

**A NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF A WRITING CENTER  
AT BILKENT UNIVERSITY**

**A THESIS PRESENTED BY  
SULE BERILGEN GÜVEN  
TO  
THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**BILKENT UNIVERSITY**

**AUGUST 1996**

**THE LIBRARY  
PE  
1404  
G88  
1996**



A NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF A WRITING CENTER  
AT BILKENT UNIVERSITY

A THESIS PRESENTED BY  
SULE BERILGEN GUVEN  
TO  
THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 1996

SULE BERILGEN GUVEN  
*Sule Berilgen Guven*

PE

1404

.G88

1996

B034984

## ABSTRACT

Title: A needs analysis for the establishment of a writing center at Bilkent University  
Author: Sule Berilgen Guven  
Thesis Chairperson: Ms. Bena Gul Peker, Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program  
Thesis Committee Members: Dr. Theodore S. Rodgers, Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program  
Dr. Susan D. Boshier, Bilkent University, MA TEFL Program

This research study investigated the perceived writing needs of students at Bilkent University and whether establishing a writing center at Bilkent would serve those needs. Sixty-six students and twenty-four instructors participated in this study. The study had two sets of six research questions. The first set of questions aimed at determining whether students were actually writing: Are students writing in their subject courses? What kinds of writing tasks are they writing? and Are they having difficulty?

The second set aimed at exploring students' writing needs and whether establishing a writing center at Bilkent University would serve those needs: How do students perceive their writing needs? and How do English and subject instructors perceive students' writing needs?

This study was followed in two steps. First, interviews were conducted with four English writing instructors and three subject area instructors. Based on these interviews questionnaires were designed. Questionnaires were distributed to two groups: 46 Freshman and 16 senior students and 14 English and 10 subject area instructors.

Data regarding the questionnaires were analyzed using frequencies, percentages and means. The open-ended items were categorized. Means across groups were compared.

The results of this study showed that students are in fact writing in their subject courses, taking essay type exams and are sometimes assigned research papers and oral presentations. Freshmen students feel more confident about their writing than senior students, but instructors feel that students are having difficulty and need extra assistance with their writing. Instructors indicated that they would encourage students to make use of a writing center and students indicated they would make use of a writing center as well.

Although there is a perceived need for extra assistance in writing for students, results do not

indicate that establishing a writing center would necessarily serve the needs of students, as students indicate reluctance about using the center.

BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
MA THESIS EXAMINATION RESULT FORM

August 31, 1996

The examining committee appointed by the  
Institute of Economics and Social Sciences for the  
thesis examination of the MA TEFL student

Sule Berilgen Guven

---

has read the thesis of the student,  
The committee has decided that the thesis of the  
student is satisfactory.

Thesis Title : A needs analysis for the  
establishment of a writing  
center at Bilkent  
University

Thesis Advisor : Dr. Susan D. Boshier  
Bilkent University, MA TEFL  
Program

Committee Members: Prof. Theodore S. Rodgers  
Bilkent University,  
MA TEFL Program

Ms. Bena Gul Peker  
Bilkent University, MA TEFL  
Program

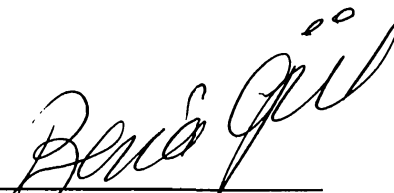
We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



Susan D. Boshier  
(Advisor)



Theodore S. Rodgers  
(Committee Member)



Bena Gul Peker  
(Committee Member)

Approved for the  
Institute of Economics and Social Sciences



Ali Karaosmanoglu  
Director  
Institute of Economics and Social Sciences



To the memory of my father

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Dr. Susan D. Boshier for her invaluable guidance and support throughout this study. I am also very grateful to Dr. Theodore S. Rodgers and Ms. Bena Gul Peker for their advice and suggestions on various aspects of this study.

I would like to thank the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Letters, Professor Bulent Bozkurt, who gave me permission to attend the MA TEFL Program and also to conduct this research study at Bilkent University. I would also like to express my special thanks to Ms. Bige Erkmen, the Director of the English Unit, who encouraged me in every step of my studies and offered her invaluable assistance where and when possible throughout my studies.

I also thank my colleagues in the English Unit, especially Turkum Cankatan, Yesim Ceki and Suzanne Olcay, who participated in this study and encouraged their students to do so. And I also thank all the instructors as well as the students in the faculties for taking the time and participating in this study.

I would like to express my special thanks to Seda Korukcu, my colleague and classmate, and Damla Tumer for their continual moral support.

My greatest thanks is to my mother and sister for their continuous support and understanding throughout

this study. And my special thanks to Murat Guven for his moral support before and during the program; without him, I would not have made it.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                  |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| LIST OF TABLES.....                                              | xi |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....                                     | 1  |
| Background of the Study.....                                     | 2  |
| Purpose of the Study.....                                        | 5  |
| Research Questions.....                                          | 6  |
| Definition of Terms.....                                         | 7  |
| Significance of the Study .....                                  | 8  |
| CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....                                 | 10 |
| The Importance of Writing.....                                   | 10 |
| Several Approaches to<br>L2 Writing Instruction.....             | 11 |
| Writing Centers as a Means of<br>Facilitating Writing .....      | 15 |
| Functions of a Writing Center .....                              | 15 |
| One-on-one Tutoring at Writing Centers .....                     | 16 |
| The Importance of One-on-one Tutoring<br>at Writing Centers..... | 17 |
| Effects of One-on-one Tutoring .....                             | 18 |
| Writing Center Tutors and<br>the L2 Learner .....                | 19 |
| The Effects of Writing Centers<br>on Students' Writing .....     | 21 |
| Models of Writing Centers.....                                   | 22 |
| Needs Analysis.....                                              | 24 |
| Conclusion .....                                                 | 27 |
| CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....                                       | 29 |
| Subjects .....                                                   | 30 |
| Subject-area Instructors .....                                   | 30 |
| English Instructors.....                                         | 31 |
| Students.....                                                    | 32 |
| Freshmen.....                                                    | 32 |
| Seniors.....                                                     | 33 |
| Instructors .....                                                | 34 |
| Subject-area Instructors .....                                   | 34 |
| English Instructors.....                                         | 34 |
| Instruments.....                                                 | 35 |
| Procedures.....                                                  | 36 |
| Data Analysis .....                                              | 39 |

|                                                                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| CHAPTER 4 RESULTS OF THE STUDY .....                                              | 40  |
| Summary of the Study .....                                                        | 40  |
| Analysis of Questionnaires .....                                                  | 42  |
| Freshman Student Questionnaires.....                                              | 42  |
| Senior Student Questionnaires .....                                               | 48  |
| English Instructor Questionnaires.....                                            | 52  |
| Departmental Faculty (Subject Instructors)<br>Questionnaires.....                 | 59  |
| Comparison Between Groups.....                                                    | 63  |
| Freshman Students versus<br>Senior Students .....                                 | 63  |
| English Instructors versus<br>Subject Instructors .....                           | 74  |
| CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION .....                                                        | 81  |
| Summary of the Study .....                                                        | 81  |
| Discussion of Findings .....                                                      | 82  |
| Are Students Writing in<br>their Subject Courses? .....                           | 82  |
| What Kinds of Writing Tasks<br>are Students Writing? .....                        | 83  |
| Are Students Having<br>Difficulty in Writing? .....                               | 84  |
| Where Students Receive Assistance<br>for their Written Tasks? .....               | 85  |
| Students' and Instructors' Perceptions<br>of Students' Writing Needs.....         | 87  |
| Making Use of and Benefiting<br>from a Writing Center .....                       | 87  |
| Limitations of the Study .....                                                    | 92  |
| Implications for Future Research.....                                             | 93  |
| REFERENCES.....                                                                   | 96  |
| APPENDICES.....                                                                   | 99  |
| Appendix A: Interview Questions .....                                             | 99  |
| Appendix B: Freshman Students Questionnaire.....                                  | 102 |
| Appendix C: Senior Students Questionnaire .....                                   | 108 |
| Appendix D: English Instructors Questionnaire.....                                | 114 |
| Appendix E: Departmental Faculty<br>(Subject-Area Instructors) Questionnaire..... | 120 |



## LIST OF TABLES

| <u>TABLE</u>                                                                             | <u>PAGE</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 Frequency of Writing Tasks Assigned to Freshman Students.....                          | 43          |
| 2 Frequency of Types of Writing Tasks Assigned to Freshman in Subject Courses .....      | 45          |
| 3 Source of Feedback to Freshmen Students on Writing .....                               | 46          |
| 4 Frequency of Writing Tasks Assigned to Seniors in English Courses.....                 | 49          |
| 5 Frequency of Types of Writing Tasks Assigned to Seniors in Subject Courses .....       | 50          |
| 6 Frequency of Essays Written in English Courses .....                                   | 54          |
| 7 Students' Essay Writing in Subject Courses According to English Instructors.....       | 55          |
| 8 Students' Need for Extra Assistance in Writing .....                                   | 56          |
| 9 Former Students' Request for Assistance in Writing .....                               | 57          |
| 10 English Instructors' Time for Extra Assistance.....                                   | 58          |
| 11 Students' Ability to Write According to Subject Instructors .....                     | 61          |
| 12 Students' Need for Extra Assistance in Writing According to Subject Instructors ..... | 62          |
| 13 Frequency of Writing Tasks Assigned (Comparison across Student Groups) .....          | 64          |
| 14 Frequency of Types of Writing Tasks Assigned (Comparison across Student Groups) ..... | 65          |

| <u>TABLE</u>                                                                                                                 | <u>PAGE</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 15 Source of Assistance<br>(Comparison across Student Groups) .....                                                          | 67          |
| 16 Students' Opinion about their Writing Abilities<br>(Comparison across Student Groups) .....                               | 69          |
| 17 Lack of Difficulty in Writing<br>(Comparison across Student Groups) .....                                                 | 71          |
| 18 Need for Extra Assistance in Writing<br>(Comparison across Student Groups) .....                                          | 73          |
| 19 Instructors' Opinion of Students' Liking to Write<br>(Comparison across Instructor Groups) .....                          | 75          |
| 20 Students' Ability to Complete Writing Tasks<br>(Comparison across Instructor Groups) .....                                | 76          |
| 21 Lack of Difficulty in the Stages of Writing<br>(Comparison across Instructor Groups) .....                                | 77          |
| 22 Instructors' Opinion about Encouraging Students<br>to Use a Writing Center<br>(Comparison across Instructor Groups) ..... | 79          |

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20-30 years there has been an enormous amount of research on the composing processes of student writers (e.g., Jacobs, Zamel, Perl, Raimes, cited in Kroll, 1991). In time it has been realized that restricting all kinds of writing only to the classroom is not enough for students to become good writers. Therefore, the effort to provide extra assistance for students has developed. Universities have been looking for ways of enhancing students' writing and, therefore, have incorporated writing centers into their curricula (Tchudi, 1986). The literature suggests that a writing center can have a positive effect on students' writing, which will be discussed in the literature review. Taking this idea as a basis, a needs analysis will be conducted at Bilkent University to determine the perceived writing needs of students and whether establishing a writing center would meet those needs.

This chapter contains the introductory components of this thesis, which explain how the idea of establishing a writing center at Bilkent University emerged, including background of the study, purpose of the study, research questions, definition of terms and significance of the study.

### Background of the Study

The idea behind this study originated from the possible needs of the university I am currently working at. Bilkent University is an English-medium university, that is, classes and academic work in all departments are carried out in English. At Bilkent University, within the Faculty of Humanities and Letters, under the responsibility of the English Unit, a two-semester compulsory course of Freshman English is offered. This unit is responsible for ENG 101, English and Composition I, and its continuation ENG 102, English and Composition II.

The English Unit offers these courses to all freshman students in mixed classes from various faculties. The faculties are as follows: Social and Administrative Sciences, Business Administration, Art, Design and Architecture and Humanities and Letters.

ENG 101 students develop their skills of reading and writing through the process of reading thematically organized texts of authentic nature such as articles and textbooks. Through class discussions, and journal writing and essay assignments, they evaluate, synthesize, and respond to the ideas in the texts. In this way, students are prepared to present their arguments in the form of

academic essays. These essays are finalized after various drafts using the process approach to writing. The continuation of this course, ENG 102, is designed to extend the skills developed in ENG 101 through the same process approach. Students are engaged in conducting research and reporting synthesized information from different sources, as well as in problem solving and decision making activities. All required work is presented in written and/or oral form, that is academic essays and formal oral presentations. If students fail ENG 101, they can not take ENG 102. Despite the preparation provided by the English Unit, subject area instructors and, indeed, teachers of ENG 101/102 note a need for a higher level of writing skill than students generally attain with these two courses.

Similarly, my colleagues in the English Unit, and I encounter former students who seek help for their written assignments in their subject-area courses. Students come to their former writing teachers at various stages of their assignments, asking for feedback and guidance. From informal conversations with teachers from various faculties, I have found out that students are required to hand in written tasks in their subject-area courses, but are weak writers. These courses are typically ones such



as Economics, History of Civilization, Sociology and so forth. Subject-area instructors say that, although try to guide students with their writing, they do not have the time for giving assistance to improve student writing. In sum, my own experience and various informal conversations with my colleagues as well as with teachers from various faculties have suggested that students still have problems in writing in their subject area courses. Students lack the necessary strategies to cope with various assignments such as term-papers or research projects given in their departments. Therefore, there seems to be a need for extra assistance, such as the assistance provided by a writing center to students who have difficulty in fulfilling written tasks. This apparent need formed the basis for this research study. In addition, the Rector of Bilkent University has reported dissatisfaction from instructors of Engineering, Management and International Relations regarding the writing standards of their entering students and is exploring development of a Writing Center at Bilkent (personal conversation with T. S. Rodgers, March 5, 1996).

### Purpose of the Study

The review of the literature, dealt with in detail in Chapter 2, shows that writing is viewed as an important component of the learning process, as writing is seen not simply as a productive skill in which students show how well they have mastered a grammatical point, but also as an ability that promotes thinking strategies (Rehage, 1986). Universities in the United States have been following the process approach to writing where students after writing several drafts, with revision, reach the final product. Moreover, searching for ways of providing extra guidance in writing outside of the classroom, universities in the U.S. have set up writing centers as a means of support for all students enrolled at the university, from which students needing extra assistance in their writing can benefit.

It was the intention of this study to determine if there was a need for a writing center to be established at Bilkent University, by first determining the perceived writing needs of students at Bilkent University and whether establishing a writing center would serve those needs. Although a nationwide needs analysis could be done to observe the necessity of a Writing Center at English-medium universities in Turkey, due to time constraints,

Bilkent University was taken as a model. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to conduct a needs analysis to determine if establishing a Writing Center at Bilkent University would be beneficial in improving students' writing. Furthermore, this study was to determine what the characteristics of such a center at Bilkent should be, as the direct implementation of a center appropriate for U.S. universities and students might not serve the needs of Turkish students.

#### Research Questions

In order to determine the research questions, the various parties were taken into consideration.

- \* Freshman students who have to take the English 101/102 courses while taking field related courses

- \* Sophomores, juniors and seniors who have to complete written tasks in their field related courses.

- \* The instructors in the departments who assign and assess students' written tasks.

- \* English instructors who are expected to meet objectives set by the university concerning students' writing.

The research questions asked in this study were two-fold. The first set formed the basis for the second set of questions. Set one was as follows:

1. Are students writing extended discourse in their subject-area courses?
2. If so, what kinds of tasks are they writing?
3. Are students having difficulty in coping with their writing assignments?

Based on the above mentioned questions, the following research questions were asked in this study:

1. Is there a need for a writing center to be established at Bilkent University to meet students' needs?
2. How do freshmen and senior students at Bilkent University perceive their writing needs?
3. How do Freshman English instructors and subject-area instructors perceive students' writing needs?
4. Would students at Bilkent University benefit from a writing center if one were established?
5. What should the characteristics of a writing center at Bilkent University be?

#### Definition of Terms

A Writing Center is a place in which guidance is provided for those students who are enrolled in all courses, not just writing courses who might need extra assistance at any stage of their writing process. Students may receive individual tutoring and guidance in

writing. Writing centers are usually guided by teachers of the English Department as well as trained tutors who are either graduate students or senior year students.

A needs analysis is a research design based on the needs and interests of the learner (Berwick, 1989). The central characteristics include systematic assessment of learners' language needs along with consultation of learners at appropriate points in the planning and instruction processes. Berwick (1989) says that an operational definition has to be reconstructed for each assessment, because its elements will change according to the values of the assessor or influential constituents of an educational system. In this case, such an operational definition is identifying the perceived needs of the students with regards to assistance in writing.

#### Significance of the Study

In this study, the main issue to be addressed was, what are students' needs in terms of assistance in their academic writing. The identification of students' individual and common writing needs will have a major impact in determining the need for a writing center. The identification of these needs can give guidance as to the criteria to be set for a possible writing center because



the criteria for the establishment of a writing center may differ from institution to institution.

Additionally, the question arises of who will benefit from a writing center-- only students who have problems in writing or will the center provide service to any students that might need guidance.

Thus, the study can be best understood on three levels:

-What are the writing needs of students in terms of assistance during the freshman writing course and after?

-How could the establishment of a writing center meet the needs of students?

-What should the characteristics of such a writing center be to best meet the needs of students at Bilkent University?

As a result, through this study the students and faculty will become aware of students' writing needs and if and how a writing center can serve these needs. With this background students and faculty can work collaboratively towards the development of a writing center.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to conduct a needs analysis to identify the perceived writing needs of students and to determine whether establishing a writing center at Bilkent University would serve those needs. Furthermore, this study also intended to determine what the characteristics of such a center at Bilkent should be. As background for this thesis, I reviewed research in the areas of the importance of writing, L2 process writing, writing centers, one-on-one tutoring in writing centers in the United States and needs analysis literature. I believe these areas are relevant to the content of my investigation. First, I will begin with the importance of writing.

### The Importance of Writing

The skill of writing has been used in the language classroom as a means of integrating the four skills, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. Writing is a productive skill in which learners are able to demonstrate what they have acquired. In the academic environment, however, writing is perceived not simply as a productive skill but rather as an ability that promotes thinking

strategies. Gage (1986, cited in Rehage, 1986) notes that there is a renewed interest in writing which has resulted from the belief that writing is not solely a skill to be mastered but the ongoing reflection of students developing understanding of ideas (Rehage, 1986). Both concepts of writing, namely writing as a technical skill and writing as an intellectual process are valid. A good writer is one that is able to show competence in both aspects. Therefore, it can be said that writing is important as it is a task that requires one to be able to clarify and structure ideas (Gage 1986, cited in Rehage, 1986). That is, writing is a task which fosters thinking.

#### Several Approaches to L2 Writing Instruction

There have been various approaches towards the teaching of writing because studies have indicated that students' writing needs improvement. When the history of writing is viewed, it can be said that the teaching of writing has undergone many changes in the last fifty years (Kroll, 1991). Prior to the mid 60's, the teaching of writing consisted basically of giving students the rules of writing, a text to comment on, and a writing assignment which was corrected

afterwards. This approach, according to Kroll (1991) was called the Product Approach. Tony Silva (1986, cited in Kroll, 1991) referring to second language composition mentions that:

The history of ESL composition since about 1945 can be viewed as a succession of approaches or orientations to L2 writing, a cycle in which particular approaches achieve dominance and then fade but never really disappear. (p. 11)

One of the approaches to ESL composition has been the controlled or guided composition. Silva (1990, cited in Kroll, 1990) notes that controlled composition comes from the idea that language is habit formation and the result of written practice is a text. Basically, in this model writing is used to enhance other skills. The writer presents the previously learned language structures. The aim is to enable students to produce error-free written texts. In other words, writing is used as a vehicle for language practice.

A more recent trend in EFL writing is the Process Approach. In the process approach, students are engaged in process writing which can be defined as writing various drafts of essays, getting feedback on each draft and then revising it, after which a final

product is reached (Kroll, 1991). According to Kroll (1991), the introduction of the process approach to EFL composition seems to have been motivated by dissatisfaction with the controlled approach since this approach fails to foster thought or expression, hence hindering creative thinking which is an aspect writing aims to achieve. In fact, writing has come to be viewed as a non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate and communicate meaning (Zamel, 1983). That is, writing is now viewed as a means of expressing ideas and conveying meaning. The application of this view of writing in the classroom involves:

providing a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing processes. The teacher's role is to help students develop viable strategies for getting started, for drafting, for revising and for editing  
(Silva, 1986, cited in Kroll, 1991, p.15)

In this manner the student then is able to process and reprocess the written text which not only adds to what was produced before but transforms it. Reprocessing, thus spans everything from editing for mistakes to reformulating goals. According to Murray



(1986, cited in Withrock, 1986) reprocessing, a broader term for revision, begins with the reading of a first draft. Consequently, reprocessing is a crucial term in the process approach not only because of its effect on the final composition but also because of its effect on the writers' knowledge. Since revisions are an important part of writing, and are used in writing centers, Murray's point is crucial to remember.

To sum up, the skill of writing in the process approach not only enhances the ability to write, but also promotes thinking strategies and the expression of ideas in an organized, coherent manner. For this reason, EFL teachers have been searching for ways of improving the teaching of writing in the classroom. However, Weiner (1981) in his book The Writing Room indicates that despite its potential for achieving broad educational objectives, the traditional classroom setting has its limitations and it is necessary to develop alternative learning environments (Weiner, 1981).

### Writing Centers as a Means of Facilitating Writing

A writing center can be defined as a place where students in an institution go for extra, individualized help with their writing. A writing center offers a tutorial setting as an adjunct to the classroom for students for private conferences between the writer and the writing teacher or tutor. Writing centers are seen as a means of support instruction for the teaching of writing (Weiner, 1981). Those institutions that perceive the growth of skills in written English as a major educational priority make use of writing centers (Weiner, 1981). In writing centers students receive individual tutoring and guidance in writing (Weiner, 1981).

#### Functions of a Writing Center

Writing centers can provide important assistance to writers from differing backgrounds and at differing developmental stages. They are usually intended to provide individual attention in writing that classrooms can not (North, 1987). Writing centers do not operate within the bounds of known traditions such as classifying students in terms of a fixed set of categories and matching students with some pre-designed instructional materials. Students given a

task in any of their courses can receive one-on-one tutoring from a writing center. They can be guided through the process of definition of the problem, and the freedom to move outside of the standard lore for ideas about how to proceed (North, 1987).

#### One-on-one Tutoring at Writing Centers

Providing students with the best of guidance is dependent upon the tutors at a writing center who are sometimes graduate students trained by the English Unit, writing instructors or other personnel hired by the university. As Weiner (1981) claims "the strength of a writing center lies in the quality of its tutors" (p. 197). According to Weiner (1981), it is the tutor, who through temperament can give the necessary extra push for students to go beyond what the classroom offers. Working with students alone in a private session, tutors follow on the demands of individual instruction, helping them think aloud and discover what is needed for the improvement of their writing and guiding them through possible solutions (Weiner, 1981).

The Importance of One-on-one Tutoring at Writing  
Centers

A student asking for guidance from a writing center is actually seeking help through conferencing. One-on-one conferences are opportunities for productive dialogues between writers and teacher-readers and are an important part of teaching writing (Harris, 1986). In this setting, tutors can hear students talk about their writing and more importantly, students can hear not about writing in the abstract but about their own writing. When conferencing as such is provided for students, that is, talking with students as they write or prepare to write, writing is a process of discovery in which teachers or tutors help the writer, in this case the student, learn how to shape a piece of writing as it is taking form (Harris, 1986).

The role of the tutor is to assist in this process by helping students move through drafts of writing, focusing their unique questions and problems. Most importantly, the tutor is responsible for responding to the writing as an audience or reader, identifying the problems the writer may be having, and

showing strategies for moving through the writing process (Harris, 1986).

#### Effects of One-on-one Tutoring

One-on-one tutoring has positive effects on students' writing. First of all, it stimulates independent learning. Although conferences at writing centers are criticized that the tutor/teacher is likely to do the student's work, in fact, a tutor who is adept at conferencing is aware that conference talk through careful guidance leads students into doing their own thinking. This can be accomplished through asking questions and getting students to talk about their writing (Harris, 1986).

Another positive effect is that conferencing promotes interaction with readers. A tutor and student talking about the writing allows the opportunity for the student to see where there are weak spots or need for more information. No matter who the tutor is, a peer or teacher, the presence of the person reminds the student writer of the importance of writing from the readers' perspective. This in turn provides interaction between the reader and writer (Harris, 1986).

Thirdly, while teaching writing in the classroom may bring about problems caused by individual differences among students, seeking guidance from a writing center provides the opportunity for individualized learning. That is, one-on-one conferencing offered by a writing center allows the tutor as well as the student to become familiar with individual students' strengths and weaknesses, which allows the tutor to help the student focus on specific strategies to improve his/her writing abilities (Harris, 1986). In fact, as George (1985, cited in Connolly & Vilardi, 1986) states, at the Michigan Technological University, the tutors employed in the writing center are professionals rather than peer tutors who work with students in one-on-one conference situations through out the semester (Connolly & Vilardi, 1986).

#### Writing Center Tutors and the L2 Learner

The supportive one-on-one conference learning environment provided by writing centers can give important assistance to writers from widely different backgrounds and at different stages (Powers & Nelson, 1995). However, Powers and Nelson (1995) also note in their article "L2 Writers and the Writing Centers"

that the potential benefits of a writing center may be hindered if tutors have limited training for L2 conferencing. Writing centers in the United States note a difference between L1 and L2 writers. Powers and Nelson (1995) claim:

Despite ample discussion of some resources for and solutions to the difficulties of ESL academic writers, however, little or no discussion of writing centers as resources for L2 writers has occurred. (p. 114)

The writers also claim that writing centers in the United States are beginning to realize that conferencing techniques used successfully with L1 writers are not always successful with L2 writers. That is to say that the teaching strategies used for L2 learners should be different from those used for L1 writers (Powers & Nelson, 1995).

Effective writing center tutoring involves a combination of motivation, training and experience, of which experience in L2 tutoring is the most essential as L2 writers have a different cultural, rhetorical and linguistic background, and hence have different needs. Furthermore, the learning strategies of L2 writers may necessitate the implementation of a specific tutor training program (Powers & Nelson, 1995).

Consequently, a model of a writing center developed in the United States may not be suitable for Bilkent University, which consists of L2 writers. An institution such as Bilkent would need to adapt a model from the United States, considering the institution-specific nature of writing centers, which makes it difficult to generalize what kind of characteristics will be effective for a particular writing center at a particular institution. Although writing centers share certain operating conditions such as budgets and staffing that are common features, these features can differ within each institutional context. Thus, issues such as students' needs, the training of tutors, and staffing for each institution will be distinct from one another.

#### The Effects of Writing Centers on Students' Writing

Several recent studies have investigated the benefits of writing centers. Taylor-Escoffery (1992) examined the influence of a writing center on college students' perceptions of the functions of written language. The subjects pointed out that they were dealing with their own specific writing which helped



them think about how to express their thoughts (Taylor-Escoffery, 1992).

Another study was conducted by Van Dam (1986) at the University of Southern California in order to determine the effect of the writing center on the academic performance of 63 Freshman students. It was concluded that while writing centers are not a cure for poor writing, they are useful tools in helping students to improve their expository writing in organization and content at the University level because students have the chance of receiving one-on-one tutoring, that is individual guidance on their drafts (Van Dam, 1986).

#### Models of Writing Centers

Connolly and Vilardi in their book (1986) New Methods in College Writing Programs described 28 University writing programs in detail in the United States. Of these 28 universities, two had writing center programs: Michigan Technological University and Illinois State University.

The Michigan Technological University Freshman English Program is process-oriented. Students are exposed to writing instruction throughout their tenure

exposed to writing instruction throughout their tenure in addition to the basic 9-hour freshman sequence. The university also has a writing center that is run by the Department of Humanities. The center, which provides tutorial assistance for students who need or want it, focuses on strengthening skills in critical thinking and development and organization in writing. The tutors in the writing center are professionals who work with students in one-on-one conference situations (Connoly & Vilardi, 1986).

Similarly, Connoly & Vilardi (1986) looked into the curriculum of Illinois State University. The curriculum includes an intensive 101 program for developmental students. The program has two main features. Firstly, it is a 3-credit hour course meeting 5 hours a week of which 2 days are set aside for tutorial instruction. Secondly, each class is taught by two undergraduate teaching assistants (UTA) who handle the tutorials. The UTA's also work at the writing center for individual help. The department claims that there are benefits to this system of instruction as students have two additional, experienced writers to answer their questions and help solve their problems (Nevleib & Scharton, 1985, cited

in Connolly & Vilardi, 1986). Nevleib and Scharon also claim that:

Students receive more time, more individual attention, more tutoring and more experienced reader responses since the UTA's also work in the writing center, they are available for additional help if their students need it.

(Nevleib & Scharon, 1985, cited in Connolly & Vilardi, 1986, p. 62).

In 1989 Brown conducted a study evaluating the success of the writing center at Illinois State University. The article entitled "Writing Centers: They succeed or fail" focused on the characteristics of a successful writing center. The results of his research indicated that two factors, interlinked funding and the utilization of tutors, were essential in determining factors for a successful writing center. By utilization of tutors he refers to training, communication of all parties involved, advertising and annual evaluation of the center which in turn are accomplished at a cost. Hence, good funding make it possible to utilize tutors (Brown, 1989).

#### Needs Analysis

Up to this point the focus of this literature review has been on one-on-one conferencing and writing centers. Some of the literature is cited from articles

which show how schools have incorporated writing centers into university curriculum. There have not been many studies done on the benefits of writing centers for students' writing and few needs analyses before the establishment of a writing center (Healy, E-mail, April, 1996). Indeed, Healy claims that writing centers run on the good faith hope that they make a difference in students' writing. In fact, he says there is very little research to back up the idea that writing centers benefit students.

As this thesis is a needs analysis for the establishment of a writing center at Bilkent University, it is necessary to give a brief description of what a needs analysis is.

A needs analysis is a study based on the needs and interests of the learner (Berwick, 1989). The central characteristic of a needs analysis is the systematic assessment of the learners' language needs which is obtained through consultation with the students at appropriate points in the planning process. This consultation can be handled through interviews or questionnaires. Berwick (1989) says that an operational definition of a needs analysis has to be reconstructed for each assessment because elements

to be analyzed can change according to the values of the assessors or the identified needs of an educational system. In other words, as perceived problems of institutions can vary, a needs analysis for an identified problem will consist of different variables and research questions. For this reason the operational definition will change accordingly (Berwick, 1989).

Richards (1984, cited in Berwick, 1989) claims that two types of needs analysis are necessary: one aimed at collecting factual information about the topic and the other aimed at gathering information about learners which can be used to guide the learning process.

According to Berwick (1989), there is a highly productive collection of methodologies to suit different planning situations. Berwick lists several of these methods, one of which is the inductive method. A technique can be called inductive when the list of items is developed by the raters. The second technique is the deductive method which is seen as complimentary to inductive methods and items are developed by the raters. That is, inductive methods can be used alone, whereas, deductive methods have to

incorporate inductive methods of assessment as a preliminary step. Instruments such as questionnaires or surveys are seen as valuable resources for the planner (Berwick 1989).

This research study used a combination of both inductive and deductive methods. Firstly, interviews were conducted to identify the items for the questionnaires (deductive), then the questionnaires were used to identify students' writing needs (inductive). Finally, it was determined whether establishing a writing center would serve those needs.

### Conclusion

The literature reviewed and many of the studies cited in this review show the search for ways of improving students' academic writing. There have been several approaches to teaching writing in the classroom, one of the more recent of which is the process approach to writing. However, as writing solely in the classroom has not been sufficient to produce good writers, most institutions have moved towards finding additional ways of improving students' writing. English teachers, as well as other faculty, have joined together and emphasis has been placed on

centers of writing from which all students can benefit.

The following chapter looks in detail at how data was gathered for this study to determine the need for a writing center at Bilkent University.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the perceived writing needs at Bilkent University and whether establishing a writing center at Bilkent would serve those needs. The initial questions asked both students and instructors addressed among other issues whether students are required to write in their subject-area courses, how often they write and whether they have difficulty in writing. The study also investigated whether establishing a writing center would serve the needs of students. In order to achieve this, as the first step, interviews were conducted with departmental heads, departmental faculty and English instructors. The interviews were transcribed and descriptively analysed. On the basis of the interviews, questionnaires were prepared and distributed to randomly selected groups of students and instructors. The students were selected from freshman year students and senior year students. These two groups of students were selected so as to compare the views of beginning students with those of finishing students. The instructors were also randomly selected from two groups, the first being the English composition instructors themselves and the second being subject



area instructors who teach students of all years. The results were again compared. After identifying the writing needs of students at Bilkent University, viewed from these several perspectives, the study turned to the question of whether the establishment of a writing center at Bilkent University would better serve the writing needs of students in their university studies.

In this chapter, the procedures and processes of selection of participants, data sources, measurement procedures and methods are described.

### Subjects

As the study involved two stages, the subjects at each stage are addressed separately. For the first step which involved the interviews two different groups were selected: subject area instructors and English instructors. The interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

#### Subject-area Instructors

Three subject instructors were randomly selected from the faculties of Social and Administrative Sciences, Business Administration and Humanities and Letters. These above faculties are those that require

their students to take the ENG 101/102 Writing Composition courses. The instructors by chance were two females and one male around the ages of 35-45.

#### English Instructors

Four English instructors were randomly selected from among instructors who had worked at Bilkent for at least one year. The instructors were between the ages of 25-33 and by chance comprised two males and two females. They are responsible for teaching the writing course offered to students of the faculties mentioned previously. All participants were graduates of English Literature programs, and had training in writing instruction. Instructors in the unit are responsible for teaching academic writing to a grand total of about 1200 students who enter the university by successfully passing a proficiency exam administered by the university or an equivalent such as the TOEFL.

For the second step of this research, questionnaires were prepared based on the interview conducted. That is, the items chosen and the questions to be asked were decided with reference to the interviews. The questionnaires were distributed to students; freshman and seniors, as well as faculty;

English instructors and subject area instructors. Since both groups were composed of two sub-groups, each is dealt with separately.

### Students

Students were selected from freshman year students who have just entered the university and senior year students who were about to graduate. Each group is explained individually below.

#### Freshmen

Participants were randomly selected from various faculties who are enrolled in the ENG 101/102 courses. Fifty students, between the ages of 18-20, filled out questionnaires pertaining to their perceived writing needs. These students were currently in their first year at Bilkent University and were taking a writing course along with their subject courses also held in English. In their faculties, in their first year of instruction the students take five classes all of which are held in English. They have all successfully passed the proficiency exam administered by the preparatory school either by studying at the preparatory school for one year or directly taking and passing the exam. This exam is called the COPE and is prepared by the preparatory school itself. COPE tests

students' general language proficiency as well as certain sub-skills like reading, writing and listening in English. Some students have taken an equivalent of the COPE such as the TOEFL or ELTS. The university requires a minimum of 550 from the TOEFL and a 6.5 from ELTS to pass.

As Bilkent University is a private university in Turkey and the cost of tuition is quite high, most of the students come from upper-class socio-economic (SES) backgrounds, apart from the scholarship students who are from a wider range of SES. Scholarship students score in the top 10% range in the country on the university exam and are competitively selected from among many students.

### Seniors

Twenty-five participants were randomly selected among all the seniors who volunteered for the study. These subjects were from various faculties and were about to graduate from the university, all having completed their university studies in four years. They had completed subject courses held in English and had been involved with writing assignments, essay type exams and research papers. These participants were

between the ages of 22-23 and again were of upper-class SES backgrounds.

#### Instructors

The instructors were also randomly selected from two groups. Subject area instructors who were from the faculties of Social and Administrative Sciences, Business Administration and Art, Design and Architecture, and English instructors were among those who teach ENG 101/102 to students from the above faculties.

#### Subject-area Instructors

Twenty instructors from various faculties were randomly selected and asked if they would participate in this research study. These instructors were currently teaching subject-area courses, that is, field-related courses, to students from all years. They assign and assess written tasks and are responsible for both the content and assessment of their courses.

#### English Instructors

Sixteen English instructors, all of whom had had at least one year teaching experience in the Bilkent University English Unit, were asked to participate in this study. Of these instructors 14 agreed to

participate as volunteers in this research study. These instructors teach the ENG 101/102 writing course to beginning students from the faculties mentioned above. They all use the same book for in-class instruction and assess students in the same manner. Participants were from similar educational backgrounds, that is, either Literature or English Language Teaching faculties and most hold at least a Bachelor's degree.

#### Instruments

For this research two types of materials were used: oral interviews and questionnaires. The interviews were organized to cover areas relevant to the aim of the study in relation to the participants' post. Interviews consisted of open-ended questions and were audio-taped. Because they were used to develop the questionnaires, they were not transcribed and are not reported in Chapter 4. Rather, the interviews were listened to and the most salient remarks selected to be included as items in the questionnaires. In other words, interviews formed the basis for the questionnaires as to what type of questions to ask and

what items to include (see Appendix A for the interview questions).

In this thesis, four different questionnaires were prepared and distributed to subject-area instructors, English instructors, freshman students and senior students. All questionnaires contained compatible and comparable questions. The questionnaires consisted of closed Likert-type rating items and one open-ended item which were parallel in all questionnaires (see Appendices B, C, D, E for the questionnaires).

Both the interviews and questionnaires were held in English, as all participants were considered proficient in this language.

#### Procedures

The interviews were held by appointment in the offices of the participants. Each lasted about fifteen (15) minutes. The interviews were taped with the consent of the participant. The reason for having interviews with this group of participants was to enable expression of opinion freely, although, guided by the interviewer through open-ended questions.

After the questionnaires were developed, they were piloted before the actual administration and were assessed for ambiguous questions, repetitiveness, unclear instructions, questions leading to bias, and timing. After the piloting, the necessary changes were made and replaced. Timing was adjusted accordingly.

The questionnaires were handed-out to subject-area instructors and English instructors to be completed on their own time. However, so as to ensure completion, it was requested that they be returned within a week. Instructors were informed of what a writing center is prior to the distribution of the questionnaires. Also there was a definition of a writing center on the first page of each questionnaire.

The participants for both the interviews and the questionnaires were informed beforehand of the purpose of the research as well as of the content in general. All subjects agreed to participate in the study; Confidentiality of responses was guaranteed.

The questionnaires distributed to the students were done so during their English courses, as English is a common course for all students from various



faculties. As with the instructors, the researcher verbally told the students what a writing center was, as well as the purpose of the study. Again consent of the English department was obtained for the use of their class time and efforts for this study. Half an hour was given to students to fill out the questionnaires and they were collected immediately afterwards. This procedure made it possible for the researcher to collect extensive data on the spot. Hence, questionnaire data were collected within two days. Yet, although the intended number was 50 for freshman students and 25 for senior students, absences from classes reduced the amount of student data collected.

The students were also informed of the topic of the research and were asked to be sincere in filling out the questionnaire, as the results would serve to help them with their writing, if the need were perceived as great. Students were selected randomly from class lists at hand in the English Unit. Yet, in the classroom, after the announcement about the research study, volunteers were asked for. Those who did not wish to participate in the study were not

required to do so. All students present agreed to participate.

#### Data Analysis

In order to analyze data, for the Likert-type rating statements, percentages, frequencies and means of each item on each questionnaire were calculated. Responses to the open-ended item on all questionnaires were categorized and similar responses identified. Each questionnaire was first analyzed independently, and then grouped with instructors' and students' responses, so that a comparison of means for each comparable item could be made.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

### Summary of the Study

This study investigated the perceived writing needs of students at Bilkent University and whether the establishment of a writing center would serve those needs. A needs analysis was conducted to determine how beginning students and graduating students perceive their writing needs, as well as how subject instructors and writing instructors perceive students' writing needs.

To collect data, two steps were followed. Initially, interviews were conducted with subject instructors and English writing instructors. The interviews guided in the formulation of the questionnaires. Interviews were not transcribed, but were listened to and the most salient points selected to be included as items in the questionnaires. Four questionnaires were designed and distributed to freshman students, senior students, English writing instructors and subject instructors.

Each questionnaire was designed with the following research questions in mind:

- 1- Are students writing extended discourse in their subject-area courses?

- 2- If so, what kinds of tasks are they writing?
- 3- Are students having difficulty in coping with their writing assignments?
- 4- Is there a need for a writing center to be established at Bilkent University to meet students' needs?
- 5- How do freshmen and senior students perceive their writing needs?
- 6- How do their writing and subject-area instructors perceive their writing needs?
- 7- Would students at Bilkent University benefit from a writing center if one were established?
- 8- What should the characteristics of a writing center at Bilkent University be?

To answer these questions, each questionnaire was first analyzed individually and then within its group. Then, parallel questions from two groups of questionnaires were selected and means compared. The freshman students were compared with senior students and English instructors were compared with subject instructors. Comparisons were done on the perceived writing needs of students by each group.

In this chapter, the results of the data are presented in the following manner. First, the results

of the questionnaires are analyzed. Secondly, the means of selected parallel items from among the students' and instructors' questionnaires are compared.

### Analysis of Questionnaires

In all questionnaires, a 5-point scale of frequency and a 6-point scale of agreement were used. For both scales the cut-off point was determined as 3 or 3.5, that is, on the 5-point scale, 3 or above was analyzed as frequent and on the 6-point scale, 3.5 or above as agreement. Those cut-off points were considered as less frequent or disagreement.

### Freshman Student Questionnaires

A 30-item questionnaire (see Appendix B) was distributed to 50 randomly selected students who were currently enrolled in the ENG 101/102 writing course. Forty-six students completed their questionnaires, a response rate of 92%. Of these 27 were male and 19 female students, 27% of whom were between the ages 17 and 20. Of the 46 respondents, 18 have been speaking and writing in English for 10 years and 13 for more than 10 years. Eighty percent of the respondents had entered the faculties after successfully passing the

COPE proficiency exam administered by the preparatory school at Bilkent University.

To determine whether students were writing, particularly in their subject courses, students were asked if they are assigned writing tasks in their English writing courses and subject-area courses.

The respondents were asked to rate the statement on a 5-point scale of frequency, with 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often and 5=always. The frequency of each item is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Frequency of Writing Tasks Assigned to Freshmen Students (N= 46)

| Course      | f (%)  |          |        |          |        | Total   |
|-------------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|---------|
|             | 1      | 2        | 3      | 4        | 5      |         |
| ENG 101/102 | 2(4.3) | 15(32.6) | 17(37) | 11(23.9) | 1(2.2) | 46(100) |
| Subject     | 4(8.7) | 8(17.4)  | 20(44) | 6(13)    | 3(6.5) | 41(100) |

Note. 1= never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

As indicated in Table 1, of the respondents, 37% responded that they are sometimes assigned writing tasks and 24% said they are often assigned writing tasks in their ENG 101/102 courses. On the other hand, 33% said rarely.

As for how often students are assigned writing tasks in their subject courses, 44% indicated that they were sometimes assigned writing tasks, and 13% responded that they were often assigned writing tasks. Seventeen percent said rarely.

These results indicate that the majority of students indicate that they are at least sometimes assigned writing tasks in their ENG 101/102 courses (63%) and in their subject courses (63%).

In order to determine what types of writing tasks students complete in their subject courses, students were asked to indicate whether they were assigned essay-type exams, research papers and/or oral presentations in their subject-area courses. The possible writing tasks were determined based on the interviews conducted prior to the design of the questionnaire. The item oral presentations is considered a writing task, because it involves the same stages as writing academic essays and students are also expected to turn in a written product.

Students were asked to rate the items on a 5-point scale of frequency. Table 2 shows the frequency with which each type of writing task is assigned:

Table 2

Frequency of Types of Writing Tasks Assigned to Freshmen in Subject Courses (N=46)

| Type of Task       | f (%)  |        |        |        |         | Total   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
|                    | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4      | 5       |         |
| Essay type exams   | 1(2.2) | 2(4.3) | 17(37) | 16(35) | 8(17.4) | 44(100) |
| Research papers    | 7(15)  | 12(26) | 14(30) | 6(13)  | 6(13)   | 45(100) |
| Oral-Presentations | 7(15)  | 12(26) | 14(30) | 6(13)  | 4(8.7)  | 43(100) |

Note. 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

For essay type exams, of the respondents 37% reported that they sometimes take essay type exams, 35% indicated often and 17% pointed out they always take essay type exams in their subject courses.

Regarding research papers, 30% said that they were sometimes assigned research papers. Only 13% claimed that they were often assigned research papers and 13% responded they were always assigned research papers in their subject courses.

Regarding oral presentations, for which students were expected to present written work as noted from the interviews, the percentages obtained were similar to those of research papers. Of the 46 respondents, 30% said that they were sometimes assigned oral presentations in their subject courses. Only 13%



responded often, while 8.7% responded that they were always assigned oral-presentations.

The results indicate that almost all the students (89%) at least sometimes take essay-type exams in their subject courses. A majority of students are sometimes assigned research papers (56%) and oral presentations (52%) in their subject courses.

The next set of questions aimed at determining from whom students receive feedback on their written tasks or if they receive assistance at all. These questions were grouped together as they aim at finding out from whom students receive feedback or guidance most often. The means (M) for all items are presented from highest to lowest in Table 3. Each statement was rated on a 5-point scale of frequency.

Table 3

Source of Feedback to Freshmen Students on Writing (N=46)

| Statement                                                         | <u>M</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| English instructor gives feedback on English writing tasks        | 3.57     |
| Subject instructor gives feedback on organisation of task         | 3.0      |
| I ask my English instructor for assistance on other written tasks | 2.09     |
| Friends help with written tasks                                   | 2.02     |
| Outside assistance on written tasks                               | 1.80     |

Note . 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

Table 3 shows the means ( $\underline{M}$ ) of five statements given in the Freshman students' questionnaire to determine from where students receive feedback. For the first statement "My English instructor gives feedback on my English writing tasks", the 46 respondents on average stated that their English instructors sometimes to often give feedback on their written tasks ( $\underline{M}=3.57$ ). The results also show that students' subject instructors sometimes give feedback on the organisation of their written tasks ( $\underline{M}=3.0$ ). For the item "I ask my English instructor for assistance in completing written assignments for my other courses", the average obtained was 2.09, indicating that students rarely ask their English instructors for assistance on their written tasks assigned by their subject instructors. The data also shows that students rarely ask their friends ( $\underline{M}=2.02$ ) or get outside help for written tasks ( $\underline{M}=1.80$ ). Although the mean for these two statements was lower than expected, other variables may have affected the results of the data, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

### Senior Student Questionnaires

A 31-item questionnaire (see Appendix C) was distributed to 25 randomly selected students who were in their senior year at Bilkent University. Twenty of the respondents completed their questionnaires, a response rate of 80%. Of the 20 respondents, 16 were male and 2 were female. Eighty percent of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 23 and 20% were over 23. Seventy percent of the respondents had entered their faculties after successfully completing the COPE proficiency exam administered by the preparatory school of Bilkent University. All respondents had taken the ENG 101/102 courses offered by the English unit, which at the time were offered as ENG 103/104 and 35% of the respondents had received a letter grade of at most C+ from the course and the rest had received lower grades. Up until 1994 the English composition courses were offered either three hours per week or five hours per week, depending on students' level of proficiency. Eighty-five percent of the sample indicated that they had taken English three hours a week, indicating that their level of proficiency was higher than those who had taken the course five hours a week.

To determine whether senior students have been writing throughout their university academic life at Bilkent, they were asked whether they have been assigned writing tasks in their English and subject-area courses. Students rated the statements on a 5-point scale of frequency. The results of which are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency of Writing Tasks Assigned to Seniors in English Courses (N=20)

| Course  | f (%) |       |        |       |       | Total   |
|---------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|
|         | 1     | 2     | 3      | 4     | 5     |         |
| English | -     | 2(10) | 6(30)  | 8(40) | 4(20) | 20(100) |
| Subject | -     | 2(10) | 11(55) | 4(20) | 3(15) | 20(100) |

Note. 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

As indicated in Table 4, 40% of the respondents said they were often assigned writing tasks in their English courses and 30% said sometimes, while 20% claimed they were always assigned writing tasks in their English courses.

As for subject courses, of the 20 respondents, 55% indicated they were sometimes assigned writing

tasks in their subject courses. Twenty percent claimed often and 15% claimed they were always assigned writing tasks in their subject courses.

The results show that almost all of the senior students were assigned writing tasks at least sometimes in their English courses (90%) as well as at least sometimes in their subject courses (90%) throughout their university academic life.

As in the Freshman students' questionnaire, senior students were asked the types of writing tasks: essay-type exams, research papers, oral presentations, they were assigned throughout their university academic life.

Respondents were asked to rate the items on a 5-point scale of frequency. Table 5 shows the frequency of types of assigned writing tasks.

Table 5

Frequency of Types of Writing Tasks Assigned to Seniors in Subject Courses (N=20)

| Type of Task       | f (%) |       |        |       |       | Total   |
|--------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------|
|                    | 1     | 2     | 3      | 4     | 5     |         |
| Essay type exams   | -     | 2(10) | 7(35)  | 7(35) | 4(20) | 20(100) |
| Research papers    | -     | 5(25) | 10(50) | 1(5)  | 4(20) | 20(100) |
| Oral-Presentations | -     | 2(25) | 11(55) | 2(10) | 2(10) | 17(100) |

Note. 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4 =often, 5=always.

Table 5 shows the frequency of the types of writing tasks senior students were assigned in all their subject courses. The results show that 35% of the 20 respondents said they were sometimes assigned essay type exams and 35% said they were often assigned essay type exams. Twenty percent claimed they were always assigned essay type exams in their subject courses. Not surprisingly, none of respondents indicated they were never assigned essay type exams during their university academic life.

As for research papers 50% indicated they were sometimes assigned. Only 5% indicated they were often assigned research papers, while 20% stated they were always assigned research papers in their subject courses.

The final type of task considered was oral presentations. For this item, 25% said they were sometimes assigned oral presentations in their subject courses, and 10% indicated they were often assigned oral-presentations and the remaining 10% indicated they were always assigned this type of task in their subject courses.

The results show that almost all of the senior students were assigned essay type exams at least

sometimes (90%) in their subject courses. A large majority of seniors also stated they were at least sometimes held responsible for research papers (75%) and oral presentations (75%). Overall, it seems a large percentage of students at Bilkent are regularly assigned written tasks in their subject courses.

Since the same statement about types of writing tasks assigned appears in the Freshman students questionnaire, a comparison of means across the two groups will be given in a later section labelled "Comparison Between Groups".

#### English Instructor Questionnaires

A 23-item questionnaire was distributed to 16 English instructors responsible for the teaching of ENG 101/102 writing courses at Bilkent University (see Appendix D). Although the English Unit has 26 instructors, only 16 were selected as subjects for this study. For the questionnaires to be valid, it was decided instructors had to have been working in the unit for at least one year, because many of the questions in the questionnaire were written so that instructors had to refer to their past experiences about assistance given to former students. Also, it was felt that, in order to be able to perceive

students' writing needs in their subject courses, instructors should have contact with former students. To increase the reliability of the results, all 16 instructors were asked to participate in this study, of whom, two were male and the rest females. Fourteen of the participants returned their questionnaires, a response rate of 87%. Fifty-seven percent of the instructors were between the ages 21 and 30, and 29% between the ages 41 and 50. Of the English instructors in the English Unit, five had been teaching for at least one year and two for more than 20 years. Seven of the instructors had been employed in the English Unit between one and three years and one since Bilkent University was established. Of the respondents, 21% had a Master of Arts degree in English literature or ELT. Eighty-one percent were currently teaching 10 hours a week to students from all faculties that were involved in this research. Nine of the 14 instructors had a total number of 41 to 60 students each semester. All instructors indicated they assigned two written tasks per week, but of them, nine instructors indicated their students only complete one written task per week.



The English instructors' questionnaire was designed in the same manner as the previous two questionnaires. That is, each item sought to address one of the research questions of this study.

To determine whether students are writing in their writing courses, instructors were asked if students write a sufficient amount of assigned essays in their English classes. The respondents were asked to rate this statement on a 6-point scale of agreement, with 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree and 6=strongly agree. The frequency of each item is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Frequency of Essays Written in English Classes (N=14)

| Statement                                                       | f (%) |      |       |       |       |   | Total   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|---|---------|
|                                                                 | 1     | 2    | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6 |         |
| Students write a sufficient amount of essays in English classes | 2(14) | 1(7) | 3(21) | 4(29) | 4(29) | - | 14(100) |

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

Table 6 shows the results of English instructors' opinion whether students write a sufficient amount of essays in their ENG 101/102 courses. Of the 14

respondents, a majority of teachers (57%) at least somewhat agreed students write a sufficient amount of essays in their English classes, while 43% of teachers at least somewhat disagreed.

The results show that overall a higher percentage of English instructors feel that students do write a sufficient amount of essays in their English course. This group also indicated that students are assigned at least two tasks, but complete at least one written task in this course. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of English instructors feel that completing one written task per week is enough.

English instructors were also asked to rate the statement that students write essays in their subject courses on a 6-point scale of agreement. The results of their opinions are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Students' Essay Writing in Subject Courses According to English Instructors. (N=14)

| Statement                                       | <u>M</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Students write essays in their subject courses. | 3.5      |

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

The results show an average rating of 3.5. On the scale used for this statement, 3= "somewhat disagree" and 4= "somewhat agree". A mean of 3.5 indicates that English instructors were indecisive about whether students are expected to complete written tasks in their subject courses.

In order to determine whether English instructors feel that students need extra assistance in completing written tasks, two statements were given to be rated on a 6-point scale of agreement. Table 8 shows the mean score obtained for each statement.

Table 8

Students' Need for Extra Assistance in Writing (N=14)

| <u>Student</u>               | <u>M</u> |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Current ENG 101/102 students | 5.08     |
| Former students              | 4.62     |

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

The results show that, when asked whether current ENG 101/102 students need extra assistance in writing, the mean score obtained was 5.08. That is, the 14 English instructors on the average agree that their current students need extra assistance in writing.

Regarding whether former students need extra assistance in writing in subject courses, there is slightly less agreement on this statement as 4.62 falls between "somewhat agree" and "agree". The results indicate that on the whole the 14 respondents agree that both their current and former students need extra assistance in writing.

English instructors were also asked whether their former students ask them for assistance in completing written work for their subject courses. This statement was rated using the same 6-point scale of agreement. The mean of their ratings is listed in Table 9.

Table 9

Former Students' Request for Assistance in Writing (N=14)

| Statement                              | <u>M</u> |
|----------------------------------------|----------|
| Former students ask me for assistance. | 4.15     |

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

The average response obtained for this statement was 4.15. That is, the 14 instructors agreed somewhat with this statement that students ask them for assistance with their writing assignments in subject courses. In sum, English instructors do not feel

strongly about this statement. However, other variables could have influenced their responses. These variables will be discussed in Chapter 5.

English instructors were also asked if they are able to spare time to give extra assistance to current students and former students. Similar to previous ratings, instructors rated the items on a 6-point scale of agreement. The frequencies are provided in Table 10 below.

Table 10

English Instructors' Time for Extra Assistance (N=14)

|         | f (%) |   |      |       |       |       |         |
|---------|-------|---|------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Student | 1     | 2 | 3    | 4     | 5     | 6     | Total   |
| Current | 3(21) | - | 1(7) | 4(29) | 1(7)  | 4(29) | 13(100) |
| Former  | 2(14) | - | 1(7) | 4(29) | 4(29) | 2(14) | 13(100) |

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

When English instructors were asked whether they have time to give extra assistance to their current students outside of class time, of the 14 instructors, 29% somewhat agreed they do not have time to give extra assistance outside of class hours and 29% strongly agreed that they do not have time, while 21%

indicated they strongly disagreed, that is, they indicated they do have time to provide extra assistance outside of class hours. In sum, a majority of teachers (64%) feel they do not have enough time to give extra assistance to their current students.

When English instructors were asked about assistance to their former students, of the respondents 29% somewhat agreed and 29% agreed with the statement they do not have time to give assistance to former students. Fourteen percent strongly agreed and 14% strongly disagreed with this statement. In sum, the large majority of English instructors (72%) agree that they do not have time to give extra assistance to former students.

Although a majority of English instructors agree with both these statements that they do not have time to give extra assistance to either their current or former students, more instructors said they have less time for former students (72%) than for current students (64%).

#### Departmental Faculty

#### (Subject Instructors) Questionnaires

A 24-item questionnaire was distributed to 15 randomly selected subject instructors working at the

relevant faculties (See Appendix E). Only 10 questionnaires were completed, a response rate of 67%. Of the 10 respondents, only two were female and eight were male. Forty percent were between the ages 31 and 40, 40% between the ages 41 and 50 and the remaining 20% over 50 years of age. Three of the instructors had between one to three years of teaching experience at Bilkent University and one since Bilkent was established and one less than a year of teaching experience at Bilkent University. Six of the ten subject instructors hold a masters degree and four a Ph.D. degree in their field. All of the respondents currently teach ten hours per week to at least a total of 60 students.

The questionnaire for the subject instructors was also prepared with the same research questions in mind. In order to determine how well subject instructors feel their students are able to complete written assignments in their courses, they were asked if their students are able to write academic essays, research papers, and essay type exams.

The respondents were asked to rate the statement on a 6-point scale of agreement. The results of each item are listed in Table 11.

Table 11

Students' Ability to Write According to Subject Instructors (N=10)

| Type of Writing  | f (%) |       |       |       |       |   | Total   |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|---------|
|                  | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6 |         |
| Academic Essay   | -     | 1(10) | 3(30) | 4(40) | 2(20) | - | 10(100) |
| Research Papers  | 2(20) | 2(20) | 3(30) | 2(20) | 1(10) | - | 10(100) |
| Essay Type Exams | -     | 1(10) | 2(20) | 4(40) | 3(30) | - | 10(100) |

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

As Table 11 indicates, for academic essays, 60% of the subject instructors feel that their students are able to write academic essays and 40% feel they are not able to.

For research papers, a majority (70%) of subject instructors indicated they disagreed that their students can write research papers, compared with 30% who agreed that their students are able to write research papers.

Regarding essay type exams, a large majority of the subject instructors (70%) agreed that their students can complete essay type exams. On the other hand, 30% disagreed.

In sum, results show that the large majority of subject instructors believe that their students can



successfully write essay exams (70%) followed by 60% who feel students can write academic essays and only 30% who feel students can write research papers. In fact, none of the respondents indicated strong agreement that their students are able to write any of the writing tasks.

Subject instructors were asked whether they think their students need extra assistance with their writing, if they have time to give feedback to their students about their writing, and finally how they evaluate their students' writing, that is, whether they only look for content knowledge in their students' writing.

The respondents were asked to rate these statements on a 6-point scale of agreement. Table 12 shows the mean rating of each of the statements.

Table 12

Students' Need for Extra Assistance in Writing According to Subject Instructors (N=10)

| Statement                                                  | M    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Students need extra assistance.                            | 4.89 |
| I do not have time to give feedback outside of class time. | 3.8  |
| I look for content knowledge.                              | 4.1  |

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

The results show that the ten respondents on average agreed that their students do need extra assistance with their writing tasks ( $\underline{M}=4.89$ ). For the statement regarding time to give feedback, the average score was 3.8, that is, the subject instructors on average somewhat agreed they do not have time to give assistance. With regards to what they look for in students' writing, the results show that instructors somewhat agreed that they only look for content knowledge in students' writing ( $\underline{M}=4.1$ ).

In sum, subject instructors believe that students at Bilkent University need extra assistance in writing, even though they reported only looking for content knowledge in their writing, and that they do not have the time to provide it.

### Comparison Between Groups

#### Freshman Students versus Senior Students

To determine whether both Freshman students and senior students agreed about their perceived writing needs, comparable questions were asked of each group. This section examines and compares the mean ratings for each item across student groups.

To compare the opinions of freshman students and senior students and establish how often students are writing in their subject courses, students were asked to respond to the statement that they are assigned writing tasks in their subject courses. Respondents rated this statement on a 5-point scale of frequency. The results of the two groups are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Frequency of Writing Tasks Assigned (Comparison across Student Groups)

| Student Group   | <u>M</u> |
|-----------------|----------|
| Freshman (N=46) | 2.90     |
| Senior (N=20)   | 3.40     |

Note. 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

The results show that freshman averaged in the sometimes range (M=2.90), whereas, seniors were closer to the often range (M=3.40) in terms of frequency of writing tasks assigned. That is, the two groups differed as to how often they reported being assigned writing tasks: Seniors reported more writing assignments than Freshman, perhaps because instructors are less demanding in the freshman year in assigning writing tasks.

In order to determine what types of writing tasks students are assigned, both student groups were asked to indicate how often they were assigned essay-type exams, research papers, and oral presentations. Respondents rated these statements on a 5-point scale of frequency. The means calculated for each item can be found in Table 14.

Table 14

Frequency of Types of Writing Tasks Assigned (Comparison across Student Groups)

| Task Type          | <u>M</u>           |                   |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                    | Student Groups     |                   |
|                    | Freshmen<br>(N=46) | Seniors<br>(N=20) |
| Essay Type Exams   | 3.64               | 3.63              |
| Research Papers    | 2.82               | 3.20              |
| Oral-Presentations | 2.72               | 3.05              |

Note . 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

The ratings of the freshmen and seniors were similar. Essay-type exams were rated the most frequently assigned writing task by both groups: Freshmen averaged 3.64, which is between sometimes and often. Seniors rated this item 3.63. That is, both

groups indicate that they are sometimes to often assigned essay-type exams.

For research papers, the mean for freshmen was 2.82 between rarely and sometimes, and for seniors the mean was 3.20, close to sometimes. As for the item oral presentations, the mean obtained from the freshman group was 2.72 between rarely and sometimes, and the mean obtained from the senior group was 3.05, or sometimes.

The results show that overall both groups indicated that they are sometimes assigned essay-type exams, research papers and oral presentations. Both groups reported essay exams as the most frequent writing task assigned. Seniors report research papers and oral presentations assigned more often than freshmen did.

To determine whom students asked for assistance in completing writing tasks for their subject courses, students were asked to respond to whether they asked their English instructors, a friend and/or outside help for assistance with writing assignments. Respondents rated the items on a 5-point scale of frequency. The mean responses are given in Table 15.

Table 15

Source of Assistance (Comparison across Student Groups)

| Source of Assistance | <u>M</u>           |                   |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                      | Student Groups     |                   |
|                      | Freshmen<br>(N=46) | Seniors<br>(N=20) |
| English Instructor   | 2.09               | 1.31              |
| Friends              | 2.02               | 2.25              |
| Outside help         | 1.8                | 1.6               |

Note . 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

The results show that the mean of Freshmen who asked their English instructors for help was 2.09, for friends, 2.02 and for outside help, 1.8. The mean of seniors who asked their English instructors was 1.31, friends, 2.25 and outside help, 1.6. In the scale of frequency 1=never and 2=rarely. In sum, students rarely refer to any of the sources indicated for assistance with their writing tasks assigned in their subject courses. Seniors reported a slightly greater use of friends than freshmen and slightly less use of English instructors. Overall both groups rarely refer to outside sources for assistance with their writing tasks in their subject courses. Furthermore, they rarely ask their English instructors or friends for help.

To determine students' attitudes and opinions about their capability in writing, they were asked whether they liked to write, knew the rules of writing before Bilkent, learned the rules in their ENG 101/102 courses, if they can write essays of a good quality, if they are proficient writers, if they were able to cope with writing tasks assigned in their courses, if they feel confident about writing, and if they think their writing ability has not interfered with their academic performance. Students rated these statements on a 6-point scale of agreement.

The mean for each statement was calculated for comparison between freshmen and seniors. The results are reported in Table 16.

Table 16

Students' Opinions about their Writing Abilities (Comparison across Student Groups)

| Statement key words                   | <u>M</u>           |                   |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                                       | Student Groups     |                   |
|                                       | Freshmen<br>(N=46) | Seniors<br>(N=20) |
| Like to write.                        | 3.44               | 3.2               |
| Knew the rules before Bilkent.        | 3.0                | 3.4               |
| Learned the rules in ENG 101/102.     | 3.53               | 2.7               |
| Can write academic essays.            | 3.53               | 3.95              |
| Proficient writer.                    | 3.26               | 3.35              |
| Can cope with writing in all courses. | 3.77               | 4.42              |
| Confident about writing.              | 3.55               | 4.25              |
| Writing ability/ performance.         | 3.24               | 3.85              |

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

As can be seen from Table 16, for the statement "I like to write" freshmen averaged 3.44 and seniors 3.2, indicating somewhat disagreement. For "knew the rules" freshmen averaged 3.0, seniors 3.4, also indicating somewhat disagreement. For the statement "learned the rules in ENG 101/102", the freshmen mean was 3.53, somewhat agreement and senior mean was 2.7, indicating somewhat disagreement. The statement "I can write academic essays" averaged 3.53 from freshmen and 3.95 from seniors, indicating somewhat agreement. When asked if they were proficient writers, respondents in the freshmen group averaged 3.26 and respondents in



the senior group averaged 3.35, both indicating somewhat disagreement. Similarly, when asked if they can cope with the tasks assigned, the mean of freshmen was 3.77, indicating somewhat agreement and the mean of seniors 4.42, again indicating somewhat agreement. For the statement "confident about writing" freshmen respondents averaged 3.55, and seniors averaged 4.25, both indicating somewhat agreement. Finally, for the statement "writing ability has not interfered with my academic performance" respondents in the freshmen group averaged 3.24, indicating somewhat disagreement and senior respondents on the contrary, averaged 3.85, indicating somewhat agreement. Overall, both groups fall in the somewhat range of disagreement and agreement when their opinions about their writing capabilities were asked. That is, no definite opinions were given. It can be concluded that both groups feel competent about their writing, though seniors much more so than freshmen, but interestingly, both groups disagree about being proficient writers, and freshmen disagree that their writing ability does not interfere with their academic studies.

To determine in which stages of the writing process students have difficulty, students were asked

to rate lack of difficulty in various areas of writing: generating ideas, developing ideas, organising ideas, supporting ideas and formulating a thesis statement. Respondents rated these items using a 6-point scale of agreement. Results are listed in Table 17.

Table 17

Lack of Difficulty in Writing (Comparison across Student Groups)

| Areas of Writing     | <u>M</u>                    |                            |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
|                      | Students Groups             |                            |
|                      | Freshmen<br>( <u>N</u> =46) | Seniors<br>( <u>N</u> =20) |
| Generating Ideas     | 4.28                        | 4.9                        |
| Developing Ideas     | 4.33                        | 4.8                        |
| Organising Ideas     | 4.15                        | 4.4                        |
| Supporting Ideas     | 4.30                        | 4.35                       |
| Formulating a Thesis | 4.07                        | 4.3                        |

Note . 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

Table 17 presents the mean scores for both the freshmen and senior respondents for the areas of writing students do not have difficulty in. For generating ideas freshmen averaged a mean of 4.28, or somewhat agree, and seniors a mean of 4.9, indicating agreement. For developing ideas the freshmen average was 4.33, or somewhat agree, and seniors' 4.8,

indicating agreement. For organising ideas freshmen respondents indicated a mean of 4.15, and seniors a mean of 4.4, both indicating somewhat agreement. For supporting ideas freshmen averaged 4.30 and seniors 4.35, indicating somewhat agreement. Finally, for formulating a thesis statement, freshmen respondents averaged 4.07 and senior respondents averaged 4.3, again indicating somewhat agreement.

The results show that while freshman students averaged in the somewhat agree range for all areas of writing considered, senior students feel slightly more confident about their writing. They averaged in the agree range on two items and in the somewhat agree range on the other items. Overall, seniors' average were higher for all aspects of writing, that is, they reported less difficulty with writing.

Both groups were also asked whether they needed extra assistance in writing and whether they would use a writing center. Again, respondents rated the statements on a 6-point scale of agreement. The mean scores are listed in Table 18.

Table 18

Need for Extra Assistance in Writing (Comparison across Student Groups)

| Statement                  | <u>M</u>           |                   |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                            | Student Groups     |                   |
|                            | Freshmen<br>(N=46) | Seniors<br>(N=20) |
| Need Extra Assistance      | 2.7                | 3.6               |
| Would Use a Writing Center | 3.62               | 4.15              |

Note . 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

With regards to needing extra assistance in writing, the mean score for freshmen was 2.7, indicating disagreement. The mean score for seniors was 3.6, between somewhat disagree and somewhat agree. In sum, senior students somewhat agreed they need assistance, whereas freshmen somewhat disagreed they needed assistance.

Regarding whether students would use a writing center, the mean score for freshmen was 3.62, between somewhat disagree and somewhat agree, and seniors 4.15, indicating somewhat agreement. Results show that freshmen students are not as enthusiastic about using a writing center as senior students, who on the other hand, somewhat agree they would have used a writing center.

An open-ended question of what students' expectations would be from a writing center was asked of both groups and only six seniors responded to this question. Unfortunately, none of the 46 freshman respondents answered this question. The most common responses of the senior respondents (4) was that especially students coming from a regular high school should be encouraged to use the center and promotion as to the benefits of the center should be emphasized.

English Writing Instructors versus Subject Instructors

To determine whether English instructors and subject instructors agreed in their opinions about the writing needs of their students, comparative questions were asked to both groups of respondents. This section examines and compares the mean ratings for each item across instructor groups.

Instructors were asked to give their opinion about whether their students like to write. Instructors used a 6-point scale of agreement. The results are shown in Table 19.

Table 19

Instructors' Opinion of Students' Liking to Write (Comparison across Instructor Groups)

| Statement                  | <u>M</u>                                  |                                           |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|                            | Instructor Groups                         |                                           |
|                            | English<br>Instructors<br>( <u>N</u> =14) | Subject<br>Instructors<br>( <u>N</u> =10) |
| My students like to write. | 3.0                                       | 2.89                                      |

Note . 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

The results show that English instructors rated this statement as 3.0, which is exactly somewhat disagree and subject instructors rated the item with an average of 2.89, close to somewhat disagree on the same scale. That is, both groups of respondents, English instructors as well as subject instructors, somewhat disagree that their students like to write.

A comparative question was also asked to determine what kinds of writing tasks students are able to complete, from the following list: academic essays, research papers and essay-type exams. The results of the means for each item, rated on the same 6-point scale of agreement, are displayed in Table 20.

Table 20

Students' Ability to Complete Writing Tasks (Comparison across Instructor Groups)

| Type of Task     | <u>M</u>                  |                               |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                  | Instructor Groups         |                               |
|                  | ENG Instructors<br>(N=14) | Subject Instructors<br>(N=10) |
| Academic Essays  | 4.5                       | 3.7                           |
| Research Papers  | 3.23                      | 2.8                           |
| Essay Type Exams | 4.0                       | 3.9                           |

Note . 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

For the rating of academic essays, the average rating for English instructors was 4.5, indicating agreement, and 3.7 for subject instructors, indicating somewhat agreement. For research papers the mean score for English instructors was 3.23, and 2.8 for the subject instructors, indicating somewhat disagreement that students can complete research papers. Finally, for essay-type exams the respondents in the English instructor group averaged 4.0, and subject instructors averaged 3.9, indicating somewhat agreement that their students can complete essay-type exams.

Both English instructors and subject-area instructors disagreed that their students can write research papers. On the other hand, they somewhat

agreed their students can complete essay type exams and oral presentations. Subject instructors' responses were lower, and they rated academic essays higher than essay-type exams, in contrast to English instructors.

To determine in which areas of the writing process instructors feel that their students do not have difficulty, they were asked to respond to students' lack of difficulty in developing their ideas, organising their ideas and formulating a thesis statement. Both groups were asked to rate each item on a 6-point scale of agreement. Means of each item are reported in Table 21.

Table 21

Lack of Difficulty in the Stages of Writing (Comparison across Instructor Groups)

| Stages of Writing    | <u>M</u>                  |                               |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                      | Instructor Groups         |                               |
|                      | ENG Instructors<br>(N=14) | Subject Instructors<br>(N=10) |
| Developing Ideas     | 4.2                       | 4.34                          |
| Organising Ideas     | 4.31                      | 4.03                          |
| Formulating a Thesis | 4.2                       | 4.3                           |

Note .1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

The mean rating score of English instructors for developing ideas was 4.2 and for subject instructors



4.34, indicating somewhat agreement. For organising ideas, the mean rating for English instructors was 4.31 and for subject instructors 4.03, indicating somewhat agreement. As for respondents' opinion about students' being able to formulate a thesis statement, the average rating for English instructors was 4.2, and 4.3 for subject instructors, indicating somewhat agreement. That is, for these stages of writing, both groups of respondents somewhat agreed their students do not have difficulty in completing these stages of writing.

Finally, instructors were asked their opinions about whether they feel students would benefit from a facility that offers assistance in writing and if they would encourage their students to use a writing center.

Both groups of instructors rated these statements on a 6-point scale of agreement. The mean scores for each item are displayed in Table 22.

Table 22

Instructors' Opinion about Encouraging Students to Use a Writing Center (Comparison across Instructor Groups)

| Statement                                             | <u>M</u>                  |                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                       | Instructor Groups         |                               |
|                                                       | ENG Instructors<br>(N=14) | Subject Instructors<br>(N=10) |
| Students would benefit from a writing center.         | 5.5                       | 5.7                           |
| I would encourage students in using a writing center. | 5.32                      | 5.89                          |

Note .1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree.

The mean rating of English instructors as to students benefiting from a writing center was 5.5 and of subject-area instructors 5.7, indicating strong agreement. When asked whether they would encourage students to use a writing center, the mean for English instructors was 5.3, indicating agreement, and for subject-area instructors 5.9, indicating strong agreement. In sum, both groups of instructors feel strongly that students at Bilkent would benefit from a writing center and report they would encourage their students to use a writing center.

When these results are compared with those of students, the results are striking. As it can be seen in Table 18, students rated these statements as somewhat agree. That is, students feel more confident about their writing and are less enthusiastic towards using a writing center, whereas, instructors feel that students do indeed need assistance in writing and would strongly encourage their students to use a writing center.

In this chapter the statistical results of the questionnaires were presented. Analysis of individual items was either of frequencies and percentages, or means of items. A discussion of findings and conclusions based on these results are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

### Summary of the Study

This research study was intended to identify the writing needs of students at Bilkent University in order to determine whether establishing a writing center would serve those needs. There were two sample groups for this study: students and instructors, and two categories within each group: freshman and senior students, and English and subject instructors. Forty-six freshman students, 20 senior students, 14 English instructors and 10 subject instructors participated in this study. All groups were administered semi-structured questionnaires which consisted of both individual and parallel questions. Prior to the development and administration of the questionnaires, however, interviews were conducted with four English instructors and three subject instructors. The interviews contributed to the development of the questionnaires. Questionnaires consisted of mostly items which respondents rated using either a 6-point Likert-type scale of agreement or a 5-point Likert scale of frequency. One open-ended item asked respondents what their expectations would be from a writing center at Bilkent University. In the analysis of the questionnaires, frequencies, percentages and means were calculated for each item separately and

then a comparison of means was conducted between groups. Although there were very few responses to the open-ended item, responses were analyzed through the identification of categories.

### Discussion of the Findings

This section discusses the findings and the conclusions of the study that have been drawn in relation to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Each section refers to one of the research questions. In addition, where relevant, references to the review of the literature are made.

#### Are Students Writing in their Subject Courses?

In order to determine the writing needs of students, it was first necessary to find out whether students are in fact writing in their subject courses. Therefore, this question was the first research question addressed. Freshman and senior students were asked this question and the results showed that students in their first year were sometimes assigned writing tasks in their subject courses but more so in their English courses, which is natural since it is a writing course. English instructors also pointed out that their students were assigned around two tasks per week, but completed only one, which most instructors believed was sufficient. Senior students also

indicated that they were assigned writing tasks in their subject courses more often than freshmen, it can be concluded that students in general are writing at Bilkent University.

The simple fact that students are writing is an important issue in itself, because writing not only improves written abilities but also helps in the development of thinking skills. As Gage (1986, cited in Rehage, 1986) notes writing is not solely a skill to be mastered, but an ongoing reflection of students' developing an understanding of ideas.

#### What Kinds of Writing Tasks are Students Writing?

After the fact that students are actually writing in their subject courses was established, the next crucial point to be investigated in this study was what kinds of writing tasks students are completing. The results indicated that overall students are assigned essay-type exams most often, which is common in a university environment. They are also sometimes given research papers and oral presentations. This is natural since these types of writing tasks are demanding, that is, they require thinking and time, both for the students and the instructors and can not be assigned more than once a semester. In fact, subject instructors indicated during the interviews that due to the large number of students in their

classes, they even resort to other kinds of testing as well, rather than only giving essay exams.

#### Are Students Having Difficulty in Writing?

Although this question was worded differently on the four questionnaires, all four groups were asked their opinion about students' writing. Results were interesting in that especially freshmen students felt they were competent in writing and that they could successfully complete written tasks. Senior students also felt they could cope with the tasks assigned, but said they had difficulty at certain stages of their writing. Interestingly, students felt they could cope with writing assignments but also indicated they were not proficient writers and their writing interfered with their studies.

Affective and motivational factors could have influenced freshmen students in their opinions about their writing ability. People in general do not like to accept that they need help and also as this was their first year in a University environment, students were highly motivated. Also, instructors tend to be more lenient towards students in their freshman year, as freshmen are encountering their first experience of university academic life, so may not look for writing abilities but only for content.

Where Students Receive Assistance for their Written  
Tasks

Once the fact was established that students are held responsible for completing written tasks both in their English and subject courses, it was believed that they would receive some form of feedback, either written or oral, for their product. This question was related to the need for establishing a writing center, although it was not research question in this study. Results showed that students often receive feedback from their English instructors, which is not surprising as this is part of teaching writing. Subject instructors sometimes give feedback on the organization of students' written work, but mostly look for content information. In fact, as mentioned previously, subject instructors are currently teaching a large number of students and giving extensive feedback is difficult and time-consuming for teachers, and so may not happen very often.

Time allocation for assistance with writing outside of class is a crucial issue, because both English and subject instructors reported during the interviews they would like to provide more assistance to their students, but due to lack of time, instructors felt that they could not. The researcher strongly believes that to give students assistance



with their writing is a long and intensive process and in order for it to be beneficial, it needs to be a process that extends over a period of time, working with individual students. In fact, research shows that there are tremendous effects of one-on-one tutoring. As Harris (1986) points out, it sets the stage for opportunities of productive dialogues between student writers and teacher-readers and such dialogues are an integral part of teaching as well as learning to write. For such dialogues to take place, students should be provided with a place where they can go and get assistance. In this way the workload placed upon instructors, both English and subject instructors, can be reduced, which in turn would increase the productivity of students and instructors in terms of the quality of work.

Another interesting result was that students indicated that they rarely ask their friends for help or seek outside assistance. Actually the researcher in this study expected that students would indicate asking their friends for assistance more often than the results indicated. However, there could have been other variables that affected the results. Firstly, students may have been reluctant to admit getting assistance from friends or others, so the reported results are not consistent with actual assistance

sought. This point will be discussed further in the limitations of the study section.

#### Students' and Instructors' Perceptions of Students'

##### Writing Needs

English and subject instructors agreed that their students needed extra assistance with their writing, and that students would benefit from a writing center. This result is not surprising, as most instructors are aware of the importance of writing in an academic environment and feel that students in general need improvement in this area. Freshmen somewhat disagreed they need extra assistance in writing, whereas seniors somewhat agreed that they do.

#### Making Use of and Benefiting from a Writing Center

Research suggests that writing centers are very beneficial since they are facilities that offer individual assistance in writing to all students enrolled in a university. Therefore, this question was the most significant research question in this study. Yet, no striking results were obtained. Students in general said they would use a writing center when necessary, but again senior students were much more positive than freshmen that a writing center would have been useful for them during their university academic life.

Instructors, both subject and English instructors, strongly agreed that their students would benefit from a writing center and said they would encourage their students to make use of such a facility that offers assistance in writing, especially the subject-area instructors.

In conclusion, it can be summed up that, students at Bilkent University are in fact held responsible for completing written tasks in their subject courses, but they are not completely proficient in this skill. In addition, instructors in general believe that students at Bilkent would benefit from a center which helps students who need assistance at any stage of their writing.

Although a writing center might benefit students at Bilkent, a center based exclusively on models from the United States would not necessarily be effective in Turkey, as students at Bilkent are EFL students, that is, English is a foreign language to them, and their needs are different than those of native speakers, or even ESL students. Powers and Nelson (1995) stated that there is a difference between L1 and L2 writers and that the learning strategies of learners may be different, as well, suggesting that the teaching strategies used for L2 learners would have to be different, as well. Therefore, the general

features of a writing center would need to be determined according to the needs of students at Bilkent University, taking into consideration that Turkish students' learning strategies may be different. Also, the institutional constraints and requirements of the instructors would need to be considered.

A close look at the results of the questionnaires reveals that students were not highly enthusiastic about whether a writing center would benefit them. Although this research was started with the idea that a writing center might help students and increase the quality of writing at Bilkent University, students' perceptions of the need for establishing a writing center were not strongly indicated. There are several reasons for this belief.

Firstly, since there are too many students in classrooms, instructors mainly look for content in their students' writing. That is, most instructors do not concentrate on the writing skills of their students in terms of organization that English writing instructors emphasize in the ENG 101/102 writing course. This in turn causes discrepancy between what is taught in their writing courses and what is sought in the subject-area courses, which results in

students' lack of concern about other aspects of their writing besides content.

Secondly, the fact that freshmen students feel that they are competent in writing will reduce the probability that they would seek guidance from a writing center if one were established. The percentage of students actually using the center might be very low. Since establishing a center necessitates high costs, it needs to be ensured that students will make use of a facility that offers help in writing.

As for the possible reasons why students may be reluctant to use a writing center, cultural issues, educational issues and motivational issues can be given as possible reasons. Turkish people in general are reluctant to admit that they might need assistance or guidance with their writing. They are often overconfident and sometimes overestimate their competence in a given area.

Also, the educational system in Turkey, starting from elementary school, does not allow students to be independent learners. In order for students to benefit from a writing center, that is, students going to the center on their own time and at their own will necessitates independent learners. If students are not autonomous, it will take more effort for them to actually use a writing center at their own will.

Similarly, students need to be motivated to use a facility on their own. Yet, if subject area instructors can only concentrate on content and students are content with the grades they receive, they may see no reason for spending time at a writing center.

The possible reasons mentioned above are variables that need to be studied before a decision to establish a writing center is made. Although the results of this study indicate that students do need to improve their writing, a preliminary step needs to be taken before establishing a writing center, particularly to determine what the characteristics of a writing center at Bilkent University should be.

A small-scale pilot project could be established with little effort and cost. Since the results of this study show that students in general have difficulty coping with research papers, a small writing center staffed by one or two trained tutors could be established to provide assistance with research papers, for students to use on a voluntary basis. Whether students make use of this center and whether their writing of research papers improves could be observed. At the end of this pilot study, whether to establish a writing center to serve all writing needs

could be determined and the model could be further refined if the decision is affirmative.

Another possibility for addressing the writing needs of Bilkent University students would be to establish a Writing Across the Curriculum Program (WAC), that is, collaborative work among the writing instructors and subject area instructors so as to improve the quality of students' writing (Connolly and Vilardi, 1986). In this type of program, subject-area instructors are trained to search for the same criteria set by the writing instructors (Kroll, 1990). There is considerable literature in this area that could be explored in more detail, that could be followed by another pilot study to determine the feasibility of such a program at Bilkent University.

#### Limitations of the Study

There were design issues regarding the questionnaires that may have effected the results of the study. Firstly, the scale used in all the questionnaires contained neutral items such as "sometimes", "somewhat agree" and "somewhat disagree", which did not force the respondents to answer in any particular manner. Originally it was believed that the participants should feel comfortable while filling out the questionnaire and not get frustrated that they are

being forced to make clear choices. However, the results in all four questionnaires clustered around these neutral areas. This flexibility in the design of the questionnaires in turn did not allow for striking or concrete results as respondents tended to choose the more flexible choices.

The second limitation was the sample size for all groups. Although groups were intended to be 50 freshman, 25 seniors, 16 English instructors and 15 subject instructors, only 46 freshmen, 20 seniors, 14 English instructors and 10 subject-area instructors participated in the study. Overall, group sizes were not large enough, especially the subject instructor groups. More subjects would have increased the reliability of the data.

Another limitation could be regarding the issue of reported data versus actual behavior which is a potential problem with this type of research study. Respondents can be reluctant to answering honestly to items that address personal or academic issues.

#### Implications for Future Research

This research study was inspired by the suggestions for future research made by a colleague in her study on students' reactions to teacher feedback. She suggested that as most students had voiced their



need for feedback and this can not be provided solely by the class instructor, a writing center could serve this need (Uzel, 1995).

In a writing center the bulk of work is dependent on the tutors involved in the program, who are trained initially to work at the center. This is because in a writing center, tutors work individually, that is, one-on-one, with the students and this is not a simple task. Tutors need to be trained in this area. The literature in this area is extensive and could be further explored and a study conducted on the benefits of one-on-one tutoring especially for Turkish students, since the needs of Turkish students may be different from American students, due to cultural differences.

Another suggestion for further research could be in the area of exploring the differences between L1 and L2 writers. Research indicates that there exists a difference, but this could be further restricted to the differences between native-speakers of English and non-native Turkish speakers of English.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, in the United States many universities have incorporated Writing Across the Curriculum Programs to increase the quantity and quality of students' writing. This type of program might prove effective with students at

Bilkent University. Therefore, a needs assessment could be conducted to determine the suitability of such a program at Bilkent University.

## References

- Berwick, R. (1989). The role of needs analysis in adult ESL program design. In R.K. Johnson (Ed.), The second language curriculum (pp. 63-78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, A. N. (1989). Writing centers: How they succeed or fail. Illinois State University. CD Rom Abstracts: Document #118.
- Connolly, P. & Vilardi, T. (1986). New methods in college writing programs. New York, N.Y.: The Modern Language Association of America.
- Harris, M. (1986). Teaching one to one: The writing conference. Washington, D.C. USA.: The National Council of Teachers of English.
- Kroll, B. (1991). Second language writing. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kroll, B. (1990). Teaching writing in the ESL context. In M.Celce-Murcia (Ed.), Teaching English as a second or foreign language (pp. 245-263). Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle.
- North, S. (1987). The making of knowledge in composition: Portrait of an emerging field. New Jersey: Boynton/Cook.

- Powers, J. & Nelson, J. (1995). L2 writers and the writing center: A national survey of writing center conferencing at graduate institutions. Journal of Second Language Writing, 4(2), 113-138.
- Rehage, K. (1986). The teaching of writing. Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.
- Taylor-Esscoffery, B. (1992). The influences of the writing center on college students' perceptions of the functions of written language. CD Rom Abstracts: Document #458.
- Tchudi, S.N. (1986). Teaching writing in the content areas: College level. Washington, D.C.: The National Society for the Study of Education.
- VanDam, D. (1986). Effects of writing center usage and motivation of academic writing performance. CD Rom Abstracts: Document #89.
- Uzel, Elif. (1995). A descriptive study of first-year university students' reactions to teachers' written feedback, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.
- Weiner, H. (1981). The writing room. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

- Withrock, M. (Ed). (1986). Handbook of Research on Teaching. 3rd. Edition. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Zamel, V. (1983). The composing processes of advanced ESL students: Six case studies. TESOL Quarterly, 17, 165-187.

## Appendix A

## Interview Questions

Subject-area Instructors

1. I am interested in finding out whether or not there is concern among departmental faculty about students' writing. Do you require your students to complete written assignments in your course?
2. What kinds of written tasks? How well do they do?
3. If students are weak writers, do you feel that this interferes with their academic performance in your courses or the department?
4. If the university was provided with a facility that offers help to students with their written assignments, would you encourage your students to use it?
5. Would students benefit from such a facility ? If so in what ways
6. What would your expectations be from such a facility?

English Instructors

1. I am interested in finding out whether or not there is concern among writing instructors at Bilkent about incoming students' writing. Could you tell me about your students.
2. How do you feel about students' writing ability when they first start ENG 101? and at the end of the 101/102 sequence?
3. What role do you think language proficiency plays in students' writing?
4. If students are not very proficient writers, do you feel that this would interfere with students' academic performance their departments?
5. Have you heard from your former students about their writing assignments in their departments and how well they do in these assignments?
6. Have you heard anything from departmental faculty about students' writing? What have you heard?
7. If the university was provided with a facility that offers help to students of all years with their written assignments, do you think;
  - departmental faculty would encourage students to make use of it?
  - would students make use of it?

-would you recommend/ require your first year  
students to use it?

8. What would your expectations be from such a  
facility?



## Appendix B

### FRESHMAN STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is for a research project for the MA TEFL Program at Bilkent University. Its purpose is to determine if there is a need to establish a writing center at Bilkent University. A writing center can be defined as a facility that offers assistance in writing to all students on campus.

You are one of the participants who has been selected randomly to complete this questionnaire. The aim of this study is not to evaluate writing instructors, English Unit Courses, or students' writing, but rather to determine the needs of the students with regards to their writing assignments both for English Unit courses as well as for subject courses.

There is no risk involved and all responses will be kept confidential. Please answer the questions honestly. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire!

Sule BERILGEN GUVEN

**PART I. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Directions: For items 1- 7 please place a tick in the most appropriate LINE \_\_\_\_ or write out the answer where necessary.

1- Gender

a) male \_\_\_\_\_

b) female \_\_\_\_\_

2- Age

a) between 17-20 \_\_\_\_\_

b) between 21-23 \_\_\_\_\_

c) over 24 \_\_\_\_\_

3- Please indicate the faculty/ department you are currently studying at:

\_\_\_\_\_

4- Proficiency exam taken when entering Bilkent:

a) COPE \_\_\_\_\_

b) ELTS \_\_\_\_\_

c) FCE \_\_\_\_\_

d) TOEFL \_\_\_\_\_

e) other; please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

5- Please indicate the letter grade you received for ENG 101: \_\_\_\_\_

6- Number of years I have been studying English:

- a) less than a year \_\_\_\_\_
- b) 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_
- c) 4-6 \_\_\_\_\_
- d) 7-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- e) over 10 years \_\_\_\_\_

7- Number of years I have been writing in English:

- a) less than a year \_\_\_\_\_
- b) 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_
- c) 4-6 \_\_\_\_\_
- d) 7-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- e) over 10 years \_\_\_\_\_

## **PART II. INFORMATION ABOUT MY WRITING SITUATION**

A. Directions: Please read the following statements and circle the number of the most appropriate response.

- 1 never
- 2 rarely
- 3 sometimes
- 4 often
- 5 always

8- I am assigned writing tasks in my;

- a) ENG 101/102 courses 1 2 3 4 5
- b) other subject courses 1 2 3 4 5

- 1 never
- 2 rarely
- 3 sometimes
- 4 often
- 5 always

9- In my other courses, I am assigned;

- a) essay type exams 1 2 3 4 5
- b) Research Papers 1 2 3 4 5
- c) Oral-Presentations 1 2 3 4 5

10- My English instructor gives feed back my writing 1 2 3 4 5

11- My subject teachers give feed back on the organization of  
my writing 1 2 3 4 5

12- I ask my English instructor for assistance in completing  
written assignments for my other courses 1 2 3 4 5

13- .I ask my friends for help with my writing 1 2 3 4 5

14- I get outside assistance with my writing 1 2 3 4 5

**B. Directions:** Please read the following statements and circle the number of the most appropriate response.

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 disagree
- 3 somewhat disagree
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 agree
- 6 strongly agree

15- I like to write 1 2 3 4 5 6

16- I knew the rules of writing before I entered Bilkent 1 2 3 4 5 6

1 strongly disagree  
 2 disagree  
 3 somewhat disagree  
 4 somewhat agree  
 5 agree  
 6 strongly agree

- 17- I learned how to write well in my ENG 101/102 courses 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 18- I am able to write academic essays of a good quality 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 19- I am a proficient writer 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 20- I can cope with writing tasks assigned in all my courses 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 21- I am confident about my writing ability 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 22- My lack of writing ability interferes with my academic  
 performance 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 23- I do not have difficulty in;
- a) generating ideas 1 2 3 4 5 6
- b) developing my ideas 1 2 3 4 5 6
- c) organizing my ideas 1 2 3 4 5 6
- d) supporting my ideas 1 2 3 4 5 6
- e) formulating a thesis statement 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 24- My English instructor gives feed back on my writing tasks  
 assigned in all my courses 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 25- My subject teachers give feed back on the organization of  
 my writing tasks 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 26- My subject teachers are not concerned with my writing abilities 1 2 3 4 5 6

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 disagree
- 3 somewhat disagree
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 agree
- 6 strongly agree

- 27- In general, I need extra assistance in writing 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 28- I would use a center that offers assistance in writing 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 29- If the university provided a facility that offers assistance in writing to all students at Bilkent, based on your experience, what suggestions would you make regarding the center?

30- Do you have any additional comments about issues mentioned in this questionnaire?

## Appendix C

### SENIOR STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Students ,

This questionnaire is for a research project for the MA TEFL Program at Bilkent University. Its purpose is to determine if there is a need to establish a writing center at Bilkent University. A writing center can be defined as a facility that offers assistance in writing to all students on campus.

You are one of the participants who has been selected randomly to complete this questionnaire. The aim of this study is not to evaluate writing instructors, English Unit Courses, or students' writing, rather to determine the needs of the students with regards to their writing assignments both for English Unit courses as well as for subject courses.

There is no risk involved and all responses will be kept confidential. Please answer the questions honestly! Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire.

Şule BERİLGİN GÜVEN

**PART I. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**Directions:** For items 1-6 please place a tick in the most appropriate box  or write out the answer where necessary.

1- Gender

a) male b) female 

2- Age

a) between 17-20 b) between 21-23 c) over 23 

3- Please indicate the faculty / department you are currently studying at:

---

4- Proficiency exam passed when entering Bilkent:

a) COPE b) ELTS c) FCE d) TOEFL 

e) Other; please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

5.a- Please indicate the letter grade you received for both ENG. 101 and ENG. 102:

ENG. 101: \_\_\_\_\_

ENG. 102: \_\_\_\_\_

b- Please indicate the number of times you have taken each course:

ENG. 101: \_\_\_\_\_

ENG. 102: \_\_\_\_\_



6- Number of years you have been studying English:

- a) 4 - 6
- b) 7 - 10
- c) over 10

7- Number of years you have been writing in English:

- a) 4 - 6
- b) 7 - 10
- c) over 10

8- Number of hours a week you took English during your Freshman:

- a) 3 hrs
- b) 5 hrs
- c) more than 5 hrs
- d) Other; please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### PART III: INFORMATION ABOUT MY WRITING

A.) **Directions:** Please read the following statements and circle the number of the most appropriate response.

- 1 never
- 2 rarely
- 3 sometimes
- 4 often
- 5 always

- 9- I am assigned writing tasks in all my English courses. 1 2 3 4 5
- 10- I am assigned writing tasks in my other courses. 1 2 3 4 5
- 11- In my other courses I am assigned:
- a) essay type exams 1 2 3 4 5
  - b) research papers 1 2 3 4 5
  - c) oral presentations 1 2 3 4 5
- 12- My subject teachers give me feedback on all my writing tasks. 1 2 3 4 5
- 13- I go to my former 101/102 English teachers for help with writing assignments. 1 2 3 4 5
- 14- I ask my friends to help me with my writing tasks. 1 2 3 4 5
- 15- I get external assistance with my writing tasks. 1 2 3 4 5

**B.) Directions: Please read the following statements and circle the number of the most appropriate response.**

**1 strongly disagree**  
**2 disagree**  
**3 somewhat disagree**  
**4 somewhat agree**  
**5 agree**  
**6 strongly agree**

- |                                                                             |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 16- I like to write.                                                        | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 17- I knew the rules of writing before I entered the Bilkent.               | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 18- I learned the rules of writing in my ENG. 101/102 courses.              | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 19- I am able to write academic essays of a good quality.                   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 20- I am able to write research papers of a good quality.                   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 21- I am a proficient writer.                                               | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 22- I have been able to cope with writing tasks assigned in all my courses. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 23- I feel confident about my writing.                                      | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 24- My writing ability has not interfered with my academic performance.     | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| 25- I have <u>not</u> had difficulty in:                                    |             |
| a) generating ideas                                                         | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| b) developing my ideas                                                      | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| c) organizing my ideas                                                      | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| d) supporting my ideas                                                      | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| e) formulating a thesis statement                                           | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

- 1 strongly disagree**  
**2 disagree**  
**3 somewhat disagree**  
**4 somewhat agree**  
**5 agree**  
**6 strongly agree**

26- My subject teachers have not been concerned with my writing abilities. 1 2 3 4 5 6

27- During my years at Bilkent I have felt the need for extra assistance with my writing. 1 2 3 4 5 6

28- I would have used a center that gives assistance in writing if there had been one. 1 2 3 4 5 6

29- If a center is set up, I would encourage my friends to use it. 1 2 3 4 5 6

30- If the university provided a facility that offers assistance in writing to all students at Bilkent, based on your experience, what suggestions would you make;

Please specify:

31- Do you have any additional comments about issues mentioned in this questionnaire above?

## Appendix D

**ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Colleague,

This questionnaire is for a research project for the MA TEFL Program at Bilkent University. Its purpose is to determine if there is a need to establish a writing center at Bilkent University. A writing center can be defined as a facility that offers assistance in writing to all students on campus.

You are one of the participants who has been selected randomly to complete this questionnaire. The aim of this study is not to evaluate writing instructors, English Unit Courses, or students' writing, rather to determine the needs of the students with regards to their writing assignments both for the English Unit courses as well as for subject courses.

There is no risk involved and all responses will be kept confidential. Please answer the questions honestly! Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire!

Sule BERILGEN GÜVEN

**PART I. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**Directions:** For items 1-5 please place a tick in the most appropriate box .

1- Gender

a) male

b) female

2- Age

a) between 21-30

c) between 41-50

b) between 31-40

d) over 50

3- Total number of years teaching experience as an English teacher:

a) less than 1 year

d) 7-10 years

b) 1-3 years

e) 11-20 years

c) 4-6 years

f) more than 20 years

4- Number of years teaching experience at Bilkent University English Unit:

a- less than a year

b- 1-3 years

c- 4-6 years

d- 7-9 years

e- since Bilkent was established

5- Degree obtained or other qualifications (check all that apply):

a- Bachelors degree

b- masters degree

c- Ph.D. degree

d - Other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## PART II. INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT TEACHING SITUATION

**Directions:** Please read the following statements or questions and place a tick in the most appropriate box .

6- Total number of hours you currently teach:

- a) 10 hrs. a week
- b) 15 hrs. a week
- c) 20 hrs. a week
- d) other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_

7- Since I began teaching at Bilkent, I have taught students from the following faculties

(check all boxes that apply):

- a) Social and Admin. Sciences
- b) Business Admin.
- c) Art, design and Architecture
- d) Humanities & Letters
- e) Engineering & Science

8- The total number of students I currently teach is:

- a) 20-30
- b) 31-40
- c) 41-50
- d) 51-60
- e) 61-70
- f) over 70

9- In general students complete the following average number of writing tasks

per week in my classes:

a) 1

b) 2

c) 3 to 5

d) other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### **PART III: INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENTS' WRITING**

**Directions: Please read the following statements and circle the number that best reflects your opinion.**

**1 strongly disagree**  
**2 disagree**  
**3 somewhat disagree**  
**4 somewhat agree**  
**5 agree**  
**6 strongly agree**

10- In general my students like to write. 1 2 3 4 5 6

11- Students write a sufficient amount of assigned essays in English classes. 1 2 3 4 5 6

12- Students are expected to write essays in their subject course. 1 2 3 4 5 6

13- Students in general by the end of their freshman year are able to write:

a) academic essays 1 2 3 4 5 6

b) research papers 1 2 3 4 5 6



**1 strongly disagree**  
**2 disagree**  
**3 somewhat disagree**  
**4 somewhat agree**  
**5 agree**  
**6 strongly agree**

14- In general, students by the end of their freshman year do not have difficulty in:

- |                                   |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| a) generating ideas               | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| b) developing their ideas         | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| c) organizing their ideas         | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| d) supporting their ideas         | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| e) formulating a thesis statement | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

15- Current ENG 101/102 students need extra assistance in writing outside of their writing classes. 1 2 3 4 5 6

16- I do not have time to give extra assistance in writing outside of class time / office hours to my present students 1 2 3 4 5 6

17- Former students need assistance in completing writing assignments in their subject courses. 1 2 3 4 5 6

18- Former students ask me for assistance in completing writing assignments for their subject courses. 1 2 3 4 5 6

19- I do not have time to give assistance to former students regarding their writing assignments in subject courses. 1 2 3 4 5 6

20- All students at Bilkent would benefit from a facility that provides extra assistance in writing. 1 2 3 4 5 6

21- I would recommend that my current and former students make use of such a facility in writing. 1 2 3 4 5 6

22- If the university provided a facility that offers assistance in writing to all students at Bilkent; what would your expectations be from such a facility?

Please specify:

23- Do you have any additional comments about issues mentioned in this questionnaire?

## Appendix E

**DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY**

Dear Colleague,

This questionnaire is for a research project for the MA TEFL Program at Bilkent University. Its purpose is to determine if there is a need to establish a writing center at Bilkent University. A writing center can be defined as a facility that offers assistance in writing to all students on campus.

You are one of the participants who has been selected randomly to complete this questionnaire. The aim of this study is not to evaluate writing instructors, English Unit Courses, or students' writing, rather to determine the needs of the students with regards to their writing assignments both for English Unit courses as well as for subject courses.

There is no risk involved and all responses will be kept confidential. Please answer the questions honestly! Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire.

Şule BERİLGİN GÜVEN

**PART I. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**Directions:** For items 1-5 please place a tick in the most appropriate box  or write out the answer where necessary.

1- Gender

a) male b) female 

2- Age

a) between 21-30 c) between 41-50 b) between 31-40 d) over 50 

3- Please indicate the faculty / department you are currently working in:

---

4- Number of years teaching experience at Bilkent University:

a- less than a year b- 1-3 years c- 4-6 years d- 7-10 years e- since Bilkent was established 5- Degrees obtained or other qualifications (check all that apply):a- Bachelors degree b- Masters degree c- Ph.D. degree 

d- Other; please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART II. INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT TEACHING SITUATION

**Directions:** Please read the following statements or questions and place a tick in the most appropriate box  or write out the answer where necessary.

6- Total number of hours you currently teach:

- a) 10 hrs. a week
- b) 15 hrs. a week
- c) 20 hrs. a week
- d) Other; please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

7- Please list the courses you (currently or regularly) teach:

\_\_\_\_\_

8- The total number of students I currently teach is:

- a) 20-30
- b) 31-40
- c) 41-50
- d) 51-60
- e) 61-70
- f) Over 70

### **PART III: INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENTS' WRITING**

**A.) Directions: Please read the following statements and circle the number of the most appropriate response.**

- 1 never**
- 2 rarely**
- 3 sometimes**
- 4 often**
- 5 always**

10- In my courses I assign:

- |                         |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) argumentative essays | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) research papers      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) oral presentations   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) essay type exams     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**B.) Directions: Please read the following statements and circle the number of the most appropriate response.**

- 1 strongly disagree**
- 2 disagree**
- 3 somewhat disagree**
- 4 somewhat agree**
- 5 agree**
- 6 strongly agree**

11- My students like to write. 1 2 3 4 5 6

12- In general my students are proficient writers. 1 2 3 4 5 6

13- In general my students are able to write:

- |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) academic essays  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| b) research papers  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| c) essay type exams | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

**1 strongly disagree**  
**2 disagree**  
**3 somewhat disagree**  
**4 somewhat agree**  
**5 agree**  
**6 strongly agree**

- 14- In general students do not have difficulty in:
- a) developing their ideas 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - b) organizing their ideas 1 2 3 4 5 6
  - c) formulating a thesis statement 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 15- I give students feedback on the quality of their writing. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 16- I only look for knowledge about the subject matter in students' writing. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 17- I am not concerned with students grammatical or organizational ability in their writing. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 18- I do not have time to give feedback to students about their writing outside of class time / office hours. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 19- Students need extra assistance in completing their writing assignments. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 20- Student's writing ability interferes with their academic performance. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 21- All students at Bilkent would benefit from a facility at Bilkent that provides assistance in writing. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- 22- I would recommend that my students make use of such a facility. 1 2 3 4 5 6

23- If the university provided a facility that offers assistance in writing to all students at Bilkent what would your expectations be from such a facility?

Please specify:

24- Do you have any additional comments about issues mentioned in this questionnaire?