following tasks.

(1) Compare and contrast the way food is served and eaten in China with food customs in the United States.

(2) The effects English (English/American music, movies, books, sports, food, culture, etc.) has had on your language and identity.

(3) Writing an argument on the use of Internet.

Wrap up: Ask students to hand in their 5 possible themes/topic areas which they have great interest in and would like to know more about. Ask them to list those

themes in an order according to the degree of interest and its importance to them.

Session Four

Theme: Considering a topic from different perspectives

Introduction

1. Provide a topic (the Internet) and writing prompts: what sort of people use the Internet? What they use it for? And what they feel its values are. Elicit uses and values from the class.

2. Ask them list all the possible aspects they might use in planning for the paper. Then, elicit students' ideas and let them write down major aspects on the board. Then, I will call their attention to figure out the associations among these possible elements.

3. The teacher calls their attention on the cubing framework.

Mini Lesson: Introducing cubing framework to the students.

Cubing Worksheet

1. Describing: Look closely at the topic and describe what you see.
2. Comparing: What is this topic similar to and what is it different from?
3. Analyzing: Analyze the topic in more detail. What is it made up of? What are its parts or elements?
4. Associating: What do you associate with this topic? What does it remind you of?
5. Arguing: How can you argue for it? And against it?
6. Applying: What can you do with it? How can it be used?

(Source: Hedge, T. *Writing*, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press 2005)

This technique provides opportunities to write a topic from multiple perspectives, to broaden students' ways of thinking, to project a topic with different stances and attitudes.

4. Ask students to work in small groups to go through the six points on the worksheet and interpret them in relation to the following topics.

Topic 1. TV and mass media

Topic 2. Industrial/economical development and pollution

5. Hold a feedback session with the class, eliciting ideas and put them on the board. Students will then have gathered sufficient ideas to write an essay on their chosen topic.

Activity 2: Collaborative writing in a group.

1. After brainstorming with cubing worksheet, students will have all relevant ideas from six different perspectives. The teacher can give examples how to list and categorize ideas, select and organize them into a writing plan.

2. Then, explain to students that they are going to write collaboratively on their chosen topic: planning together, writing a section, checking each other's drafts, and finally putting the sections together. Each student will write one or two sections, and as they draft their sections, they should also read their peers' work and help with revisions.

Writing assignment: Students will work on their writing sections, revise them and develop them into a complete group paper and turn it in to the teacher at the next session.

Wrap up: Summarize cubing technique, and ask students to use cubing

framework to consider their 5 possible themes over the week, and list their ideas under each perspective and bring them to the next workshop.

Session Five

Theme: Developing an argument

Mini-lesson: Summarizing different ways of developing an argument

1. Logos—persuading through reasoning

2. Ethos—persuading through credibility

3. Pathos—persuading with emotion

These are ten ways of developing an argument which are commonly used in writing.

1. Cause-effect	2. Quotes from authority
3. Reduction to absurdity	4. Using signs
5. Using statistics	6. Induction
7. Common sense	8. Deduction
9. Analogy	10. Definition

After I briefly summarize the ways of illustrating/supporting the ideas/points, I will give them a worksheet to practice illustrating ideas/points in different ways. The purpose is to raise their awareness of using supporting details to illustrate their points effectively.

Worksheet 5.1 Topic: Childhood is the best time of your life.

Possible statements:

1. This statement has never been true for all children.

2. Children in poor countries rarely have easy childhoods.

3. Even in wealthy countries children have to cope with pressures.

4. Child abuse is a widespread problem.

Show students how they can turn the statements into a series of arguments by following the pattern as shown below:

Topic	Children in poor countries rarely have easy childhoods.
Point	In many parts of the world, children are ill or starving because of poor living conditions, drought, famine, unclean water, or a poor national economy.
Evidence	For example, in developing countries children often become malnourished after a bout of gastroenteritis, caused by impure food and water. The resulting malnutrition weakens the body's defenses against other diseases such as measles, which can cause long-lasting health problems.

Ask students in pairs to turn each statement into a more detailed argument, construct paragraphs for each statement in this way. They should make the statement clear, elaborate it into a point, and provide evidence to back it up. When they have finished, students can exchange their paragraphs for comment. I will invite them to read their paragraphs.

1. Peer-review: They are supposed to bring the group paper (TV and Mass media or Industrial development and pollution) to the workshop, so I plan to ask them exchange their papers for peer review. Ask them to underline the "general, broad and abstract" statements which need to be illustrated in more details, and give feedback to peers.

2. Brainstorming their chosen topics: Each of them has 5 possible topics, and we will try to get some ideas generated through class discussion.

Homework: revise the group paper and provide specific supporting details to their statements in the paper, and turn it in next time.

Session Six

Theme: Constructing great paragraphs

Review of some key points of developing an argument. Last session, I give brief introduction of ten popular ways of developing an argument. In this session, I will use an issue from GRE writing topics and intend to raise their awareness of using different forms of evidence to support their points.

Writing Techniques and Application

- Issue: “We can usually learn much more from people whose views we share than from people whose views contradict our own; disagreement can cause stress and inhibit learning.”
- Ways of developing arguments: Cause-Effect/Causal Chain, Compare-Contrast/Point by Point.
- Application: brainstorming and creating topic sentences/statements—elaborating statements into detailed arguments—providing evidence to back them up—great paragraphs.

A. Share similar views—form supportive groups—carry on shared views—feel comfortable to learn from the supportive groups—promote learning.

Have different views—have argument with others—cause stress and tension—reluctant to learn—inhibit learning;

B. Get praise from others—approve one’s capability—boost self-confidence—feel motivated to learn more—enhance learning.

Encounter disagreement—get frustrated—have pessimistic attitude—lose interest/motivation to learn—inhibit learning.

Session Seven

Theme: Finding your voice in writing

1. The teacher will distribute two short readings to students and give them five minutes to read. Then, I will ask them about their first impression of these two readings, then I will introduce today's theme "voice in writing."

2. Mini-lesson: "finding my voice" (with readings and key concept explanation)

3. Distribute Voice worksheet and work on the questions.

4. Find the voice in their group paper.

5. Generating more ideas of their chosen topics and ask them to compose a writing plan.

Writing assignment: Ask students to develop their thesis statements and organizing general and supporting statements on their chosen topics and write a plan to bring to the next session. As they write their plans, students need to spend time considering the following elements: (1) writing purpose and target audience, (2) appropriate writing style and voice, (3) writer's stance/attitude, (4) thesis statement and main ideas, (5) relevant information about the topic, (6) questions they have on topic. Make a plan based on these aspects.

Session Eight

Theme: Raising awareness about writing (II)—Reader's expectation

Activity 1: Stating writer's stance, attitude toward the topics they choose. Then students write about what comes in mind first on their chosen topics, and students exchange writing and tell what they can see about the writer's stance in the writing. Students work in groups with real audience and see if they make their

purposes and stances understood by their audience.

Activity 2: Imagining writer-reader dialogues.

This activity is to help students write relevant content by imagining the reader's questions. Ask student writers to visualize their reader and imagine the questions that reader might ask about the specific topics. Guide students to work out a list of possible questions and exchange their ideas in groups, and see what other questions might come up from their peers. In this way, it is hoped that all the relevant content is included and ordered in a sensible manner.

Activity 3: Opening, Concluding and Transitions in the text

Session Nine

Theme: Teacher Conferencing and Peer Reviewing

At this session, I hold teacher-student conferences (one-on-one) with all 16 students. At the same time, I assign other students to do peer reviewing on their paper. Then, I ask students to talk to the writer and explain what they think about the paper.

Session Ten

Theme: Documentation in Writing

1. I introduce APA style of documentation in brief, then I distribute their papers with L1 reader's feedback.
2. I show them a sample of "workshop book" and suggest that we make a "class book" collecting all students' writings and take a group picture as a memory of this workshop experience.

APPENDIX C

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Student Survey Questions (Given in Week 1)

Section I. Writing Experience

1. How often do you write in English in your English writing classes?

a. Once a week b. Once in two weeks c. Once a month d. other _____

2. What types of writing have you ever written?

a. Personal writing b. Persuasive writing c. Fiction d. Poetry e. Other _____

3. How many drafts do you usually write before you turn in the final product?

a. one-time draft b. two drafts c. three drafts d. other _____

4. What are your major problems in writing in English?

a. vocabulary b. grammar c. textual organization d. composing

e. others (list all) _____

5. What do you usually do when you write on a topic? (Check all apply)

a. planning b. grouping ideas c. composing d. revising e. editing f. other _____

6. How often does your teacher give feedback (oral and written) on your writing?

a. never b. seldom c. sometimes d. often e. always

Section II. Attitudes toward Writing in English

The following questions are regarding your opinions on English writing instruction at university level. Please use the scale below to circle the response that most closely represents your perspectives.

1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Somewhat Disagree; 4= No Strong Opinion, 5= Somewhat Agree; 6= Agree; 7= Strongly Agree

1. Learning to write in English is as important as learning other language skills, e.g.: listening, speaking, reading, translating, etc.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I don't write in English unless I have to write papers for the class.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I don't like writing classes because I feel I have nothing to write about.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I don't like writing classes because I often have difficulties to find good words and phrases, the variety of sentence structures to express what I think.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Writing is helpful for learning vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. When I have problems finding vocabulary in writing, I search the word in the Chinese-English dictionary, and imitate the sample sentences in the dictionary to my paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. When I have some ideas on the topic, I like to discuss with my classmates. I think group discussion can help me get more ideas.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Peer review is a waste of time. I can't get anything from other students. Even if they have good ideas, they don't want to tell you. Or, they just say "everything is fine".

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I don't feel comfortable with having other students reading my papers. I prefer only having my teacher read my paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. I think teacher should give more feedback to my writing. Teacher feedback can help me write better.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. My teacher seldom gives feedback on writing except correcting errors in my paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I like working with other students. I feel more confident to write on a topic in group than by myself.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Once I finish writing a topic, I usually correct errors in the paper, and then submit it. After the teacher returns my paper with a grade, I don't go back to rewrite it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. I think extensive reading in English texts can help students write better.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. I hope my writing teacher can teach some strategies to deal with the problems we have in writing?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX D

STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Student Interview Questions I (Given in Week 6)

Researcher: We have experienced a few writing activities so far, I'd like to know about your experience and your opinion on these activities:

- Freewriting/Automatic writing
- Brainstorming and generating ideas and making concept maps
- Changing styles according to writing purpose and audience
- Identifying the nature of writing tasks and the characteristics of different essay types
- Using cubing framework to consider a topic from six perspectives
- Writing in class and sharing your writing in public.
- Collaborative writing in a group
- Presenting different forms of evidence to develop an argument

1. Have you ever experienced any of the above mentioned writing activities in your regular writing classes? If so, what was that? How did you feel about it?

2. Which writing activity do you like most in the workshop? Why?

3. Are you comfortable with these writing activities? Are there anything that you don't like?

4. So far, what aspect(s) of these workshops is (are) helpful for your writing?

Please explain.

Please rate the following activities and explain your ideas in detail.

1----------4----------7

Least helpful No strong opinion Most helpful

Brainstorming in a group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Collaborative drafting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sharing your writing in class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Peer Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teacher Feedback	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Student Interview Questions II (Given in Week 12)

Researcher: We have learned some writing strategies and experienced the following writing activities so far, I'd like to know about your experience and your opinion on these activities. Please circle the number which matches your opinion properly.

1=less helpful	2=ok, no strong opinion	3=more helpful		
Freewriting/Automatic writing		1	2	3
Brainstorming and generating ideas and making concept maps		1	2	3
Identifying writing purpose and audience before you write		1	2	3
Identifying the nature of writing tasks		1	2	3
Using cubing framework to consider a topic from six perspectives		1	2	3
Writing and responding initial writing plans		1	2	3
Writing in class and sharing your writing in public.		1	2	3
Collaborative writing in a group		1	2	3
Presenting different forms of evidence to develop an argument		1	2	3
Development of thesis and ideas		1	2	3
Finding your voice in writing		1	2	3
Opening, Concluding and Transitions in the text		1	2	3
Teacher-student writing conference		1	2	3
Peer reviewing as readers/audience		1	2	3
Revising your paper to meet reader's expectation		1	2	3
Documentation in writing (APA style)		1	2	3
Editing for language use		1	2	3

Attitudes toward this Writing Experience

1. What are the major achievements you've gained by participating in these workshops?

2. Have these writing workshops helped you write better? In what ways?

3. What do you like most in these workshops? Please explain in detail.

4. What do you like least in these workshops? Why?

5. What writing strategies have you learned from these workshops? What are the most helpful techniques you learned from the workshops?

6. What do you think of the activities in these writing workshops (brainstorming, collaborative drafting, peer-reviewing, teacher conferencing, L1 reader feedback, etc.)?

Please rate the following activities and explain your ideas in detail.

(1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Somewhat Disagree; 4= No Strong Opinion, 5= Somewhat Agree; 6= Agree; 7= Strongly Agree)

Brainstorming	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Collaborative drafting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Peer reviewing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teacher conferencing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teacher Feedback (written)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
L1 Reader Feedback	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Multiple Drafts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Would you like to have any of these activities more often in your regular writing classes? Why or why not?

APPENDIX E

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

This questionnaire aims to find out your practices of teaching writing, your beliefs about current writing approach for EFL college students, and the concerns you may have regarding the subject.

1. Which of the following groups are you currently teaching?

   a. Freshmen b. Sophomores c. Juniors d. Seniors

2. How many years have you been teaching English to Chinese college students?

   a. 1 to 5 years b. 5 to 10 years c. 10 to 15 years d. 15 to 20 years

   e. over 20 years

3. How long have you taught English writing for the students?

   a. 1 to 5 years b. 5 to 10 years c. 10 to 15 years d. 15 to 20 years

   e. over 20 years

4. What is your highest degree in an English-related subject (e.g., TESL/TEFL, Linguistics, Translation, Cultural Studies, Literature, and International Business)?

   a. B.A. b. M.A. c. Ph.D. or Ed. D.

5. Do you have a Graduate Diploma in an English-related subject (e.g., TESL/TEFL, Linguistics, Translation, Cultural Studies, Literature, and International Business)?

   a. Yes, in _____. b. No.

6. Have you ever studied or visited any English-speaking countries?

   a. Yes, _____. b. No.

APPENDIX F

TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What writing strategies do you teach to your students? Why do you choose these strategies?

2. What is (are) the most important element(s) in your teaching of English writing to Chinese university students? Please explain.

3. What concerns or problems, if any, do you have in teaching English writing classes?

4. What are the major problems in students' writing in English in your classes? How do you solve these problems?

5. In your opinion, how should writing teachers teach English writing to Chinese EFL university students? Why? Please explain in detail.

6. What do you think of these writing activities: brainstorming, collaborative drafting, peer- reviewing, teacher conferencing, multiple drafts etc.)?

Please rate the following activities and explain your ideas in detail.

(1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Somewhat Disagree; 4= No Strong Opinion, 5= Somewhat Agree; 6= Agree; 7= Strongly Agree)

Brainstorming	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Collaborative drafting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Peer reviewing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teacher conferencing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teacher feedback (written)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Multiple drafts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Will they be helpful to your students in English writing? Do you think any of these activities could be used more often in your writing classes? Why or why not?

APPENDIX G

EFL WRITTEN TEXTS ASSESSMENT PROFILE

Content					
Knowledge of subject	1	2	3	4	5
Development of thesis and ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Organization					
Overall expression of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Transitions	1	2	3	4	5
Paragraph unity and coherence	1	2	3	4	5
Rhetorical Stance					
Writing purpose clear throughout	1	2	3	4	5
Audience expectations met	1	2	3	4	5
Contextual appropriateness					
Culturally suitable to target audience	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate knowledge of writing context	1	2	3	4	5
Language use and style					
Sentence structures	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Mechanics	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX H

COPIES OF CONSENT FORMS

Informed Consent Form for Student Participants

Working title: “Applying Contemporary Western Composition Pedagogical Approaches in University EFL Writing Context in China”

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate.

The purpose of this study is to research the possibilities of applying some aspects of contemporary Western composition pedagogical approaches in advanced English writing classes. You are invited to attend a 12-week writing workshop, held for two hours every week, and to complete the writing activities required in these workshops. This writing workshop aims at leading you through the writing process, and helping you develop social, cultural, and contextual language awareness in your English writing. The main focus is to help you write for your interests, needs and concerns with real audiences, purposes, and contexts in mind.

I will conduct a series of English writing workshops for a 12-week period. If you are interested to participate in the study, you will get a survey at the beginning of the study. You will then attend the weekly workshop sessions, and you will be interviewed in week 6 and week 12; each of these interviews will last at least 30 minutes, but will be no longer than 60 minutes. During the 12-week writing workshop, you will work on two papers, on topics that you choose yourself.

I will collect these texts you write, with your permission; but these will be analyzed mostly in general terms. No written material that you produce will be identified as your writing, since your name will not be revealed at all in the written results of my study. After the writing workshop, I will send the interview transcriptions via email if we can not meet with each other in person, to be sure that I have written up your responses accurately.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study, or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with me, your teachers, and the English Department. If you choose to participate, but want to withdraw from the study for whatever reason, you need to inform me directly by email or by letter. Upon your written request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. The information obtained from the study may be published in academic journals or presented at professional conferences, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below.

Researcher: Jiajia He, PhD candidate in Composition and TESOL
English Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana PA 15705, USA
Email Address: J.He@iup.edu

Project Director: Dr. Jeannine M. Fontaine, Associate Professor
English Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
347 Sutton Hall, Indiana PA 15705, USA

Office Phone: 724-357-2457

Email Address: jfontain@iup.edu

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).

Informed Consent Form for Student Participants (continued)

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received a copy of this informed consent form to keep in my possession.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email:_____

Best days and times to reach you _____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research project, have answered questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date: _____Investigator's signature: _____

Informed Consent Form for Teacher Participants

Working title: “Applying Contemporary Western Composition Pedagogical Approaches in University EFL Writing Context in China”

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate.

The purpose of this study is to research the possibilities of applying some aspects of contemporary Western composition pedagogical approaches in advanced English writing classes. If you are willing to participate in this study, you will be interviewed once during the Spring semester of 2006. You will be asked about your teaching approaches and strategies in your writing classes, and your opinions on the improvements and inventions in teach English writing in advanced writing classes. The interview will last at least 30 minutes, but will be no longer than 60 minutes. After the initial interview, I will meet you to discuss interview transcriptions with you, or send the transcriptions via email if we can not meet in person, to be sure that I have written up your responses accurately.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study, or to withdraw at any time. If you choose to participate, but want to withdraw from the study for whatever reason, you need to inform me directly by email or by letter. Upon your written request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. The information obtained from the study may be published in academic journals or presented at professional

conferences, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below.

Researcher: Jiajia He, PhD candidate in Composition and TESOL

English Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Indiana PA 15705, USA

Email Address: J.He@iup.edu

Project Director: Dr. Jeannine M. Fontaine, Associate Professor

English Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

347 Sutton Hall, Indiana PA 15705, USA

Office Phone: 724-357-2457

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VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

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Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Best days and times to reach you:_____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research project, have answered questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date: _____ Investigator's signature: _____