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THEORY TO PRACTICE, PRACTICE TO THEORY: DEVELOPING A CRITICAL  
AND FEMINIST PEDAGOGY FOR AN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE  
ACADEMIC WRITING CLASSROOM

by

LAUREN LUKKARILA

Under the Direction of Diane Belcher

ABSTRACT

Although many aspects of English as a second language (ESL) academic writing instruction have been well researched, Leki, Cumming, and Silva (2008) note that, "There have been surprisingly few research-based descriptions of L2 writing classroom instruction" (p. 80). Although research related to the use of critical and feminist pedagogy in ESL is increasing, Kumaradivelu (2006) notices that it is still not clear how the critical awakening "...has actually changed the practice of everyday teaching and teacher preparation" (p. 76). The purpose of this study was to provide an individual response to the gaps identified by both sets of authors by investigating how critical and feminist theories could be utilized to develop an orientation to interactions in the everyday practices of an ESL academic writing classroom. In order to achieve this purpose, an autoethnographic study of an eight-week ESL academic writing course in an Inten-

sive English Program (IEP) was conducted. The participants in this study included the teacher-researcher and seven learners. The data collected included the following: lesson plans, instructional materials, teacher field notes, teacher reflexive journal, transcripts of everyday class interactions, transcripts of multiple interviews with learners, learner written reflections, and learners' written assignments for the course. Analysis of findings revealed that the critical and feminist theories selected for the course were realized even though there were some internal and external obstacles. Learners experienced positive shifts in their feelings about the topic of academic writing and their own abilities as academic writers. Learners' written texts also reflected positive shifts with respect to the teacher's goals for learners. These findings suggest that critical and feminist theories can be enacted in everyday classrooms and can be helpful with regard to improving teachers' and learners' experiences of everyday ESL academic writing classrooms.

**INDEX WORDS:** English as a second language (ESL) writing instruction, Academic writing instruction, Critical pedagogy, Feminist pedagogy, Auto-ethnography

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LAUREN LUKKARILA

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2012

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2012

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Georgia State University

August 2012

**DEDICATION**

To Anneliese, Beatrice, Id, Malakai, bibi, and all the learners with whom I have ever had or will  
ever have the privilege of sharing a space called classroom

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have often heard it said that it takes a village to raise a child. My experience of writing this dissertation has demonstrated to me that it also takes a village to bring forth a dissertation. The village to whom I owe my gratitude is quite large, so I will begin by thanking everyone—everyone who is or has ever been my teacher, my student, my friend, my companion, my peer, my colleague, my mentor, my boss, my advisor, my roommate, my officemate, my administrative support, my technological support, or my family. Without the generosity, compassion, and consideration that you have shown me, I would never have been able to complete this dissertation. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the contributions that you have made to my knowledge base, my skill set, my financial stability, my emotional well-being, and my overall growth as a person.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

*"The most important thing to remember is this: To be ready at any moment to give up what you are for what you might become." (Du Bois, n.d.).*

*"To me the classroom continues to be a place where paradise can be realized, a place of passion and possibility, a place where spirit matters, where all that we learn and know leads us into greater connection, into greater understanding of life lived in community" (hooks, 2003. p. 183).*

For me, the words of Du Bois (n.d.) and hooks (2003) form the fundamental philosophical core of what I believe education could be and should be for both educators and learners. Schools and classrooms could be and should be sites of inspiration, awareness, change, connection, and understanding. Through school and classroom practices, educators and learners could and should experience regular moments of critical awareness that are so compelling that the only natural response is change, and that change is one of expansion. Educators and learners could and should be consistently and constantly expanding their ideas of themselves and others by and through their relationships with one another. The communities formed by schools and classrooms could and should be sites of autonomous, conscious, compassionate transformation where all participants regularly experience existing and mattering.

Unfortunately, the experience of existing and mattering is not necessarily the most common of experiences for either educators or learners. Instead, for many, the experience of being objectified and otherized may be among the more memorable aspects of their encounters in schools and classrooms, even in sites of higher education. This experience may be especially

common for English as a second language (ESL) teachers and ESL learners who are ostensibly functioning as participants in a university community. In many universities, ESL teachers - not unlike their other university counterparts who proffer other basic university knowledge and skills (e.g., English Composition, Spanish 1, U.S. History) - are viewed as wage laborers in comparison to the tenure track faculty. They may, in fact, only be referred to as faculty or part of the faculty in select circumstances. Likewise, ESL learners, particularly those who are matriculated into credit bearing university courses, are stigmatized by many of their non-ESL professors and peers as deficient in communication skills simply because their communication problems and errors are different than those of other students. Thus, both ESL teachers and ESL learners are often marginalized to the periphery of the university community, and their legitimacy (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in the eyes of the university community is at best questionable.

Legitimacy, according to Lave and Wenger (1991) mediates becoming because legitimacy confers certain privileges of access on newcomers to a community of practice (CoP) that optimize their chances of becoming like long-term members of the CoP. Correspondingly, of course, a lack of legitimacy minimizes newcomers' chances of becoming members of the CoP. As Lave (1991) explains, commodification (i.e., the reduction of persons' identities to wage laborer) and alienation (i.e., the otherization of persons' identities) result in "...the creation of devalued or negatively valued identities" (p. 77). For ESL teachers, this might lead to self-deprecating perceptions like one I recently heard after a meeting of ESL teachers, "What skills do I have? I'm just an ESL teacher." For ESL learners, this might lead to self-defeating beliefs like, "I and everyone like me (i.e., from my culture) are intellectually inferior to those who are native speakers of English."

Understandably, the absence of legitimacy is believed to place newcomers on a trajectory that leads toward exclusion rather than inclusion in any CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore, it is crucial that ESL teachers manage their own trajectory and that they, in their special role as cultural liaisons for ESL learners, also foster a trajectory for their learners that enhances learners' legitimacy with respect to the larger university community. This is true in any ESL teacher-learner context, but it is especially true for ESL teachers who work with ESL learners who are not yet matriculated in U.S. universities. These learners are often in intensive English programs (IEPs) on university campuses, but they, unlike matriculated ESL learners, are often not aware of the legitimacy issues they will face upon matriculation in a U.S. university. For these IEP learners, the ESL teacher is usually their sole representation of what life in U.S. university classrooms is like, and the teacher's management of the issue of legitimacy—their own and their learners'—quite probably has a strong impact on learners' future trajectories that learners are not necessarily in a position to understand due to the somewhat sheltered nature of many learners' IEP experiences.

In this study, I propose that legitimacy is negotiable - it does not have to be given, it can be taken. Specifically, I propose that marginalized individuals like ESL teachers and ESL learners exist and matter in a university community and the larger society in which that community is found. I propose that these individuals can take charge of their own legitimacy by connecting with one another and having experiences of becoming in their own community. In turn, these experiences of becoming can have a bottom-up effect on the forces that typically marginalize ESL teachers and learners. In other words, in this study, I embrace the notion that “the personal is political” (Worell & Remer, 2003, p. 60), and I seek to offer a theory-based personal narrative

of my own attempts as an ESL teacher to embrace the pedagogy of hope envisioned by hooks (2003) for my field, my learners, and myself.

### ***1.1 Purpose of the Study***

In this study, I conducted an autoethnographic investigation of my personal capability and capacity for transforming relationships in my classroom CoP through the adoption of theoretical models borrowed from the field of counseling psychology. In the Du Bois (n.d.) sense, I gave up some of my previously held ideas and notions about what I should do or be as an ESL teacher and what ESL learners should do or be as ESL learners, and I expanded my ideas in order to discover what my learners and I might become as a result of the expansion. I based my choices regarding my expansion of ideas on notions of mattering, connection, and community (hooks, 2003).

Because my primary area of interest was English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and even more specifically academic writing, I focused my investigation on one of my 8-week ESL academic writing classes in an IEP. In this specific university classroom site, I looked at how tenets of Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) and Positive Psychology, two theories of relationship building, could be incorporated into an IEP academic writing class and how intentional relationship building might impact learners, learners' products, and me. In particular, I focused my investigation on the following questions:

1. How can an ESL teacher develop an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of Relational Cultural Theory (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths)?

2. What internal and external obstacles will the teacher encounter as she develops and implements an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology?
3. How will the use of an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology affect ESL learners' feelings about Anglo-American academic writing in general?
4. How will the use of an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology affect ESL learners' feelings about their own abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing successfully?
5. In an ESL academic writing course in which the teacher uses the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology to develop an orientation to interactions, how will the learners' abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing change over the duration of the course?

### ***1.2 Significance of Current Study***

This study provides a thick, rich account from multiple data sources of how a particular orientation to interactions was established in an 8-week IEP academic writing class, how it impacted learners' feelings, how it impacted learners' written texts, and how it impacted the teacher (me). The data and analysis derived from this study are significant from multiple perspectives. To begin, this study describes and considers the teacher's and the learners' interactions in an academic writing classroom from an affective perspective rather than a procedural perspective. The inclusion of the affective perspective in the literature on academic writing instruction in both non-ESL and ESL classrooms particularly with regard to classroom interactions other than peer editing is relatively sparse. For example, over the past year, according to the 2011 *Annotated*

*Bibliography of Research in the Teaching of English* (Beach, et. al., 2011), research in the area of writing instruction has focused on the following topics: comparisons between high school and college notions of writing instruction (Brockman, Taylor, Kreth, & Crawford, 2011; Addison & McGee, 2010); specific techniques and approaches to postgraduate writing instruction (Bitchener & Turner, 2011); specific techniques and approaches to undergraduate or secondary writing instruction (Early & Decosta, 2011; Kuhn & Crowell, 2011; Thonney, 2011; Klein & Rose, 2010); the effectiveness of writing tutorials or consultations (Butler & Britt, 2011); the nature of writing prompts or assignments (Caldwell, DeRusha, Stanton-Hammond, Straight, & Sullivan, 2011; Wolfe, 2011); the effectiveness of peer review (Cho & MacArthur, 2011); issues related to learner placement in writing courses (Gere, Aull, Green, & Porter, 2010); issues related to on-line writing instruction (Hewett, et.al., 2011); error patterns in writing (Horton-Ikard & Pittman, 2010); teacher self-development of writing knowledge-base (Limbrick, Buchanan, Goodwin, & Schwaecz, 2010); and writing assessment (Morozov, 2011; Parr, 2011). Noticeably, relationships and interactions that occur in non-ESL writing classrooms and the feelings that these might engender have not received attention over the past year. Although this study will not investigate non-ESL classrooms, academic writing instruction in ESL classrooms is often based on non-ESL composition courses (Leki, 2007). If a topic is not receiving attention in non-ESL composition research, it is also not likely to receive attention in ESL research, which suggests that the nexus of relationships, interactions, and feelings may be a topic that merits attention in both areas.

In the field of second language instruction, the notion of the facilitative effect that affective factors have on language learning has long played a part in teacher training since Krashen's (1981) introduction of the *affective filter hypothesis*. Although most of Krashen's hypotheses have been subjected to intense critique over the years, the prevailing common-sense knowledge

transmitted to many second language teachers-in-training is that learners' feelings matter and play a significant role in their language development. Both teachers-in-training and in-service teachers tend to share the idea that teachers should care about how learners feel and strive to create non-threatening, comfortable environments for second language learners. Notwithstanding the generally common acceptance of the importance of the affective domain in second language learning, research on ESL academic writing instruction is quite similar to research in non-ESL academic writing instruction with regard to its lack of attention to interactions in the writing classroom and the feelings they engender. For example, over the past year, according to the 2011 *Annotated Bibliography of Research in the Teaching of English* (Beach, et. al., 2011), research in the area of second language literacy, specifically writing, has focused on the following topics: the effectiveness of specific types of writing activities (Lee & Barton, 2011; Tin, 2011); the impact that the hybrid experiences of today's learners has on writing instruction (Enright, 2011; Tardy, 2011; Vieira, 2010); teacher training (Deoksoon, 2011); and second language writing proficiency (Schoonen, Van Gelderen, Stoel, Hulstijn, & DeGlopper, 2011).

Again, as with the research on non-ESL writing instruction, the relationships and the interactions of writing classrooms as well as the feelings they may occasion are not among the current research trends despite the fact that many ESL teachers would likely agree that relationships, interactions, and feelings do matter in classrooms. Thus, this study suggests a new line of affective inquiry in ESL academic writing instruction and challenges the field to consider the substantial and important role that the affective domain may play in learners' knowledge, skill, and strategy development with regard to a specific topic like academic writing.

Of course, in addition to field specific significance, this study also has important professional and personal significance for the participants. Professionally, for me as the teacher-



researcher, this study embodies a crucial next step in my development as an educator who believes in the importance of practicing critical pedagogy. With this study, I have had the opportunity to transform my beliefs into practice and to truly experience how the practice of critical pedagogy feels and looks on a daily basis. My lived experience of practicing critical pedagogy has important impacts for my growth as a teacher in areas like the development of classroom practices, the development of materials and writing tasks, the use of technology and resources, and writing assessment. By extension, my professional growth could have important impacts on not only the learners in my classrooms but also the professional growth of the other teachers with whom I work. Given that currently I occupy a leadership role in the IEP in which I work, my story and my growth will become part of the resources that I access to guide the development of other IEP faculty.

Finally, when I began this study, I sincerely hoped that this study would have significance for my community of learners. The intention and design of this study reflected my heartfelt desire to make learning in a classroom a personally rewarding and empowering experience for learners. The long-term significance that I envisioned for learners was an attitude of willingness, confidence, and competence when faced with new writing tasks. I wanted the learners to leave my course (and this study) with a strong belief in their intellectual and cultural value as well as an understanding of the hidden and obvious obstacles they might face with regard to academic writing in U.S. universities. Ultimately, for learners, the significance of this study was their ability to claim and manage their own legitimacy with respect to any Anglo-American academic community of practice they might need to or wish to join.

### ***1.3 Organization of the Study***

Chapter 2 provides a review of the multiple theoretical and practical models that form the conceptual framework of this study including critical pedagogy in EAP, feminism and critical pedagogy, legitimate peripheral participation (LPP), RCT (mutual empathy), Positive Psychology (strengths-based focus), and the role of emotions in academic writing. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological framework of this study - autoethnography infused with radical visionary feminism (hooks, 2000), and describes the context, participants, and procedures utilized for collecting and analyzing data for this study. Chapter 4 describes and discusses the findings that are relevant to the first and second research questions, Chapter 5 focuses on the findings that are related to the third and fourth research questions, and Chapter 6 focuses on the findings linked to the fifth research question.

In each chapter, I begin with a discussion of the specific theoretical principles and/or related research findings that form the context for the interpretation of my findings. I describe and analyze multiple data sources with respect to the research questions selected for that chapter, I discuss the limitations the design of my study may have placed on the findings, and I suggest the pedagogical implications of my findings and analysis. In Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, I review the major findings with respect to my research questions, I discuss the implications for academic writing instruction and future research that this study has, and I offer a personal reflection on how this study has affected my professional growth.

## 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The philosophical commitments of this study range from the broad desire to address social justice issues in higher education, particularly to resist the commodification and objectification of ESL educators and ESL learners in U.S. university contexts, to the narrow desire to integrate my personal beliefs about what ESL teachers *should do* with what I *actually do* as an ESL teacher. The framework of a study that intends to meet such a wide range of philosophical commitments must necessarily weave together multiple theories to both explain the underpinnings and assumptions on which the study rests as well as to explain the proposed steps that the study will take. Accordingly, the framework of this study is built on overlapping and interrelated understandings of social justice, teaching, and learning drawn from different fields and research traditions. The framework includes two separate branches. One branch consists of the theories that provide the conceptual framework for understanding the motivations, intentions, and assumptions of the study. These theories include the following: critical pedagogy in ESL and EAP; feminism and critical pedagogy; and LPP and critical pedagogy. The other branch consists of the theories and research that provide the pragmatic framework for developing and implementing an actionable plan (Kumaradivelu, 2006) that accurately reflects the conceptual framework. These theories and research include the following: RCT (mutual empathy), Positive Psychology (strength-based focus), and research on the role of feelings in academic writing.

### 2.1 *Conceptual Framework*

*2.1.1 Critical pedagogy in ESL and EAP.* Arguably, a decisive turning point in a topic's bid for legitimacy in a given discipline is the moment when a major academic journal decides to publish a special issue on that topic. The publication of a special issue indicates that interest and awareness of the topic have reached the attention of the gate-keepers and the proverbial stamp of

approval has been given to allow entry. In 1999, the notion of critical approaches to TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) reached such a decisive turning point and the adjective *critical* became an official part of the TESOL lexicon (Chapelle, 1999). Of course, this was not the first moment that the term had been used or discussed in TESOL articles (e.g., Albertini, 1993; Willet & Jeannot, 1993; Rees-Miller, 1993; Canagarajah, 1993, 1996; Sheen, 1994; Benesch, 1996; Atkinson, 1997; Starfield, 1997; Crookes & Lehner, 1998; Warschauer, 1998), but it was the first (and only) time that it had or has been featured in the title of a special issue. At this moment, critical became a reified category that according to Pennycook (1999) denoted the following: a domain of inquiry that focused on some type of inequity, a transformative pedagogical suggestion, an explicit connection to critical theory, and a problematizing view of one's own critical work. This particular view of how the adjective critical might be used has by and large become the standard in TESOL, and critical has quickly become a direction rather than a descriptor in TESOL.

In fact, in Kumaravadivelu's (2006) review of the major changes in TESOL methods over the past 15 years, critical (or *postmethod*) pedagogy and critical discourse are two of the three most important changes. These changes occur in what Kumaravadivelu calls TESOL's *period of awakening*—the period in which TESOL acknowledged and began to explore its intersection with broader personal, social, historical and economic contexts. Kumaravadivelu's categorization of changes in TESOL, in many ways, mirrors Pennycook's (1999) breakdown of critical. The changes he details are related to the politicization of the domain of inquiry (e.g., Allwright's focus on quality of life over instructional efficiency), the intentional inclusion of some form of consciousness-raising (e.g., Kumaravadivelu's notion of *possibility* or utilizing the students' own

sociopolitical consciousness to transform), the importance of theory-based practice, and the benefits of reflexivity.

Thus, it would seem that critical research after Pennycook's (1999) initial attempt at establishing a common understanding of what counts as critical in TESOL had largely accepted and operated with this common understanding. However, theoretical views about teaching are not the same as true classroom practices, and one of the unsolved problems in the relationship between critical and TESOL is the translation of a theoretical perspective to the practical situations of TESOL (i.e., the real, everyday teachers and classrooms). Or, as Kumaradivelu (2006) aptly states, "What is not clear is how this awakening [the critical awakening] has actually changed the practice of everyday teaching and teacher preparation. Admirable intentions need to be translated into attainable goals, which, in turn, need to be supported by actionable plans" (p. 76).

Perhaps because of the growing realization that critical theory without critical practice has limited utility, new, more narrowly focused outgrowths of the critical awakening in TESOL have emerged like critical EAP (CEAP). Just as narrowing the scope of TESOL to something like EAP allows researchers to attend more meaningfully to questions and issues that are restricted by purpose and population so too narrowing the scope of critical to CEAP allows researchers to attend more specifically to questions and issues that are restricted by specific types of discourses and contexts. The narrowing of focus creates a slightly different description of critical than the one offered by Pennycook (1999).

The CEAP conception of critical includes the following assumptions: the primacy of discourse in relation to language, the importance of praxis, the necessity of practicing praxis in daily events, the benefits of maintaining a reflexive view of one's own praxis, and the relevance of

reporting critical findings with humility and respectful awareness of the limited nature of any knowledge that truly takes into account the complexity of human interactions (Benesch, 2009). The research in CEAP tends to emphasize Pennycook's (1999) transformative aspect of critical approaches by focusing on learners (one of whom is the teacher) rather than students. Terms like uncertainty, risk, and choice are representative of the themes discussed in CEAP. The teacher's role in CEAP is often problematized, and the findings of studies are messy musings about possible considerations rather than neatly bulleted lists of guidelines or suggestions. Still, CEAP is not eternally dedicated to the discovery of problems, its focus on a collaborative and self-reflective transformative praxis is indicative of the underlying spirit of hope and possibility (Benesch, 2009).

The increased emphasis on praxis and investigating the practitioner's praxis in CEAP's definition of critical has created what Belcher (2004) refers to as a sociopolitical approach to teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which encompasses EAP. As she points out, more and more researchers are adopting a "...critical pedagogy [that] asks *whose* needs are being addressed and *why*" (174), while they simultaneously address the pragmatic concerns and goals of their ESP populations. She notes that critical pedagogy in ESP is characterized by social activism, collectivism, and curricular flexibility, which may currently be serving as a measure of Kumaradivelu's (2006) attainable goals and actionable plans.

To wit, a cursory review of recent (post-2004) research that explicitly claims to investigate critical pedagogy in ESL contexts reveals that notions of critical pedagogy are indeed based on a sense of social activism, a concern for collectivism, and an emphasis on curricular flexibility. The sense of social activism that is common to many research projects in ESL is the idea that a critical pedagogical approach creates greater autonomy for those most likely to be hege-

monized through the process of assimilation and acculturation. For example, Harwood and Hadley (2004) suggest that their genre-based critical approach to teaching post-graduate students how personal pronouns and possessive adjectives are used in academic research writing is a strategy that allows students to make their own decisions about accepting or rejecting dominant practices. Likewise, Phan's (2009) research on the pedagogical relationship between a thesis advisor and a graduate student who are both non-native speakers of English demonstrates that even the student has just as much ability to affect the development of the teacher as the teacher does the student. Similarly, Grey (2009) invites EAP students to become "nomadic ethnographers" (p.121) who do not passively accept society's definitions of diversity but instead create their own semiotic representations and definitions of diversity.

The concern for collectivism that is also found in many of the current research projects involving critical pedagogy and ESL is generally represented by a focus on sharing or collaboration (i.e., the approach itself is based on the idea that sharing or collaboration between those of unequal power - the teacher and the student - is empowering in ESL settings). For instance, Cadman (2005) shares power with her students who are learning research English as an additional language by using critical classroom practices that turn ownership of class and instructor activities over to students. Grey (2009) shares power by allowing students to resolve critical moments in their class discussions without teacher intervention on what is the right, best, or politically correct way to think or feel about diversity. Phan (2009) also focuses on the sharing of power between an advisor and a graduate writer as integral to the development of the student's development of an English writing voice.

Just as social activism and collectivism are prevalent in critical pedagogy research in ESL, so too is the inclusion of curricular flexibility. Researcher-practitioners of recent critical

pedagogy in ESL insist that their approach is non-traditional in the sense that it is responsive to the true needs of the students. Research like Cadman (2005) and Grey (2009) purports to respond flexibly to the true contextual needs of students by utilizing teaching approaches that valorize the lived experiences of students in their ESL settings. Cadman's (2005) and Phan's (2009) research inverts the normal curricular model and becomes a negotiation between equal participants during which sometimes the teacher is the learner. Harwood and Hadley (2004) propose a curriculum that is based on discovery and choice rather than mastery and adaptation.

In addition to conceptions of critical pedagogy in ESL that focus on social activism, collectivism, and curricular flexibility in real classrooms or real academic interactions, there is another branch of critical pedagogy research in ESL that focuses more on theorizing critical considerations that are needed to realize these conceptions of critical pedagogy. This research explores theoretical concepts like situatedness (Benesch, 2009), learner agency and identity (Canagarajah, 2002, 2006), and teacher identity (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005) and proposes pedagogical actions and considerations related to social activism, collectivism, and curricular flexibility. The majority of researchers who work in this theorizing branch of critical pedagogy have done and continue to do critical pedagogy research in real classrooms or real academic interactions (e.g., Benesch, 1998, 2010; Morgan, 2004, 2009), and as with other critical pedagogy research, their studies emphasize social activism by questioning systems of control (e.g., anorexia, Benesch, 1998; military recruitment, Benesch, 2010; media, Morgan, 2009), collectivism (co-construction of image-text and identities, Morgan, 2004), and curricular flexibility (e.g., purposeful topic selection and development, Benesch, 1998, 2010; Morgan 2004, 2009).

Of course, there are other examples of critical pedagogical research in ESL, and in all likelihood, those examples would also show characteristics of a model of ESL critical pedagogy



that emphasizes social activism, collectivism, and curricular flexibility. However, the emphasis on these characteristics does suggest that critical pedagogical researchers in ESL may need to engage with their own creativity and expand their concept of critical pedagogy. At present, critical pedagogy research has some noticeable limitations like the emphasis it places on pedagogical approaches that depend heavily on the specific characteristics of a particular program (e.g., Benesch, 1998, 2010; Cadman, 2009; Grey, 2009), a particular teacher's characteristics (e.g., Morgan, 2004; Phan, 2009), or a very narrowly focused ESL topic (e.g., Benesch, 1998, 2010; Harwood and Hadley, 2004; Morgan, 2009).

*2.1.2 Feminism and critical pedagogy.* In many ways, the particular characteristics of critical pedagogy that often appear in critical pedagogy research in ESL or EAP overlap with characteristics of feminist pedagogy. For example, feminist pedagogy like critical pedagogy problematizes the so-called norms of education by valorizing learners' lived experiences (Mackie, 1999; Sheared, 1994), and recognizes learners' multiple or polyrhythmic realities (Sheared, 1994). Like critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy seeks to resist and transform hegemonic influences specifically those that are derived from gender, race, ethnicity, and class (Sheared, 1994; Vandrick, 1994). Feminist pedagogy similar to critical pedagogy promotes reflexivity and the idea that consciousness-raising can be transforming (Mackie, 1999). Feminist pedagogy like critical pedagogy also promotes collectivism in the form of collaboration and building connections through community (hooks, 2000; Mackie, 1999; Vandrick, 1994). And, finally, like critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy includes curricular innovation or flexibility (Mackie, 1999; Sheared, 1994; Vandrick, 1994). To a large extent, it would be reasonable to say that the ways in which critical pedagogy has been represented in ESL or EAP are equally representative of feminist pedagogy.

However, as English (2006) points out, feminist pedagogy has been useful in debunking myths of male-as-normative in classroom topics and practices, but it has not necessarily kept pace with the expansion of feminism as its concept of inclusiveness has grown to include all forms of marginalization. What is generally referred to as feminist pedagogy by and large reflects White educated women's interpretation of oppression (hooks, 2000) and their value-laden ideas of how social activism, collectivism, and curricular flexibility are enacted in classrooms. Other ideas of feminism exist like radical visionary feminism (hooks, 2000) and womanism (Williams, 1986; Sheared, 1994; Maparyan, 2012) that reflect different interpretations of and reactions to oppression.

The basic idea behind radical visionary feminism and womanism is the idea gender is only one factor that positions an individual within "the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (hooks, 2000). There are other factors like race, class, language, and personal experiences (hooks, 2000; Sheared, 1994) that play a crucial role in forming individuals' avowed and ascribed identities and thusly their experiences in society. A premise that unites radical visionary feminism and womanism is the idea that "feminism is for everybody," (hooks, 2000, p. 3), or as it is expressed in womanism, a womanist perspective reflects "a commitment to the survival and wholeness of entire people—men and women" (Williams, 1986, p. 70).

Critical pedagogy and feminist pedagogy are often reactive pedagogies in the sense that they react or respond to incidents of oppression. They tend to operate according to a problem-solution paradigm. For example, a particular instance of critical pedagogy research may develop to resist or reject a specific type of oppression like targeted military recruitment of minorities on college campuses (Benesch, 2010). In contrast, radical visionary feminism and womanism are proactive pedagogies in the sense that they focus on overcoming oppressions (plural), and they

see oppressions not as incidents but as complex cultural patterns that work together to reinforce one another and enshroud one another. Radical visionary feminism and womanism tend to operate in a manner more akin to call and response than problem-solution. To explain, call and response operates in the following manner:

The minister [teacher] is responsible for pointing out principles [oppressions] from the Bible [everyday life] in a way that evokes a response of understanding from the congregation [learners]. ...Moreover, the preacher [teacher] shares a part of himself [herself] with the congregation [learners]. He [She] must be willing to listen to responses, react, and then follow up with responses that suggest he [she] understands them as well as they understand him [her]. In other words, the minister [teacher] and the congregation [learners] talk back and forth to each other. It represents an interconnectedness based on an understanding of the meanings that they each have of what they hear and observe in that moment” (Sheared, 1994, p. 276). (*Brackets include my insertions.*)

Radical visionary feminist and womanist pedagogies assume oppressions are omnipresent in everyday life, and they assume that it is the everyday actions of everyday people rather than the unusual or extraordinary actions of select people that actually succeed in overcoming oppression. As Marpayan (2012) explains, in womanism, “There is no need to ‘fight authority’ when we can just be our own authority and get started on whatever plan we envision” (p. 322).

Thus, when the ideas of critical pedagogy in ESL or EAP are combined with radical visionary feminism and womanism, the following questions emerge: How can critical and feminist pedagogy be enacted in an everyday ESL classroom by a typical ESL teacher who is charged with teaching a normal or even hegemonizing topic like the gate-keeping topic of academic writing? What might research of this type of classroom, teacher and topic reveal about other charac-

teristics of critical and feminist pedagogy in ESL? What actionable (Kumaradivelu, 2006) practices might emerge in the pursuit of this everyday enactment of critical and feminist pedagogy?

*2.1.3 Legitimate peripheral participation and critical pedagogy.* Perhaps one of the most significant flaws in much educational research and certainly in popular media discussions of education of any kind is the positivistic problem-solution logic that shapes both the research and the discussions. In this logic, the idea that learning or teaching are processes is largely ignored because identifying a process as a problem, especially a process like learning, which is not scientifically understood, would not allow for the creation of a tidy list of solutions. Rather than see the processes or the lack of information about the processes as a problem, educational research and discussions may identify the people who represent those processes—student (learner) and teacher—as the problem and focus on proposing or evaluating solutions to improve the people not the processes in which they are involved.

Learning and teaching are processes, and they are processes that occur as part of a larger system of cultural processes. While cultural processes may have many non-manipulative purposes, like ensuring a given population's ability to survive in a specific physical environment, cultural processes are also reflective of society's use of power and knowledge as controlling systems (Foucault, 1975). As Foucault and many others have shown, society's controlling systems are created by those with the most power and are designed to maintain and reproduce the status quo (i.e., the idea that those in power are the natural or normal holders of such power). Therefore, educational research, which is typically produced by those who have educationally apprenticed themselves to the institutions of power and knowledge and as such have the tendency to become consciously or unconsciously part of the supervisory or surveillance (Foucault, 1975) mechanisms of a society's controlling systems, may truly reflect nothing more than ways to im-

prove the people's ability to maintain and reproduce the processes so that no true social change occurs or even threatens to occur. Of course, educational research does not always do this, and many educational researchers explicitly try to avoid doing this. Because education is one of society's controlling systems, any investigation of pedagogy, particularly critical and feminist pedagogy, must carefully resist the socially acceptable temptation to focus entirely on the individual people of the teaching-learning situation, and instead, adopt a theoretical orientation to pedagogy that accounts for the processes or interactions that occur between and among the people of the teaching-learning situation.

One such theory is the socio-cultural theory of situated learning proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) known as legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). This theory of learning, which was developed through ethnographic studies of learning in naturalistic environments involving apprenticeship, asserts that learning is a process of becoming or not becoming a member of a community of practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to the theory of LPP, a CoP is "a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). Newcomers to a CoP may or may not become *full-er* participants by interacting with the other participants (new and long-term), practices, and artifacts of the community. Over time, these interactions change the identity of newcomers who may or may not begin to perceive and respond to ideas or events in ways that are similar to long-term community members. As the newcomers' identity changes, they may become reproductions of long-term community members, which, of course, maintains and reproduces the community. They may also through their own novel understandings of community practices interject growth and change into the community, or as their identity changes in relation to the community, newcomers may actively reject community membership or

be alienated from community membership by other members. In any case, Lave and Wenger (1991) assert that the process of becoming or not becoming is an organic process to human groups regardless of the situation.

As mentioned, membership is not a certain result simply because one is a newcomer or even because one actively desires membership. A key factor in LPP is the concept of legitimacy. Access to a CoP is governed by long-term participants' willingness and ability to grant legitimacy to newcomers (Lave & Wenger, 1991). If long-term participants do not acknowledge newcomers by providing access to other members, practices and artifacts of the community, newcomers will not be able to become long-term participants because they will not be able to learn to perceive and respond to events as long-term community members do. For example, Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss how the use of some artifacts in the community may be opaque (i.e., it may be unclear for newcomers how these artifacts are used, and long-term members may not explain their use for a variety of reasons), and this lack of communication may disallow *full-er* participation to some newcomers.

According to Lave (1997), school communities may be especially opaque about their practices. As she illustrates, teachers and students, who are theoretically participating in the same community, may not be clear on what the goals or purposes of school communities are. She compares naturalistic communities like Weight Watchers to school communities with a third grade class learning math and finds that the newcomers' dilemma identification shaped the learning in both environments. If newcomers themselves decided that they did have a weight problem, that is they identified their dilemma in a way that was similar to long-term members, they then also aligned themselves with the practices of the Weight Watchers' community, and they became like long-term members in their perceptions and responses. On the other hand, if new-

comers like the third grade students identified their dilemma as winning the approval of the teacher (the long-term participant) while the teacher identified the dilemma as mastering a specific new math strategy, the newcomers did not become like the long-term member. Instead, the newcomers used an old math strategy that they knew so that they could more certainly win the teacher's approval with a correct answer. In effect, the newcomer participants (third graders) and long-term participant (teacher) of the classroom community had very different points of view about what practices would allow a newcomer to become more like a long-term participant, and these different points of view were the result of a lack of clarity or some might argue a lack of authenticity on the part of the teacher as to what the real purposes of school communities of practice are.

The original theory of LPP proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) has experienced some mutations over the years. In particular, Wenger, one of the founding theorists of LPP, has progressively focused more on the formation of CoPs rather than the LPP process (e.g., Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Wenger's focus on the formation of CoP has resulted in educational research that attempts to manipulate the formation of CoPs (e.g., Barab, Barret & Squire, 2002; Haneda, 1997; Schlager, Fusco & Schank, 2002; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). This has shifted the ideas of CoP in the direction of prescriptive solutions to people problems, which fits nicely with socially acceptable ways of looking at education. Lea (2002) critiques the recent types of emphasis on the formation of CoPs for transforming the concept CoP that originated in LPP from a heuristic for teaching and learning to a prescription for teaching and learning.

In this study, in accordance with Lea (2002), I utilized the original concepts of LPP and CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which proposed that LPP is an analytical viewpoint. It is a view-

point that acts as heuristic indicating where I need to look and why I might need to look there if I want to know more about teaching and learning. To begin, LPP offers researchers, especially autoethnographic researchers, a set of sensible assumptions for looking at teaching and learning processes (i.e., interactions between people, practices, and artifacts) rather than individual people as problems in a process. If one accepts as Lave (1996) does that schools and classrooms are CoPs without entering into prescriptive evaluations of what makes them a CoP, the focus becomes what identities (useful and un-useful) are being enacted and acquired in school and classroom CoPs and how are these identities being enacted and acquired in those CoPs. Lave (1996) suggests that those who truly want to do research on learning in schools should "...establish the locations in which and the processes by which the most potent identity-constituting learning conjunctions occur" (p. 162). She also suggests that LPP as a heuristic can be used to address social justice issues. For example, schools produce racialized identities, and Lave (1996) argued that LPP can be used as a heuristic to discover where and how this is happening in schools. Conveniently, LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) suggests three specific areas in which to look - participants, practices, and artifacts - for both the *what* and the *how* of identity enactment and acquisition.

In pedagogical research, LPP (often referred to as CoP) has provided researchers with interesting ideas about where to look for identity-constituting learning conjunctions and how to understand the processes that are found. For example, Morita (2004) looks at participant behaviors, most especially second language newcomer-participants' decision to be silent, when attempting to become full-er members of their new graduate class CoPs and finds both a sense of newcomer agency in the silence as well as long-term member obstacles that led to silence in the classroom practices. Similarly, O'Connor (2001) looks at newcomer-participants' discourse, particularly their use of indexicals, in an intentionally manufactured CoP classroom community



and finds newcomer agency in newcomers' resistance to the prescribed discourse of the fabricated model of a CoP.

Toohey (1998) and Belcher (1994) used LPP to look at the practices of the academic community. Toohey (1998) finds that the spatial arrangement of L2 children (newcomer-participants) in a NS/L2 classroom, their borrowing and lending practices with one another, and the manner in which the teacher (most experienced long-term participant) managed the topic of copying leads to the systematic exclusion of the L2 newcomers, thereby denying them access to community membership. Belcher (1994) investigates the practices of advisors (long-term participants) and L2 graduate students (newcomer-participants) and finds that some practices by both types of participants decrease the potential for community membership and some increase the potential.

Canagarajah (2002) focuses on artifacts in his study of how L2 academic research writers in international settings (newcomer-participants) negotiate membership in an English language academic research community (long-term participants). He finds that newcomer-participants lack of access to artifacts of the community (e.g., books and journals) can be an obstacle to the newcomer's ability to become a full-er member of the community through publication. However, he also finds that newcomer-participants can strategically use the artifacts to which they do have access to successfully negotiate a full-er membership.

Casanave (1998) and Freedman and Adam (2000) utilize LPP less as a source of information about where to look for identity learning and more as a way to explain how communities of practice manage membership. In Casanave's (1998) investigation of the development of academic writing identities in specific disciplinary communities - one North American and one Japanese - she finds that newcomer membership in both communities is negotiated through interper-

sonal relationships in different ways. Freedman and Adam (2000) compare the acquisition of workplace genres in school versus workplace settings, and find that the relationships in each setting affect the ways that newcomer-participants' learn to produce community artifacts (e.g., genres). They, not surprisingly, find that newcomer-participants who are attempting full-er membership in a classroom setting versus a workplace setting are enacting and acquiring different identities because they are joining different CoPs.

As previously discussed, critical and feminist pedagogy seeks inclusion for all in classrooms and schools, and as such, must issue the call for others to notice and respond to the complex and often hidden ways that exclusion in classrooms and schools occurs. LPP complements the call-and-response function of critical and feminist pedagogy by providing a clear organizational framework for understanding and calling out how classrooms and schools operate to produce identities so that teachers and learners can respond. Among other things, LPP provides autoethnographic critical and feminist pedagogy researchers with a way to understand their relationship to and with learners. LPP provides specific areas of inquiry for researchers that are likely to affect the overall well-being of their CoPs. In addition, LPP supports the idea that researchers needed to be self-reflexive and build self-awareness as there is a strong likelihood that their own identities in other communities (e.g., institutional CoPs) may cause them to engage in practices that restrict access to the practices or perspectives needed for fuller participation in their own classroom communities, which could exclude newcomer-participants.

## **2.2 *Pragmatic Framework***

Critical and feminist pedagogy, along with LPP, focus on community. Critical and feminist pedagogy do this through the concept of collectivism or collaboration, and LPP does this through the concept of CoPs. All of these theories may have a great deal to say about the role of

community in learning, they have very little to say about the intrapersonal and interpersonal psychological aspects of community building. For example, critical and feminist educators may utilize practices that require a collective act like a collaborative project. The educators may assume that the sharing required to collaborate builds community. However, the learners' psychological experience of collaboration might actually decrease their sense of community, especially if they experience feelings of isolation or alienation during the collaboration. In other words, communal actions do not necessarily lead to community. Community is more than an action - it is a psychological state of being. For this reason, I turned to counseling psychology for information about building a psychological state of being that valued connections with others. From counseling psychology, I selected two theories, Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) (Miller, 1976) and Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) that address the intrapersonal and interpersonal psychological aspects of community building.

*2.2.1 Relational-Cultural Theory.* RCT, a theory of counseling and development proposed by Miller (1976), addresses the intrapersonal aspect of community building. The goal of RCT is to build healthy growth-fostering relationships (Miller, 1976). RCT assumes that relationships are central to human life (i.e., human suffering and happiness originates and is resolved in human relationships). In RCT, the concept of mutuality or mutual empathy is a guiding principle for building healthy growth-fostering relationships (Miller, 1976). According to RCT, when people give and receive mutual support, they feel connected. These feelings of connection result in personal growth, and their growth leads them to seek connections in a wider network of relationships (i.e., to build and experience community).

Mutual empathy is a "relational attitude, orientation, or stance" (Covington & Surrey, 2000) that reflects a person's desire to see and understand others from a relational-contextual

view - a view that considers others' relational history and experience (Hartling, 2008). It also reflects a person's willingness to be seen and to be understood from a relational-contextual perspective. Therefore, to practice and experience mutual empathy, people must interact with their authentic selves rather than their role-based selves.

For the counselor or teacher-researcher in this case, achieving mutual empathy and allowing one's self to be mutually affected in relationships with clients or learners requires authentic representation of the self in those relationships (Freedberg, 2007). This authentic representation is realized through behaviors like acknowledging and discussing power differentials in the relationship, accepting and acknowledging connections and disconnections in the relationship while maintaining a well-differentiated sense of self, and operating from and enacting self-awareness in the relationship (Freedberg, 2007). Identifying and deconstructing obstacles to mutual empathy in individuals' relationships is the goal of RCT counseling (Comstock, 2005; Comstock, Daniels, & D'Andrea, 2006). Miller (1986) describes the positive outcomes of the practice of mutual empathy in the following way:

1. Each person feels a greater sense of zest (vitality, energy)
2. Each person feels more able to act and does act in the world
3. Each person has a more accurate picture of her/himself and the other person(s)
4. Each person feels a greater sense of worth
5. Each person feels more connected to other persons and exhibits a greater motivation to connect with other people beyond those in one's primary relationships (p. 2).

*2.2.2 Positive Psychology.* Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) is a theory of counseling and psychology that addresses the interpersonal aspect of community building. The goal of Positive Psychology is to build "...thriving in individuals, families, and communities" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 13). Positive Psychology assumes that all people have strengths. In Positive Psychology, the purpose of the counselor-client/teacher-learner interactions is to discover, develop, and apply strengths (Anderson, 2004). According to Positive Psychology, understanding and using one's strengths creates a state of thriving in individuals, and individuals who are in a state of thriving contribute to a general state of thriving for groups and communities. That is, individual thriving supports the thriving of communities.

Positive Psychology (strengths-based focus) is a "philosophical stance and daily practice" (Lopez & Louis, 2009, p. 1) that affects how teachers and learners understand their roles and the purposes of their interactions. Strengths-based approaches to education include the following specific strategies: measurement or strengths assessment (Carey, 2004); individualization for strengths' development (Gallup, 2003; Levitz & Noel, 2000); networking with others who affirm strengths (Bowers, 2009); deliberate application of strengths (Rath, 2007; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005); and intentional development of strengths (Louis, 2008). Strengths-based approaches focus on individual strength development, but the development occurs through positive interactions (i.e., individuals become aware of their strengths and use them as a result of their interactions with others). The outcomes of strengths-based approaches include positive feelings like mattering (Dixon & Tucker, 2008); optimism (Hewitt, 2005), confidence (Anderson, 2004), and motivation (Anderson, 2004).

*2.2.3 Role of feelings and emotions in academic writing.* As part of the pragmatic framework of this study, RCT and Positive Psychology provide an explanation of how communi-

ty is built and strategies for encouraging individuals to participate in community. Each of these theories proposes that when individuals psychologically experience states like connectedness (RCT) or thriving (Positive Psychology), they feel better, and their improved feelings contribute to their own development as well as the development of the community. However, in educational contexts, teachers do not build community solely for the sake of positive feelings.

The goal of any classroom is to achieve some specific knowledge and skill-based objectives that will allow the learners to join a CoP beyond the classroom. In the case of this study, learners need to learn how to produce written texts that are deemed not only appropriate in their immediate classroom CoP but that would presumably be deemed appropriate and legitimate as a starting point in their future CoP of Anglo-American university writers. Thus, building community and positive feelings in this study is a goal, but it is not the only goal. In fact, from an education-as-information/skill-exchange perspective, building community and positive feelings is not that important unless it is linked to improving learners' ability to achieve the objectives of the course, which in this case is to produce academic written texts that display qualities deemed important in Anglo-American academic writing. Therefore, the question that needs to be addressed is as follows: Do feelings affect learners' abilities to learn about writing, specifically academic writing, in classroom CoPs?

Researchers like Leki (2007) have done important and helpful research on ESL undergraduates' transition to matriculated courses from a writing perspective, and part of that research has revealed that feelings and emotions are an important factor in the transition process. For example, Leki (2007) includes a description of the role that socio-academic relationships play in her description of each of her four participants' academic journeys. She found that their relation-

ships with peers and faculty played an important role in both their academic development and their feelings about their academic development.

Likewise, researchers like Casanave (2003) and Li (2006) have shared ideas and case studies on ESL graduate and post-graduates' bids for legitimacy in their CoPs through writing-related interactions. These researchers focused on the socio-political forces that influenced ESL writers' written texts and writing processes. In particular, they focus on the impact that power relations have on ESL writers, and they allude to the feelings that these power relations provoke in writers as potentially influential in their written texts and their writing processes. However, Casanave (2003) also suggests that future research should ask, "How do particular actors, their relationships, and their culturally infused expectations about writing influence the ways that writing gets done?" (p. 93).

Some research, particularly in the area of graduate writing, has addressed the question of the influence that relationships and feelings could have on written texts and writing processes. For example, Cameron, Nairn, and Higgins (2009) found that emotions play a disabling role with regard to the academic writing of graduate students. When graduate students in their writing workshops were asked to brainstorm challenges to their academic writing, a large number of those challenges were feelings or emotions like self-doubt, anxiety, and fear. They also found that graduate students felt "surprised and relieved" to know that others felt the same way about academic writing. Hearing other students' feelings diminished their sense of isolation and enabled them to approach the writing task from a more realistic and empowered point of view.

Likewise, Wellington (2010) found that the graduate students in his focus groups also felt better when they discussed their feelings about academic writing because they realized that they were not alone in their feelings. He found that the affective domain of writing held great im-

portance for students. They reported positive feelings like excitement and catharsis, but they also reported negative feelings like stress, fear, isolation, and anxiety.

Research on undergraduate writing may also include some references to the role of emotions. For example, Curtis and Herrington (2003) look at the longitudinal writing development of four undergraduates to explore the relationship between writing development and personal development. They find that one writer, Lawrence, attributes his improvement in writing to an increase in confidence and self-esteem.

Longfellow, May, Burke, and Marks-Maran (2008) investigated Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) for writing and found that emotional benefits were among two of the primary benefits reported by participants. In general, participants felt decreased feelings of intimidation and increased feelings of safety. Participants indicated that these emotional benefits positively affected their willingness to ask questions and to request clarification.

Of course, emotions can play a negative role in academic writing performance. Woodrow (2011) in a large study of college English students in China found that feelings of self-efficacy and anxiety were important variables in writing performance. Feelings of low self-efficacy resulted in lower level of writing performance. Anxiety affected writing performance indirectly by affecting feelings of self-efficacy.

In sum, research seems to suggest that feelings and emotions do play an important role in learners' perceptions of writing, attitudes about writing, and perhaps even their performance of writing. However, despite any writer's or writing teacher's intuitive understanding that emotions are important in writing and the quality of one's writing, there appears to be very little research in this area. There is even less research on the role that teachers play or might play in creating classrooms that produce emotions favorable to writing or improving writing. Cameron, Nairn,



and Higgins (2009) allude to the idea that researchers (i.e., graduate professors) are generally accustomed through training to ignore emotions in research, so in their discussions of writing with students, they also ignore emotions. Perhaps, teachers and researchers are not ignoring emotions but cloaking them within their discussions of academic jargon like socio-academic relations or socio-political orientations so that they will appear more authoritative and less emotional. Certainly, feminist critiques have commented for years on how achieving authoritative academic status at the university level requires a certain relinquishment of all things emotional.

### 3 METHOD

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate my own ability to enact critical and feminist pedagogy using RCT and Positive Psychology in an 8-week ESL academic writing course. In addition, I wanted to investigate the potential impact that my enactment might have on all participants. Although investigations of one's self could include other external researchers, in this study, I elected to investigate this experience as a participant-researcher.

The primary reason for this choice is purely pragmatic. The IEP course in this study met five days per week for eight weeks. All of my colleagues, like me, teach at least four classes per day five days per week. Thus, their opportunities to assist me by observing the course I taught in this study are quite limited.

In addition to the practical difficulties of including an external researcher, I believe that classroom CoPs are mini-cultures. They develop histories, practices, and ways of communicating that are understood to the members who participate in them. Outsiders can provide a window on those cultures, but outsiders who only occasionally drop in are truly outsiders. The sense that outsiders make of a culture is based on their own points of reference rather than the points used by the members of the culture. To be sure, outsiders' observations can bring to light aspects of the culture that are unconscious for members, so I am not saying they are not valuable. However, in this study, I was most interested in the insiders' perspectives and points of view about our common classroom culture.

In order to investigate insiders' perspectives and points of view, I selected autoethnography as my method. In the following pages, I will describe autoethnography and its relationship to critical and feminist pedagogy. I will describe the conceptual framework including the re-

search questions that guided the design of this study. I will identify and discuss the assumptions and biases that I brought to this study as a participant-researcher. I will describe the context of this study, the participants, the data collection process, and the data analysis process. I will conclude with a description of the steps that I took to ensure the trustworthiness of my findings.

### **3.1 Autoethnography**

Although the concept and practice of ethnography as a methodology for the study of cultures has existed formally for at least 100 years, the concept and practice of autoethnography is relatively new, emerging about 30 years ago. Autoethnography is literally the study of the researcher herself (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), and as is the case with many methodological offspring, it evolved from practitioners' desire to adapt an existing methodology to embrace ideological expansions in social science's conception of what research is and does. Spry (2001) explains that autoethnography emerged after the *crisis of representation* in ethnographic inquiries. In this crisis of representation, ethnographers began to "resist Grand Theorizing and the façade of objective research that decontextualizes subjects and searches for singular truth" (p. 710). Thus, autoethnography was conceptualized as a more authentic research method that conferred scientific value and validity on openly subjective viewpoints and multiple interpretations.

Traditionally, ethnography is identified as an approach in qualitative research guides, and autoethnography is described as a type or sub-type of ethnography (Creswell, 2007). The status of autoethnography is elevated in other texts to method (Chang, 2008) and tradition (Hays & Singh, 2012). This elevation suggests that at least for some, autoethnography is significantly more than just another way of doing ethnography. Essentially, autoethnography might reasonably be argued to be a paradigm or framework — a thought pattern that is reflected in the research

at all points from the choice of the object of inquiry through the interpretation of results and in the case of autoethnography, including the presentation of results.

When autoethnography is viewed as a paradigm or framework, the researcher lays claim to not only the procedures and techniques that characterize it, but also the underlying assumptions that are at its core. In the case of autoethnography, these assumptions include the following: the researcher and the researched are inextricably linked and are best studied in relationship; self-narrative is the basis of all human knowledge (i.e., we all explain the world to ourselves through our self-narratives); the goal of research is change; self-analysis combined with self-narrative lead to greater self-awareness (Chang, 2008) and thus greater possibility for personal change; and readers compare their own selves to the selves they see in self-narratives (Chang, 2008) possibly learning to imagine themselves in new ways. Autoethnography as a framework (i.e., set of procedures, techniques, *and* assumptions that affects every aspect of a research project) is an ideal choice when the ideological framework of the project is related to critical and feminist pedagogy.

*3.1.1 Autoethnography's relationship to critical and feminist pedagogy.* The assumptions of autoethnography are complementary to many of the notions of critical and feminist pedagogy in ESL pedagogical research already reviewed. For example, the study of one's own praxis, which is essential in critical and feminist pedagogy, is logically linked to an underlying assumption that reflexivity and self-awareness lead to personal change. Likewise, the emphasis on collectivism and collaboration that is so prevalent in critical and feminist pedagogy research in ESL is related to the assumption that people are best studied in relationship and the assumption that people (i.e., readers) learn new ways of being collectively by comparing themselves to others. In addition, the social activism imperative to acknowledge and address power inequities that under-

lie much of the critical and feminist pedagogical research in ESL is connected to the assumptions that all human knowledge is a socially constructed self-narrative that may be deconstructed and the purpose of research is change in the form of improvement. Thus, the choice of autoethnographic methods and their accompanying assumptions is almost automatic when the research project involves critical and feminist pedagogy, for what other frameworks could even pretend to provide means and rationale for investigating the multi-layered complexities of evaluating a critical and feminist pedagogical approach in an ESL classroom? Indeed, it would be harder to explain why one did *not* use autoethnography when doing this type of investigation than to explain why one *did*.

The underlying assumptions of autoethnography are, of course, not embraced equally by all who do autoethnography. Denzin (2006) illustrates that autoethnography has been defined in several different ways. He argues that the primary difference between the definitions is primarily related to the degree to which the author defining autoethnography is willing to embrace it as a political commitment to social justice. In Denzin's (2003) point of view, autoethnography must embrace its potential by becoming a performance that actively and openly seeks to change the inequities of the world. Denzin (2003) refers to this type of autoethnography as *performance [auto] ethnography*.

In performance [auto] ethnography, the ethnographer produces a text (i.e., creative performance) that provides a moral tale that helps people to survive and thrive in spite of the overwhelming, oppressive obstacles they face from institutional systems (Denzin, 2003). In a field like education, a researcher/teacher's performance [auto] ethnography might not be artistic in a literary sense like Denzin's (2006) performance, but the performance is still creative and dramatic. The teacher, much like a one-person Broadway show, writes, directs, produces, and acts a

performance with a moral message that is intended to help others - primarily teachers and learners - to survive and thrive in a hegemonizing institutional system. The moral intent of performance [auto] ethnography fuses it with critical and feminist pedagogy and further supports the choice of autoethnography as a framework for investigating critical and feminist pedagogy.

The ways in which autoethnography has been used in pedagogical research projects attests to the many different ways that researchers engage with the assumptions of autoethnography. Three general patterns emerge in the literature. The first pattern is autoethnography as an instructional approach (e.g., Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011; Chamcharatsri, 2009). In this approach, researchers primarily engage with the assumption that self-reflection and self-narrative will lead to personal change in students' identities as teachers (Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011) or as newcomers to a new culture (Chamcharatsri, 2009).

The second pattern is autoethnography as a research writing style (e.g., Grey, 2009; Vicars, 2006). Researchers who use autoethnography in this way may openly claim it as Vicars (2006) does with a title that refers to "an autoethnographic account", or they may only claim to be writing an ethnography in which they were a participant as Grey (2009) does. For these researchers, the assumption that self-narrative has significant impact on the imaginations of readers seems to be most important.

The third pattern is autoethnography as an analytical approach (e.g., Duarte, 2007; Fujieda, 2008; Phan, 2009; Miller, 2009). For these researchers, autoethnography is a way to understand their own trajectory in processes like the following: academic literacy in an MATESOL program (Fujieda, 2008), writing-advisor relationship between a non-native English speaking thesis advisor and a non-native graduate student writer (Phan, 2009), practicum experience when a pre-service teacher is committed to critical pedagogy (Miller, 2009), and professional devel-

opment for an experienced teacher (Duarte, 2007). In these cases, autoethnography's assumption that the goal of research is change is underscored although one would not say that any of the aforementioned is necessarily performance [auto] ethnography.

Perhaps by virtue of the lingering positivism that governs the genre of the academic research article, some pedagogical autoethnographers spend more of their text discussing their own relationship with *something* rather than *someone*. For instance, Duarte (2007) focuses on his relationship with specific ideas and the project; Fujieda (2008) focuses on her relationship with academic writing and academic reading; Phan (2009) focuses on identity, particularly the advisee's identity; Miller (2009) focuses on a particular perspective - pragmatic radicalism - that the researcher has chosen to enact; and Vicars (2006) also focuses on a particular perspective, Queer pedagogy.

Certainly, autoethnographers are permitted to discuss their relationships with ideas; however, it is interesting that all of the previously mentioned teacher-autoethnographers elected to prioritize their development of self-awareness in relationship to disembodied ideas rather than other humans. To be sure, each of them to varying degrees does discuss human interactions, but despite the preponderance of human interaction that each of them as teachers probably has on a daily basis, none of them chose to focus on the *human* relational aspect of ethnography in education. Most of their stories are highly individualistic accounts of one person's, not surprisingly the most powerful person in a classroom's, interaction with a process or theory. Where is the study of the human interactions that are part of the everyday experiences of teachers and learners? Where is the study of the collective learning process that happens or could happen in every classroom? Above all, where is the autoethnographic performance of a moral (Denzin, 2003) message that addresses surviving *and* thriving in educational contexts?

### ***3.2 Conceptual Framework for This Study***

Maxwell (2005) describes a conceptual framework as a tentative theory. As he explains, this tentative theory both informs and explains the researcher's choices and interpretations. This theory, in a sense, becomes the worldview of the study. Like a worldview, the conceptual framework is a set of cultural organizing principles that identify and give meaning to all phenomena. The conceptual framework of my study is based on the use of an autoethnographic method interpreted with a radical visionary feminist (hooks, 2000) pedagogical lens. From these two complementary paradigms, I have attempted to build a worldview that situates the design of this study.

Both autoethnography, particularly performance (auto) ethnography, and radical visionary feminism (hooks, 2000) contribute to the conceptual framework or worldview of this study the following organizing principles: studying one's self is vital for change, attempting to change any of society's controlling systems (Foucault, 1975) is a worthy endeavor, and chronicling attempts to change are important for effecting a continued consciousness of and hope for change. As previously mentioned in the discussion of autoethnography, the study of self, the expectation of change as a result of self-study, and the importance of telling one's story are salient features of autoethnography and this study. The addition of radical visionary feminism (hooks, 2000) to the organizing principles of this study's framework energizes each of those principles to engage in the on-going struggle for social justice in all arenas.

The first fundamental organizing principle of this study is the idea that change is a product of self-awareness and self-reflection. hooks (2000) ideas of radical visionary feminism add to this organizing principle that self-study is the fundamental first step to dismantling oppressive



controlling systems wherever they operate. She describes radical visionary feminism in the following way:

Radical visionary feminism encourages all of us to courageously examine our lives from the standpoint of gender, race, and class so that we can accurately understand our position within the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (p. 116).

Autoethnography provides radical visionary feminists with a way to increase their own and their audience’s understanding of the cultural context that positions all participants and their interactions in any given context (Chang, 2000).

The second fundamental organizing principle of this study is that the effort to change any of society’s controlling systems (Foucault, 1975) on a small or grand scale always matters. Thus, the efforts of one teacher in one class are a significant contribution to the world because they aim to create a world by and for everyone. hooks (2000) urges all people but especially those imbued with the privileges of academia to embrace radical visionary feminism because the feminist politics championed by this type of feminism are concerned with social justice for everyone in every situation:

Feminist politics aims to end domination to free us to be who we are - to live lives where we love justice, where we can live in peace. Feminism is for everybody (p. 118).

Autoethnography offers radical visionary feminists the possibility of transformation for their participants and themselves by forging the potential for “cross-cultural coalition building” (Chang, 2000, p. 52).

The third fundamental organizing principle of this study is the idea that self-narrative is a powerful vehicle not only for self-change but also societal change. The crucial decision of how

to describe one's journey, whether it be the hero's journey or the researcher's journey, communicates a worldview that includes and excludes those who might learn the morals of the tale. Radical visionary feminism (hooks, 2000) adopts the position that the broader the scope of inclusion is, the broader the scope of potential change is. Movements of change gain their momentum and their future members from popular support. Thus, stories of radical visionary feminism in action should be told in an appealing way to a wide audience:

Most people have no understanding of the myriad ways feminism has positively changed all our lives. Sharing feminist thought and practice sustains feminist movement. Feminist knowledge is for everybody (hooks, 2000, p.24).

The fact that one of autoethnography's key benefits is its accessibility to both the researcher and reader provides radical visionary feminists with a way to share and sustain their movement.

Thus, for this study, I chose to use an autoethnographic method interpreted with a radical visionary feminist (hooks, 2000) pedagogical lens because I wanted to know how I position myself and am positioned by others within one of society's controlling systems—education. I wanted to explore my transformative potential within a specific educational context. I wanted to share my story in a way that was interesting and accessible to others in the hopes that they might be inspired in any way, small or large, to consider the changes that they might make in their own lives and/or classrooms that could sustain and strengthen the movement for social justice for all in all arenas. The research questions that follow are a reflection of the worldview that motivated and sustained this study.

*3.2.1 Research questions.* The research questions guiding this study were the following:

1. How can an ESL teacher develop an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of Relational Cultural Theory (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths)?
2. What internal and external obstacles will the teacher encounter as she develops and implements an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology?
3. How will the use of an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology affect ESL learners' feelings about Anglo-American academic writing in general?
4. How will the use of an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology affect ESL learners' feelings about their own abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing successfully?
5. In an ESL academic writing course in which the teacher uses the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology to develop an orientation to interactions, how will the learners' abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing change over the duration of the course?

### ***3.3 Researcher Bias and Assumptions***

The worldview of a study is in large part established by its conceptual framework. However, in qualitative approaches like autoethnography, the subjectivity of the researcher also forms part of the study's worldview. Qualitative approaches require researchers to disclose and document their own assumptions and biases (Maxwell, 2005) because these assumptions and biases are as much a part of the connective structure of the study as the theories that form the conceptual framework. In this study, the researcher biases and assumptions that form part of the

worldview and thusly the connective structure include my personal beliefs about my purpose in life, my pedagogical experiences of the educational context as a language teacher in many different settings, and my pedagogical experiences of ESL language learners and myself as an ESL teacher.

My personal beliefs about my purpose in life led to my selection of a conceptual framework that assumes a particular socio-political worldview. The organizing principles for this study are in fact a reflection of my assumptions and biases about how the world operates and how I ought to operate in the world. To review, those principles state that self-study is essential for change, attempts to change society's controlling systems (Foucault, 1975) are worthwhile, and self-narratives describing such attempts are beneficial for inspiring others to attempt change. From these principles, it may be rightly surmised that I conducted this study with the following beliefs: self-reflection is a valid tool of inquiry, especially when one is seeking to change one's self; reflection inspires and motivates change; society's controlling systems (Foucault, 1975), like education, privilege some at the expense of others, and privilege should be constantly challenged; it is possible to change those systems with individual choices and actions; telling one's story is a better way to communicate research findings that inspire action than other formats; and, I *should* try to inspire others to believe that change is possible and worthwhile by living (and teaching) according to what I believe.

My pedagogical experiences of the educational context as a language teacher in many different settings over a long period of time has certainly caused me to develop certain assumptions and biases about educational contexts that were relevant to this study. In fact, these assumptions and biases were part of the inspiration for this study. My foundational beliefs about education in general are that it is designed to privilege certain groups of learners over others and

that the privilege is doled out in such a way so as to maintain the status quo of any society (i.e., the group that is powerful stays powerful). Of course, a private school education maintains a different status quo than a public school education does, and education does produce those who resist the status quo (e.g. people who use their education specifically to help others who are disenfranchised to gain more recognition and access to resources in society). However, even in the case of those who resist status quo to improve social justice in some specific area, it is usually true that they had certain privileges that allowed them to make that choice.

My other related beliefs are that teachers, who in the U.S. are often White and middle class, are positioned by multiple controlling systems to essentially reproduce themselves vis-à-vis classroom practices, which is why the students who are positioned in ways similar to the teacher are the most likely to succeed academically. In addition to my beliefs about the functioning of education in general, this study was also influenced by my beliefs about ESL instruction, particularly academic writing instruction. I believe that knowing how to produce acceptable academic written texts is absolutely essential for academic success in U.S. universities. I also believe that acceptable academic texts include many hidden cultural expectations that many U.S. professors and some ESL writing teachers do not adequately acknowledge or explain. Although I do not believe that either group intentionally withholds information about how to produce acceptable academic texts from ESL learners, I do believe that ESL learners are often excluded from participating as fully as they might in different Anglo-American academic communities because they do not have that information. I believe this exclusion creates problems for ESL learners beyond just academic success in U.S. universities.

Finally, the assumptions and biases derived from my pedagogical experiences of ESL learners and myself as a teacher contributed in many ways to specific elements of this study.

With regard to my beliefs about ESL learners, my many years of pedagogical experience led me to assume that learners would resist certain aspects of my teaching regardless of what principles, practices, or activities I used. With regard to my beliefs about myself as a teacher, I believed that I, too, would resist changes to my normal way of thinking, doing, and being in the classroom. I also believed that although my goal as an academic writing teacher is to teach ESL learners to be a part of a wider U.S. academic writing community, the targets that I set for that individual goal are individually constructed. In other words, I assumed that even though I believed that what I asked learners to do in terms of written products has a relationship to what they will be asked to do in the future in the university, my construction of what they will be asked to do is unique to my own assumptions about academic writing and does not represent any type of universal standard.

### ***3.4 Context of Study***

This study was conducted in the Intensive English Program (IEP) of a large, public university. Considering that one of the goals of my study is to enact social justice, an IEP may seem like an odd choice of context because IEPs are often populated by learners who are privileged to extremely privileged in all ways within the context of their own countries. Many learners in IEPs are able to be in a U.S. IEP precisely because they are members of the social and economic elite in their own countries. This is not true in all cases, but in general, IEP learners are formally educated, financially stable, and socially normed to the cultural values of the controlling class in their countries.

However, the IEP is only a temporary stopping point for these learners as many of them want to gain admission to U.S. universities. In a U.S. university, the privileges that may have insulated IEP learners from feeling oppressed may be overshadowed by their otherness, and they

may suddenly become aware of themselves as different and have to cope with feelings of inferiority and acts of discrimination. In other words, in U.S. universities, even the most privileged of IEP learners will have to face some or many situations in which they are intentionally or unintentionally excluded or otherized by virtue of their linguistic and cultural background. Thus, IEP learners as much as any others need to develop an awareness of privilege and how it operates because it will definitively operate against them in some cases.

The choice of this particular IEP context had several advantages for this type of study. To begin, part of the central purpose of this study was to increase social justice in broad and narrow educational contexts. Investigating critical and feminist pedagogical practices in relation to a gate-keeping topic like academic writing, a course that is offered in this IEP and is populated primarily by learners who have the explicit desire to become matriculated students of U.S. universities, afforded me the opportunity to work on broader social justice issues like helping these learners to feel a greater sense of legitimacy about their own identities as academic writers in English in future U.S. university classroom CoPs as well as narrower social justice issues like increasing these learners' understandings of the practices and tools common to most large U.S. universities.

In addition to the opportunities for a wide range of social justice impacts, this IEP context is host to learners with a wide range of national, ethnic, language and educational backgrounds. Thus, the diversity of the learner population enhanced the development of the critical pedagogical teaching approach because it ensured that the feelings, strengths, and needs of the learners will be more heterogeneous. This IEP context also offered me access to some resources like the ability to teach the EAP writing course in a computer lab and access to a web-based educational platform that all learners could use that are extremely useful for both teaching academic writing

and conducting research on writing. Finally, this IEP context offered me significant autonomy for selecting materials and designing curriculum as well as allowing me the opportunity to work with many of the same learners in both their academic writing and academic reading courses, which offered the potential to explore and use reading-writing connections.

This IEP operates as a separate entity on campus (i.e., it is not part of an academic department). This program divides the curriculum of the IEP into seven levels (with Level 700 as the highest level) and within each level, the students focus on skills in the areas of grammar, writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Sessions last eight weeks and classes meet for 50 minutes five days per week. Most of the courses are taught in a single, self-contained building on the university campus. The classrooms offer basic resources (e.g., whiteboard, desks, a teacher computer) with some having computers for all students and others having a docucam and a projector attached to the teacher's computer. Although the IEP is not part of an academic department, the students do have access to most of the resources of the campus including the educational platform LMS and the library.

In recent sessions, the average number of students in the IEP had been about 300 for each session. The student population is very diverse in terms of nationality, ethnic background, educational background, religion, and age. Although at times a single language group may be dominant in one class, at other times, all students in one class may be from different language groups. Students are by and large block scheduled, which means that they have most or all of their classes for a specific level with the same group of students. This means that over time, the students do know one another quite well. In addition, most students spend multiple sessions in the IEP, so they establish close friendships with other students.



The IEP is not marketed as a program that is specifically designed to focus on improving U.S. academic skills at all levels. Levels 100-400 are predominantly focused on general, communicative skill development in English for life purposes. Levels 500-700 are more focused on U.S. academic skill development for attending U.S. universities. Level 700, which is the level that was addressed in this study, is more focused on U.S. academic skill development than other levels. Most students in Level 700 either have specific goals to attend a graduate program in the U.S. or an undergraduate program in the U.S. Many have received sponsorship from their countries to do so and are pressured to gain acceptance into a U.S. university as quickly as possible. Because of the particular reputation of the university, many students are interested in topics like engineering, science, and technology.

The Level 700 academic writing course that was the focus of this study was taught as a paired course. That is, many of the students in this academic writing course also took the academic reading course, which was taught by the same teacher (in this case, me). Although many students in Level 700 courses are preoccupied with passing the TOEFL, Level 700 does not focus on timed writing (Level 600 does). Rather, Level 700 purports to focus on the type of academic writing that students will need to do after they are accepted into a U.S. university.

### **3.5 *Participants***

In addition to the teacher-researcher, this study included seven participants. The participants were enrolled in one section of Level 700 Academic Writing. Although the course began with nine participants, approximately 4 weeks after the start of the course, two of the participants changed to a course that was taught in the afternoon due to the fact that they had trouble arriving to the morning class on time. The participants were not evenly matched in terms of gender with seven female and two male participants (one male and one female spent only half of the session

in this group because they changed to a later class). The participants ranged in age from 17 to 37. The languages participants spoke with their families included the following: Arabic (n=1); English (n=1); Korean (n=4); and Spanish (n=4). (Some participants indicated that they spoke more than one language with their families, so although there are 9 participants, n=10) In terms of general educational background, participants were asked to indicate the highest level of education completed in their home country. Two indicated high school, two indicated that they were presently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in their home country, and five indicated that they had completed college or a Bachelor's degree. With regard to study of English, all students but one had taken at least one previous level (Level 600) in the IEP where this study was conducted, and 7 had taken two or more levels in this IEP. Three of the students either indicated uncertainty about future plans for using English or future plans for using English that did not include attending a U.S. university. Three of the students planned to attend U.S. universities for a Bachelor's degree and three for a Master's degree.

### ***3.6 Instruments, Data Sources and Data Collection***

The on-site researcher was Lauren Lukkarila, the author of this study. I conducted a self-ethnographic study of my own teaching of one section of an advanced level ESL course. The course was Academic Writing 2. As previously discussed, these courses were offered in an IEP in metropolitan city in the southeastern U.S. These courses are part of the curriculum for the most advanced level of English instruction offered at the Language Institute.

The instruments and data sources that I used to collect information about my own practices and development included the following:

- Lesson plans
- Field notes

- Course documents (e.g., teaching materials and assignments)
- Reflexive teaching journal
- Transcripts of digital recordings of my daily teaching

The instruments and data sources that I used to collect information about learners' perspectives and development included the following:

- Answers to a general information form on learners' educational and ideological backgrounds in relation to academic writing (See Appendix A for the questions learners answered)
- Copies of all assignments
- Transcripts of learner comments or questions captured by the digital recorder and/or field notes of learner questions
- Transcripts of three qualitative interviews with each participating learner (See Appendix B for copies of the questions learners answered)

### ***3.7 Procedure***

At the beginning of the course, all students in my Academic Writing II courses were invited to join the study. In order to ensure complete comprehension of the request I was making of them, I orally explained the purpose and procedures of my study to the students. I gave the students two copies of the request for Informed Consent (see Appendix C) and read through the request aloud, pausing to initiate a comprehension check after every two or three sentences. I answered all questions that came up during my reading, and I answered any additional questions after the reading of the request was complete. I gave each student an envelope with their name on it. I asked the students to take both copies of the form home and consider my request. I explained that signing the form meant that they agreed to be part of the study, which meant that

they were agreeing to allow me to use their coursework and comments as part of my study. I also explained that agreeing to participate would require participating in three interviews outside of class.

In addition, I explained that the decision to participate or not participate was completely voluntary and would have no impact on the student's grade. (I emphasized the voluntary nature of participation as well as the fact that it would not affect their grade several times.) I requested that the following class day they place a signed or unsigned copy of one of the consent forms in the envelope and return it to me. On the day that they were to return the envelopes, I again reminded them of the voluntary nature of the study and the fact that their decision would not impact their grade.

### **3.8 *Data Collection***

The data collection process in this study involved a systematic data collection of the above listed data sources. Recursively evolving, my data collection informed my data analysis and the approach that I took to designing each day's lessons and materials in accordance with both my emerging understanding of enacting classroom practices that would foster an orientation to interactions based on the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology as well as my perceptions of learners' responses as reflections of their desires, strengths and needs. Each day during my 5-day teaching week, I reflected on the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology, my own teaching practices, and questions/comments or written work offered by learners to prepare the instructional plan and materials for the next day. I composed written reflections on my internal process of being a participant-teacher-researcher in this study two to three times a week depending on the data collection and analytic needs of the study. One to three times per week, I included some type of classroom interactions that allowed learners to report and discuss their internal processes

as well. In addition, during the study I continued to review literature on RCT and Positive Psychology to further inform my approach to teaching the course.

I asked participants to participate in three semi-structured interviews outside of class. Each interview was digitally recorded, and most interviews lasted from 15 to 20 minutes. Most interviews were conducted with individual learners. However, on a few occasions, learners decided to participate in interviews with another learner. I conducted the first and second interviews. A trained interviewer conducted the third interview. The first interview primarily focused on asking learners to expand on written comments they had given with regard to their feelings about writing at the beginning of the course on the General Information Form and compare their answers from the beginning with their thoughts about the same question at the time of the interview. The first interview also asked the learners to describe their writing course and to offer any suggestions they might have. In addition, learners self-selected a pseudonym during the first interview. At the beginning and end of all interviews, learners were reminded that their participation was voluntary and that their answers would not affect their grades in any way.

The second interview primarily focused on asking learners to expand on written comments they had given with regard to their experiences of academic writing prior to the course on the General Information Form and compare their answers from the beginning with their thoughts about the same question at the time of the interview. Learners were also asked if and how their ideas and feelings about academic writing had changed since the course began. In addition, learners were shown a copy of the first written text they produced for this course during the first week. They were asked to comment on how they felt their writing had changed, and once again, they were asked for suggestions.

The third interview was conducted after the final exam by a trained external interviewer. The recordings of these interviews were not given to the researcher-teacher until after the learners' grades had been submitted. The third interview focused on asking learners to describe their experience of the teacher-researcher's class and teaching approach. Learners were asked to discuss their feelings about teacher-researcher and the course as well as to give suggestions for how the course might have been improved. Learners were also asked if and how participating in interviews with the teacher-researcher affected them.

### ***3.9 Data Analysis and Researcher Interpretation***

In this study, data analysis was both an on-going and post-hoc process. Ongoing analysis included the following:

- Identified my assumptions in advance of the study.
- Reflexively and critically analyzed my daily experience of the course, the learners, and my teaching practices in relation to my understanding of the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology as well as the desires, needs, and preferences of the learners.
- Developed lesson plans and materials for each day's class.

Each research question required a unique set of analytic steps, which I will revisit as I report the findings of this study in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Throughout the research process, I recursively journaled and reflected on my teaching and interview experiences with students. I also interpreted my field notes, and my lesson plans in an effort to ensure that my teaching practices integrated the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology that I had selected as the basis for my study. After the course ended, I transcribed all interviews with learners. I collected data sources like Teacher Reflexive Journal, my lesson plans, my field notes, learners' written reflections, and

transcripts of interviews with learners. I analyzed all of these data sources in order to identify and select specific recurring activities that were instrumental in developing an orientation to interactions in the class.

Based on my analysis, I selected three recurring practices that appeared to be prominent in developing an orientation to interactions in the class. Having identified three specific practices, I randomly selected days of class on which these practices had occurred and transcribed interactions related to those practices. I again read through Teacher Reflexive Journal, my field notes, transcripts of interviews with learners, and my lesson plans identifying references to those practices. After collecting the references to each practice, I coded the references in relation to the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology that I had selected for this study. I also coded transcripts of the class episodes in this way. Finally, I triangulated the data for each practice to verify that the use of the tenets in the practices was corroborated in multiple data sources.

### ***3.10 Trustworthiness and Researcher Reflexivity***

The study used seven strategies of trustworthiness designed into the research activities in order to strengthen its credibility. First, I maintained a reflexive journal throughout the research process (Hays & Singh, 2011). In this journal, I reflexively described my assumptions, biases, reactions, experiences, and other thoughts and feelings related to the study. I maintained this reflexive journal daily throughout the 8-week course. Second, I integrated recursivity in the process of data collection and analysis - where earlier data collection and analysis informed later data collection and analysis (Patton, 2002). This recursivity also allowed me to revise interview questions and other research activities based on the lived experiences of students in this study, as well as myself.

Third, I triangulated data sources and analyzed them in tandem with one another in

order to identify tensions and sources of explanation within the data (Creswell, 2007).

For example, I triangulated the following multiple data sources:

- Course materials that I used (lesson plans, assignments, sample papers, etc.)
- Written assignments that consenting students submitted
- Field notes from the courses (I requested permission from consenting students to use field notes regarding comments or questions they express publicly in class.)
- Digital recordings of myself during class (I requested permission from consenting students to use recordings of comments or questions they expressed publicly in class that might be caught by the recorder I had for myself.)
- Digital recordings of private interviews with students
- General information form on writing background, etc.
- Self-reflective daily journal

Fourth, I used negative case analysis to strengthen the credibility of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my interview questions, reflexive journal, and other research activities, I searched for examples within the data where participants and I engaged in dynamics that were not mutual empathy/strength-based or where participants shared thoughts that were less enthusiastic about a mutual empathy/strength-based approach to learning academic writing.

The fifth strategy of trustworthiness was my work with a peer debriefer. I submitted a selection of uncoded data (e.g., interviews with learners, reflexive journal, transcripts of in-class interactions) to the peer debriefer along with a description of the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology that I selected as the basis for this study. The selection represented approximately ten



percent of the total data. I asked the peer debriefer to review the data and code the data according to what they believed were reflections of any of the six tenets.

Then, the peer debriefer and I reviewed the data and came to consensus on what constituted a reflection of the tenets I had selected. Finally, in writing my discussions of the data analysis (Chapters 4, 5, & 6), I used thick, rich descriptions of data to illustrate how the tenets were reflected in this study.

#### 4 THEORY TO PRACTICE: RESEARCH QUESTIONS 1 & 2

Kumaradivelu's (2006) concern that the critical awakening in TESOL may not have affected everyday teaching practices very much reflects the age-old question in education of how much educational theory in general ever engenders true change in classroom practices. His concern also reflects the fundamental philosophical question that all individuals face of how much their stated beliefs about what is best are ever reflected in their daily practices. Both the educational and the philosophical question have a compelling influence on this study.

As the teacher-researcher in this study, I am well aware of the theory-practice divide in the field of TESOL. I have witnessed it from both sides of the proverbial divide, for I have been immersed in a Ph.D. program that is concerned with preparing future researchers to discuss, debate, and create theory. However, I have also been equally immersed in the everyday teaching of ESL in an IEP that is concerned with teachers fulfilling their obligation to impart knowledge, skills, and abilities to students in a regulated, efficient, and acceptable (from students' points of view) manner. I have experienced first-hand how important it is to incorporate theory into practice, but I have also experienced how difficult and frustrating that incorporation can be when the theory fails to account for some very real situational factors. My internal and external struggles with regard to this dilemma have alternately caused me to feel vexed on the one hand by colleagues and students and the other hand by myself. My vexation with colleagues and students usually arises when, in my opinion, they refuse to see the benefits of incorporating new ideas and want to rigidly continue doing what they have always done. My vexation with my own self usually arises when I become aware of my own inconsistencies with regard to enacting the theoretically-inspired beliefs that I hold in my actual classroom practices.

This study is inspired in part by the vexation I feel with my own inconsistencies and my own desire to demonstrate that everyday practices can change in beneficial ways through the thoughtful application of theory. As a result, the first two research questions of this study focus on how theory becomes everyday practice and how theory is challenged by the real factors of everyday practice. The questions are as follows:

1. How can an ESL teacher develop an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of Relational Cultural Theory (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths)?
2. What internal and external obstacles will the teacher encounter as she develops and implements an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology?

This chapter will discuss the theory that I, as the teacher-researcher, wanted to enact and how I enacted that theory in my everyday classroom practices. As the practices for enacting the theory are discussed, data collected from my own reflections during this study and data collected from learners will be used to illustrate the connections that I see between theory and practice. Next, the limitations of my enactment of theory will be described. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the potential implications that these findings have for aspiring critical and feminist pedagogues like myself.

#### ***4.1 Theory of Practice for Questions 1 & 2***

The theory behind the practice in this study can be described as having two layers. The first layer is the conceptual framework of the theory of practice utilized in this study. For the conceptual framework, I selected LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as the specific theory of learning that provided the foundation for my knowledge and assumptions of how learning operates in

general and how it may operate in classroom settings. The second layer is the pragmatic framework of the theory of practice utilized in this study. The pragmatic framework refers to the ideas and concepts that guided my practical, everyday choices and actions in the classroom. For the pragmatic framework, I selected RCT (Miller, 1976) and Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) as two theories of human interactions, specifically human interactions between an authority figure and a lay person, that provided the foundation for my knowledge and assumptions of what types of practices might create an orientation to interactions that would enhance the learning process as it is envisioned by LPP.

*4.1.1 Conceptual framework of the theory of practice.* LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) explains learning as an organic process that occurs whenever an individual attempts, willingly or unwillingly, to join a CoP. According to the process, the individual attempting to join a CoP, referred to in their theory as the newcomer, acquires the knowledge, practices, and perceptions of full members by interacting with both full members and other newcomers of the CoP as well as the artifacts produced by members and other newcomers. Through those interactions, the individual either gradually becomes more like the full members and is perceived as belonging to the CoP, or the individual does not become like the full members and is voluntarily or involuntarily excluded from the CoP.

The initiation stage of membership (i.e., the newcomers' first encounters with the CoP) plays a critical role in determining newcomers' trajectory in the CoP. If full members perceive a newcomer as a poor fit from the beginning, it is likely that the newcomer will never be given sufficient access to the CoP to achieve full membership. In contrast, if full members perceive the newcomer as a legitimate contender for membership, it is likely that the pathways to achieving full membership will be relatively open and clearly marked. However, full membership is not

just based on full members' initial perceptions of newcomers. Full membership requires members to be competent in the practices of the community, which include but are not limited to the production and use of the artifacts of the community. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), the competencies required for membership may be difficult to acquire regardless of the amount of legitimacy a newcomer is granted. They note that the use of some of the CoP's artifacts may be opaque due to full members' inability or lack of willingness to explain them. Thus, it would seem that the flow of information in a CoP can be an obstacle for those seeking membership.

In LPP, a classroom CoP follows the same operational principles as any CoP, but the purpose of a classroom CoP is somewhat different. Lave (1997) explains that LPP is a process that is intended to ensure the survival of a CoP by constantly producing a new group of full members to replace the ones that leave. However, the purpose of a classroom CoP is not to endlessly reproduce itself. Rather, a classroom CoP is theoretically intended to produce legitimate newcomers for a real-world CoP that is somehow represented by the topic of the course. For example, an IEP classroom CoP focused on Anglo-American academic writing, in theory, should seek to transform learners into legitimate newcomers for the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers.

Specifically, the IEP classroom CoP focused on Anglo-American academic writing should provide the learners with relational competence for the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers. Relational competence is the ability to achieve objectives related to communication by interacting in ways that are considered appropriate for a specific interpersonal context (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1983). For instance, the ability to discuss, use, and produce artifacts that are deemed appropriate in a CoP would indicate relational competence. If my IEP classroom CoP successfully provides relational competence that is in fact appropriate for mem-

bership in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers, learners should be perceived as more legitimate newcomers when they begin their encounters with the real-world CoP and consequently have a better chance of becoming members.

Because the purpose of a classroom CoP differs from that of other CoPs, it does have some structural differences that are important to note for a study such as this one. To begin, unlike a real-world CoP that usually has multiple full members, a classroom CoP has only one full member of the real-world CoP to which it is linked, the teacher. In addition, like a real-world CoP, a classroom CoP has multiple newcomers (the learners). However, in a real-world CoP, newcomers exist on a continuum from novice to advanced, but in a classroom CoP, all newcomers may be quite similar in terms of overall knowledge and skills with only slight differences. Therefore, a classroom CoP does not have the same range of participants that a real-world CoP generally has.

The range of participants does not change how LPP operates or what the obstacles to LPP may be, but it does create some additional obstacles. For example, a real-world CoP generally has multiple full members, so a newcomer has the potential to interact with many different full members. This multiplicity improves newcomers' access to information by improving the odds that they will connect with a member that explains things in a way that makes sense to them. However, in a classroom CoP, the teacher (in this case, me) is the only full member, so neither I nor the students can rely on other full members to clarify explanations or repair miscommunications, a fact which can lead to problems for both the teacher and the learners. Lave (1997) observed that a teacher's failure to communicate, specifically to express the purpose of her practices clearly, can lead learners to fail in acquiring the relational competence that the teacher intend-

ed for them to acquire. In a real-world CoP, one full member's failure to communicate might have been compensated for by other full members.

In addition, a real-world CoP also generally has multiple newcomers whose experience in the CoP ranges from novice to advanced, but a classroom CoP does not. In a classroom CoP, all newcomers (learners) are presumably of more or less the same level with slight differences. According to LPP, more advanced newcomers are an important source of information for less advanced newcomers (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) because they provide scaffolded learning for the less advanced newcomers. Scaffolded explanations are important for less advanced newcomers because they may have difficulty understanding full member explanations. The simplified explanations of other advanced newcomers may be more comprehensible. Therefore, in a classroom CoP, neither the teacher (me) nor the learners can rely on advanced newcomers to provide newcomer-friendly input or support, which could of course mean that learners are not able to acquire the knowledge and skills they need for relational competence in the real-world CoP.

After considering both the operational principles of LPP in the classroom and the real world as well as the potential obstacles, I determined that I needed to establish an orientation to interactions in the classroom CoP that focused on maximizing the flow of information in the classroom CoP by removing the obstacles that might restrict it. Specifically, I needed to establish an orientation to interactions that would increase the quantity, quality, and directionality of the information flow. The orientation I established must allow more information to flow into and through the community, it must improve the comprehensibility and clarity of the information flow, and it must create a multi-directional flow of information. By maximizing the flow of information, I believed I would increase the likelihood that learners would succeed in achieving

the pedagogical goals of the course (i.e., relational competence in the real-world CoP) and that their success would in turn increase their legitimacy and improve their chances of membership in the real-world CoP.

*4.1.2 Pragmatic framework of the theory of practice.* To develop an orientation to interactions that would maximize the flow of information in ways that were congruent with the theory of LPP, I turned to two theories from counseling and psychology, RCT (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths) as the basis of my pragmatic theoretical framework. I chose RCT (Miller, 1976) and Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) as the basis for the pragmatic framework because the tenets of these theories blend well with the theory of LPP, and the tenets also reflect my concern for practicing critical pedagogy.

Based on my knowledge of LPP, I had determined that the flow of information in a CoP, particularly a classroom CoP, was a potential obstacle for all participants (teacher and learners). I had also determined that interactions between participants and between participants and artifacts affected the flow of information in a CoP. Interactions often reflect relationships, which means that positive or productive interactions are more likely if the relationship of the participants is positive and strong. Therefore, in my classroom CoP, I wanted to establish an orientation to interactions that maximized the flow of information by improving the relationships in the CoP. Specifically, I wanted to build positive relationships between participants (external) and within participants (internal). I believed that building positive external and internal relationships would encourage all participants to contribute to the knowledge-base of the classroom CoP (increase the quantity of information flow), ensure that the knowledge circulated in the classroom CoP was understandable to all participants (improve the quality of information flow), and estab-



lish new resources for participants to use in building their knowledge-base (create a multi-directional information flow).

I selected RCT and Positive Psychology because both of these theories focus on improving relationships. Both RCT and Positive Psychology assert that relationships between an authority figure and a layperson (e.g., counselor-client) can be a source of positivity and growth for both participants. As the pre-ordained authority figure, I wanted to use my influence to build positive relationships in as many ways as possible. The relationships that I wanted to build in the classroom CoP included the following: teacher-learners, learners-teacher, learners-learners, teacher-self, learners-self, and learners-artifacts. I used tenets of relationship building from both theories to guide and inspire me in developing classroom practices that would improve relationships between and within participants in the classroom CoP. By building a more positive relationship in any of these dyads, I believed that I would be removing an obstacle to communication, enhancing the flow of information, and thereby increasing the chances of learning according to the operational principles of LPP.

Although both RCT and Positive Psychology contain tenets that can be related to building any of the relationships I listed, I used tenets from RCT primarily as my guide for establish an orientation to interaction that would build positive relationships between participants (i.e., teacher-learners, learners-teacher, learners-learners), and I used tenets from Positive Psychology as my guide for building positive relationships within participants (i.e., teacher-self, learners-self, learners-artifacts). One of the noticeable differences between these complementary theories is their focus. RCT truly has a relational focus—it is a theory of relationships—why they matter, how to build them, and how to support them. Positive Psychology has a strength focus—it is a

theory of how relationships can support individual growth and development by providing support for each individual to find and develop their strengths.

*4.1.3 RCT's contribution to the theory of practice.* The standard educational practices and goals of any society are determined by those who have the most power and the most privilege in that society. In the U.S., those practices and goals have been shown many times over to reflect and best serve a small segment of the population, namely white, middle to upper class, Christian, heterosexual males. Because U.S. education from its historical origins until today has been fundamentally designed to serve this population, the values of U.S. education are the values of that population.

One of the key values of U.S. education and the population it best serves is individualism. Many of the most basic practices of U.S. classrooms involving learners' interactions, learners' movements, learners' artifacts, and learners' spaces are designed to instill in learners a sense of one's self as separate from others. For example, school-age learners are taught that one person speaks at a time, they are taught to move from one room to another in single file lines, they are taught that individual ownership of artifacts like books is important as well as individual ownership of spaces like desks or lockers. In fact, as Toohey (1998) discovered, children who have collectivist borrowing and lending practices are systematically excluded from classroom practices because of their lack of individualism.

Promoting individualism as a core value of education is not inherently right or wrong, but it is problematic if it is not tempered with the awareness that there are other values that could be chosen and that might in fact be preferred by many of the learners in a classroom CoP. Given the fact that I wanted to build positive relationships between participants in my classroom CoP along with the fact that I am admittedly very individualistic in nature, I felt that I needed to select

a theory that offered a radically different view of relationships than the one to which I am accustomed. Accordingly, I selected RCT (Miller, 1976), which is a theory that eschews the Western concept of individualism for the false picture it paints of all human development as a process that necessarily entails individuation, separation, and autonomy (Comstock, Hammer, Strentzsch, Cannon, Parsons & Salazar, 2008). Instead, RCT (Miller, 1976) emphasizes that building connections with others is another equally valid way to understand human development. RCT suggests that connections are experienced by receiving and giving mutual support and that the feeling of connection leads to personal growth. On the other hand, RCT posits that not feeling connected to others leads to a sense of condemned isolation and on-going disempowerment (Miller & Stiver, 1997).

In this study, I wanted to establish an orientation to interactions that would build healthy growth fostering (Miller, 1976) relationships between teacher-learners, learners-teacher, and learners-learners. To do this, I selected three tenets from RCT to serve as the theoretical basis for my orientation to interactions. The three tenets were as follows: people yearn to connect vis-à-vis relationships (Miller & Stiver, 1997), people feel connected when they experience mutual empathy (Miller, 1976), and feelings of connection result in mutual empowerment (Miller & Stiver, 1997).

The first tenet, people yearn to connect vis-à-vis relationships (Miller & Stiver, 1997), is the basic premise of RCT. RCT is a relational model that sees human development as a product of healthy growth-fostering relationships. According to RCT, humans develop through connection and toward connection (Covington & Surrey, 2000). That is, their healthy growth-fostering relationships help them to develop, and their healthy growth-fostering relationships cause them to want more healthy growth-fostering relationships. In the context of my classroom CoP, this

tenet suggested to me that learners want to connect not just with me but with other learners as well and that building healthy growth-fostering relationships was an important consideration for avoiding and overcoming feelings of isolation and disempowerment.

The second tenet, people feel connected when they experience mutual empathy (Miller, 1976), is the primary strategy suggested by RCT for building healthy growth-fostering relationships. Mutual empathy is a two-way practice (Jordon, 1992) in relationships wherein both members give and receive support by giving and receiving empathy. Empathy is described as the "...ability to join with another at a cognitive and affective level without losing connection with one's own experience" (Covington & Surrey, 2000, p. 2). In other words, empathy is the desire to truly understand another's experience as they understand it. In practice, empathy is the willingness to interpret others' actions from a relational-contextual view that considers their actions from the perspective of their relational history and experience (Hartling, 2008). In the context of my classroom CoP, this tenet suggested to me that I should include classroom practices that encouraged and acknowledged giving and receiving between all participants in the CoP. This tenet also suggested that classroom practices should include and develop a relational-contextual ethic of understanding and interaction.

The third tenet, feelings of connection result in mutual empowerment (Miller & Stiver, 1997), is the primary outcome of RCT. Hartling (2008) explains, "Mutual empowerment is a sense that both (or all) people in the relationship have the ability to influence their experience and the relationship, and are able to take action on behalf of themselves and others" (p. 61). Through the building of healthy growth-fostering relationships, all participants grow in psychological strength (Covington & Surrey, 2000), and this growth allows them to participate in more complex and diverse relational networks (Jordan, 2000). In the context of my classroom CoP,

this tenet suggested that an outcome of mutual empathy could actually become another strategy for building relationships, particularly the target relationships that learners are hoped to have in the real-world CoP.

To explain, according to Jordan (2000), the psychological strength developed through healthy relationships is a transferable skill that allows a person to participate in more complex networks. The real-world CoP for which I was preparing learners is certainly a more complex and more diverse network than the classroom CoP. Therefore, from RCT, I concluded that if I included classroom practices that built healthy growth-fostering relationships, learners would feel mutual empowerment, and if I included classroom practices that explicitly allowed learners to enact their experience of mutual empowerment, the experience of using their psychological strength would then actually become a form of relational competence for the real-world CoP for which I was preparing them.

Thus, the key tenets of RCT adopted for guiding my development of an orientation to interactions that would build healthy relationships in the classroom CoP included the assumption that people desire relationships in all contexts, the idea that the practice of mutual empathy is a crucial strategy for developing healthy growth-fostering relationships in all contexts, and the notion that mutual empowerment was both an outcome and a means for the development of healthy growth-fostering relationships in all contexts. All of these three tenets suggested to me that the improvement of relationships like teacher-learner, learners-teacher, and learners-learners relationships would increase the quantity, quality, and directionality of the information flow in the classroom CoP and thereby help learners in their quest to gain relational competence in the real-world CoP.

*4.1.4 Positive Psychology's contribution to the theory of practice.* Of course, relationships between people are clearly an important aspect of LPP (newcomers cannot learn without interactions with other participants) and RCT (human development is stunted without healthy growth-fostering relationships). However, there are other important relationships within a CoP that affect LPP but are not between people per se. Rather, these relationships are within people (i.e., an individual's relationship to self) and between people and artifacts (i.e., an individual's relationship to products of the CoP). Just as the relationships between members of a CoP affect communication and growth by their impact on the flow of information, the individual-self and individual-artifact relationship also affect communication and growth by their impact on the flow of information, specifically their impact on the information loop that allows learners to understand how they are perceived in a CoP in terms of legitimacy and to autonomously manage their own development based on that understanding.

To establish an orientation to interactions in my classroom CoP that focused on building positive teacher-self, learner-self and learner-artifacts relationships, I adopted tenets from Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive Psychology developed as a strength-based approach to counseling or education in which the counselor/teacher works with the client/learner to help the client/learner identify their own strengths and to discover how their own strengths might be utilized to ensure that they thrive rather than just survive (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive Psychology is essentially a relationship-based model of individual development.

I chose Positive Psychology for three reasons. To begin, Positive Psychology is relationship model that focuses on thriving rather than surviving, and my personal goal as a teacher is for learners in my classroom CoP to thrive both in my classroom CoP and in the real-world CoP to

which they aspire. The theory of LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) describes the process of learning, and it states that this process is necessary for the reproduction of CoPs. However, the theory acknowledges that CoPs have an inherent tension between the need for newcomers to reproduce the community and the fact that newcomers are the future replacements of members (Lave, 1991) that can cause full members to impede newcomers' progress or thriving. Therefore, Positive Psychology offers an approach that I can use to build learners' individual abilities to thrive by avoiding and overcoming some predictable full member barricades.

I also chose Positive Psychology because it complements RCT (Miller, 1976). As discussed earlier, RCT is based on the premise that individualism and the pursuit of increasing individualism is not the only or the best model of human development. Positive Psychology is a theory that is concerned with individual development through relationships, but it is not a theory that promotes the Western values of "hyper-competitiveness and deterministic control" (Walker, 2003, p. 1) associated with the human development model based on individualism. Positive Psychology offers a way to acknowledge and address the presence of individuals positively for the sake of their own growth and the impact that growth might have on their relational competence. Thus, Positive Psychology offers an approach that I can use to build learners' individual abilities without jeopardizing the building of healthy growth-fostering relationships between members of the classroom CoP.

Finally, I chose Positive Psychology because it supports my personal philosophy of teaching. In my classroom CoP, I see myself as a liaison or *coyote* (i.e., paid guide for illegal border crossings). I see the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writing as a kind of illegal border for NNS learners (and truthfully for many NS learners as well). I see my job as an insider to this real-world is to show NNS learners how to avoid and overcome the obstacles that

would prevent them from gaining a foothold in this CoP. Of course, my own knowledge of the real-world CoP and the path between the classroom CoP to the real-world CoP is crucial to my coyote skills. Positive Psychology addresses my desire to keep my coyote skills sharp because it includes teacher development in its relational model.

In strengths-based educational models, a strengths-based approach is not something teachers just apply to their interactions with learners. Rather, “The process of strengths-based education involves educators intentionally and systematically discovering their own talents and developing their own strengths...” (Anderson, 2004, p. 1). In other words, the teacher is just as viable as a candidate for strengths-based development as the learner, and the teacher’s development matters because everyone’s development matters. In this way, Positive Psychology valorizes the teacher as a real member of a classroom CoP rather than a role in a CoP, which is important for creating an orientation to thriving rather than surviving for all members.

Including practices that valorize the teacher as member rather than a role in a classroom CoP is important for building healthy growth-fostering relationships that support LPP in the CoP. Normally, the term teacher refers to a person’s role in a classroom context. It does not recognize any relationship between the teacher and the learners other than one of power. Likewise, the term teacher, as in science teacher, does not recognize any expert relationship between the teacher and a CoP of scientists. In effect, the role teacher isolates the teacher from the classroom CoP because of the power-relationship, and the role teacher isolates the teacher from the real-world CoP because of the commodification of education (Lave, 1991).

According to Lave (1991), education is commodified in two ways that particularly impact teachers. First, the teacher (the laborer) is very removed from the results of labor. For example, the science teacher teaches science but is typically very removed from the day-to-day production



of scientific findings. Second, the teacher is objectified as a commodity in that her labor comes to represent her value. Both of these types of commodification interfere with LPP because they alienate the teacher from the product she teaches (it has no personal value, for she did not contribute to its production), and they alienate the teacher from her own labor (her unique knowledge and skills do not matter only her labor in the system of production has value). As Lave (1991) explains a person who is alienated in these ways will not become a full member of a CoP because they have no vision of what full membership is and therefore no value for what it could offer them. Thus, the science teacher has no interest in participating in a CoP of scientists. She probably never has had such an interest given that it was her labor as teacher that had value, and she probably never will have an interest given that even in her training, she was far removed from the actual production of science.

In a CoP, the commodification of teachers interrupts the LPP process (Lave, 1991). If a teacher cannot serve as a representative of a real-world CoP for the topic, then what relational competence are they teaching? LPP claims that learners will by virtue of being in a school CoP learn something (Lave, 1996, 1997), but what will that something be if the teacher is only a teacher and not a full member of the real-world CoP? Freedman and Adam (2000) argue that from an LPP perspective, school practices reproduce school practices even when their explicit intention is to simulate the real-world because teachers focus on school values like hierarchy (which they know because they are members of the school) rather than the values of the target real-world CoP (which they do not know because they are not members). Thus, because of its emphasis on the importance of the teacher's own development, Positive Psychology offers support for me to consider my own membership in both the classroom and the real-world CoP and engage in my development as a member in both as a way to enhance the process of LPP.

I selected three tenets from Positive Psychology to guide me in developing an orientation to interactions that would build healthy teacher-self, learners-self and learners-artifacts relationships. The tenets I selected are as follows: individualization (Gallup, 2003; Levitz & Noel, 2000), deliberate networking in the application of strengths (Bowers, 2009; Rath, 2007; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), and intentional development of strengths (Louis, 2008).

The first tenet, individualization, is a strategy strengths-based educators use to help the teacher and the learners become aware of "...where [learners] are, where they are going, and how strengths can help provide a pathway between these two" (Lopez & Louis, 2009, p. 4). Educators practice individualization through a variety of practices that personalize learning by considering learners' strengths, interests, and needs (Gallup, 2003; Levitz & Noel, 2000). In the context of my classroom CoP, individualization suggests that I should include practices that encourage learners to see themselves as *half-full* (Freire, 2007) and that my practices should acknowledge and create awareness of their fullness as part of their strengths.

Individualization also suggests that I should incorporate classroom practices that address learners' relationships with artifacts. In a classroom CoP that is focused on academic writing, the use production and use of artifacts is clearly primary. As a result of the classroom CoP, learners should become legitimate newcomers in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writing, and their legitimacy is likely judged in large part from the initial artifacts they produce and offer to that CoP. Therefore, in my classroom CoP, I need to include practices that build self-awareness (i.e., a realistic view of where learners are in their use of artifacts), other-awareness (i.e., a realistic view of where they want to be in their use of artifacts), and transformative-awareness (i.e., a realistic view of what they have, what they need, and how they can per-

sonally meet their needs in their use of artifacts) to ensure that learners have the opportunity to achieve relational competence vis-à-vis artifact competence.

The second tenet, deliberate networking in the application of strengths, is actually a tenet I developed by joining two tenets, networking (Bowers, 2009) and deliberate application of strengths (Rath, 2007; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), from Positive Psychology. Networking is a strategy that can be used to increase access to resources like support in the development of individual strengths (Lopez & Louis, 2009). Deliberate application of strengths is a strategy that focuses on individuals bringing out the best in themselves by making choices based on their strengths (Lopez & Louis, 2009). My use of deliberate networking in the application of strengths is intended to represent a strategy whereby individuals intentionally share their strengths, and those strengths become resources for choices that other learners can privately make to bring out the best in themselves. In the context of my classroom CoP, this tenet suggests classroom practices that allow learners to share and use their own strengths and the strengths of others to improve their own relationships with artifacts as well as their own awareness of their development.

The third tenet, intentional development of strengths, is a strategy that primarily educators use to motivate learners to become self-directed in their development and use of strengths beyond a specific classroom (Lopez & Louis, 2009). Intentional development of strengths is related to identity development and individuals' ownership of their strengths-based identities. As Lopez and Louis (2009) explain, intentional development of strengths "...requires more than an innovative application of strengths in existing settings, but demands engagement in new experiences designed to expand personal strengths" (p. 5). In the context of my classroom CoP, this tenet suggests that active ownership of one's own development is vital for continued develop-

ment and that my practices should encourage and perhaps even train learners in how and why to pursue intentional self-development.

Thus, the key tenets of Positive Psychology adopted for guiding my development of an orientation to interactions that would build healthy relationships in the classroom CoP included personalization of the learning experience, intentional networking for the sharing of individual strengths as a resource, and purposeful attention to self-directed strategic development in a broader context. By utilizing these three tenets, I believed that I could improve teacher self-knowledge, learner self-knowledge, and learner artifact knowledge. Further, I believed that these individual improvements would impact the building of healthy growth-fostering relationships between participants positively. I reasoned that individual growth would increase self-awareness and competence, which would positively contribute to the flow of information in the classroom CoP and thusly, increase learners' development of relational competence in the real-world CoP.

#### ***4.2 Practice of Theory for Questions 1 & 2***

As do most studies, this study included several goals that had to be considered and balanced during both the planning and collection phases of the study. One of my primary research goals was to develop an orientation to interactions in the class assigned to me that built positive relationships using the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology that I discussed in the previous section. As a researcher, I was interested in the physical, mental, and emotional *mechanics* of developing such an orientation as well as the human responses and outcomes that might ensue from implementing such an orientation.

However, I am not only a researcher, and my assigned class is not simply my personal laboratory. Therefore, I also had to consider and include in my development of an orientation to interactions programmatic and personal (the learners' and my) pedagogical goals. For example,

regardless of what orientation I implemented, the learners needed to meet the curricular objectives of the course (namely to improve learners' academic writing to a level that would be deemed an acceptable starting point for a beginning matriculated undergraduate U.S. university student), I (the teacher-me) needed to feel that I had fulfilled my charge to move these newcomers towards full-er participation in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers, and the learners needed to feel that they had changed in some positive way with regard to Anglo-American academic writing. Thus, the development of an orientation to interactions in the classroom CoP necessarily required me to blend and balance the pragmatic theoretical tenets of relationship building I wished to implement with what I believed would achieve the pedagogical goals of all participants.

Because I am first a teacher, my overall and daily plan for developing an orientation to interactions in the classroom CoP always began by selecting specific pedagogical goals for my decisions and actions. Once I had determined the pedagogical goals I was hoping to achieve with the learners, I then considered how these goals might be achieved by applying the six tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology that I wanted to use in forming an orientation to interactions in our classroom CoP. This process led to the development of three particular organizing patterns or tropes of interaction in our classroom CoP, which I believe were fundamental in establishing the general orientation to interactions held by all participants in the classroom CoP. The three tropes included the following: the "campfire" discussion circle; the public writing forum; and the parts-before-whole instructional approach.

Before describing the tropes, I think it is necessary to explain a bit more about how I am using the expression trope. According to the philosophy of Santayana (1951), a trope is a process that joins the elements that create matter (i.e., physically observable objects or events), and

a trope is also a process that allows the mind to become aware of matter. To explain, in the philosophy of Santayana (1951), the creation of matter (any object physical or otherwise) requires the presence of the mind, for nothing exists without the mind. However, the creation of matter also requires that the mind be unaware of its own presence. Matter is created by certain organizational processes or tropes of which the mind cannot be aware during the process of creation. Once the trope is completed, the mind can experience the object (matter) and become aware of it. Thus, the trope creates both the matter and the mind's ability to experience the matter.

In this study, I used specific tropes such as the campfire discussion circle, the public writing forum, and the parts-before-whole instructional approach to create physically observable events or processes. Each of these tropes reflected and utilized three or more of the six tenets I had chosen as a guide for my pragmatic framework of practice. I propose that the tropes that created these tangible events and processes also stimulated learners to become aware of their own and others' existence in the events and processes. This awareness of existence included an awareness of the tenets that were reflected and utilized in the tropes. In essence, this awareness of self, others, and the tenets became another kind of trope that created an orientation to interactions in the classroom CoP that for the most part reflected the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology upon which the original classroom tropes were based.

*4.2.1 Practice of theory: The campfire discussion circle.* In my experience as a language teacher in general and as an academic writing teacher of Anglo-American university-style writing, I have developed the strong belief that the retention of information and the acquisition of skills are a struggle for learners because they often fail to acquire the meta-language necessary to actually talk about their interaction with the topic of the course. In other words, I believe that academic writing learners who cannot talk about their own writing using the meta-language of

writing (or at least, the meta-language of writing used in a particular course) often find it challenging to remember and even more challenging to actually enact writing changes suggested by the teacher. In addition, when learners fail to acquire meta-language for discussing a topic in a particular classroom CoP, their progress towards full-er participation in the real-world CoP is limited because they still do not understand the topic and cannot act on the topic in ways that a full member would.

I have also developed the strong belief that interactions like the giving and receiving of instructions in classrooms operate more smoothly and successfully when all participants are fluent in the use of the meta-language of the classroom CoP. Taking into account the theory of LPP and the fact that a classroom CoP is supposed to make it more likely that a newcomer will be able to become a member of a target real-world CoP, smooth and successful operations in the classroom CoP should equate to a greater likelihood of newcomers developing in ways that increase their viability as future full members of the real-world CoP. Thus, from a pedagogical standpoint, learning and appropriately using the meta-language of academic writing are important pedagogical goals in my academic writing courses.

In the course I taught while doing this study, I wanted to achieve my goals regarding learners' understanding and use of meta-language while simultaneously developing an orientation to interactions in the classroom CoP that built positive relationships in the classroom and improved the flow of information. To do this, I implemented an activity that was repeated each day of the course that I called the "campfire" discussion circle. This activity consisted of me from day one of the course, asking learners to come to the front of the classroom at the beginning of class and form a circle with me as part of the circle. I repeated this activity every day of the course. If I anticipated that the "campfire" would last longer than 10-15 minutes, I usually asked

learners to bring their chairs, so that we could all sit. However, normally, we all stood in a loose circle. Environmentally, this request reconfigured the space between the learners and me by removing physical obstacles like desks and computers (the classroom was a computer lab, so when seated, each learner had a computer between them and me). It created immediate face-to-face contact between each learner and me, and it improved the acoustics for all participants so that they could truly hear what other learners were saying in addition to what I was saying.

While we sat or stood in the circle, I led a discussion that most days had the following three general objectives: review previous material, elicit learner self-reflection, address learner confusions or concerns, and build learner meta-language. A typical exchange during a daily campfire might be as follows:

Me: So, we are working on the concept of the academic paragraph, okay.

What are the four parts that we're talking about right now?

Multiple: Topic sentence

Me: Topic sentence, [I write topic sentence on whiteboard] what else?

Eugenia: Supporting points

Me: Okay [I write supporting points on whiteboard]

Carolina: Illustration

Ahmed: Illustrations

Me: Illustrations [I write illustrations on whiteboard]

Suh: Concluding

Multiple: Concluding statement

Me: Concluding statement [I write topic statement on whiteboard], okay. And yesterday, we looked at some analysis that you had done of three different



academic research paragraphs, okay. Now, everybody began the course with some understanding of what academic structure is in your own language and in English, okay. So, has anything changed for you yet? Is there anything that we've said in the last couple of class periods that you've thought, "Hmm, that's a little bit different than what I understood before." Anything changing for you yet?

[Approximately 5 seconds of silence]

Carolina: For me [Me: Yeah, Carolina] it was that what you say that about the thesis statement that it's not necessary in academic writing

Me: That it, that the thesis statement is different than the topic sentence?

Carolina: Yeah, [Me: Okay, so, mhm] exactly, so I don't know if I, do I need to write a thesis statement at the end of my introduction paragraph or I'm not sure about it.

Me: Okay, alright. So, we have had some discussion about the difference between these two things [I write thesis statement and topic sentence on the whiteboard] thesis statement and a topic sentence. Okay, a thesis statement goes with an essay [I write essay underneath thesis statement on the whiteboard] topic sentence goes with a paragraph [I write paragraph underneath topic sentence on whiteboard]. So, they do have similarities, but there's a huge difference between them. The topic sentence is introducing the reader to a short piece of writing, so all it does is open the door and say, "Hello reader. Come on in," to a short piece of writing. The thesis statement is introducing the reader to a much longer piece of writing,

okay. So, when you introduce the reader to a longer piece of writing, you have to do some different things, okay. Uhm, whereas in the topic sentence, you just say, “Hello reader. This is my topic and controlling idea, come on in.” With a thesis statement, a lot of times you say, “Hello reader. This is my topic and my controlling idea and some sub-topics I’m going to talk about.” Okay, you give the reader more information in a thesis statement, okay. Does that help Carolina?

Carolina: Yeah (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 7)

As a classroom trope, the campfire discussion circle, on the surface, functioned as a kind of daily review plus question and answer session for learners. However, the design and practice of the campfire discussion circle was also intended to build an orientation to interactions that would engender more positive relationships in the classroom CoP by using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology. In fact, the campfire discussion circle reflected and promoted the use of all of the six tenets that I had chosen for this study.

The tenets of RCT that I had selected for this study were chosen because I believed that their use would promote the development of healthy growth-fostering relationships between members of the classroom CoP (e.g., teacher-learners, learners-teacher, learners-learners). The campfire discussion circle integrated the first tenet - people yearn for connection (Miller, 1976), quite directly by creating a daily physical practice and experience of relationship. The learners and I were literally obliged to recognize our own existence and the existence of others by the fact that the campfire discussion circle removed all obstacles to our physical isolation from one another. The campfire discussion circle also obliged (or at least strongly encouraged) us to speak

to one another, which further strengthened our awareness of one another. No member of the classroom CoP was alienated from the experience of visibly existing and mattering. In fact, even when members were absent or arrived late, their existence as part of the relationship created by the campfire discussion circle was recognized:

(Acknowledgement of absent learners)

Me: Who are we missing today?

Suh: Min A

Me: Min A

Frida: This class is almost empty

Me: Rebeca is taking the TOEFL today I think, so we're wishing her good luck on that

Multiple: Uh huh (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 7)

(Acknowledgement of late arriving learners)

*Jieun arrived after the campfire discussion circle began.*

Me: Okay, so Jieun we're talking about last night's homework and troubles or questions people had about it, okay. And, Jieun, you weren't here yesterday, so I'm gonna I'm just gonna repeat this for her, okay. It is possible sometimes that when I give you a question maybe you can't think of two points, but you can think of one and you have lots and lots of illustrations, okay, so one possibility is to write a topic sentence, make this box, have one supporting point, and then have two different types of illustrations. They have to be different, okay, you can't be the same illustration just long, okay, it has to be kind of separate illustrations, so that's one option,

the other option is to keep the formula that I gave you, okay, they would have the same topic sentence, okay, so just like we were saying that novice writers make many different types of mistakes when quoting period. If you were using this one, you would say, “The most important mistake that novice writers make,” or “The primary mistake that novice writers make,” because those would signal to me that you’re only gonna talk about one thing, but over here, you would say something like, “One mistake” “Another mistake,” and that would let me know that you’re gonna talk about two things, okay [Jieun: mhm] that make sense? [Jieun: mhm] *I continue with the discussion that was in progress before she arrived.* (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 28)

In addition to physically acknowledging members’ desire for relationship, the campfire discussion circle provided the means and the opportunity for members to become physically and psychologically aware of the multi-directional nature of relationships in the classroom CoP. As the teacher, I did propose the initial questions or topic that we discussed, I did mediate the discussion, and I did decide when it was over, but it was not a teacher-to-learner lecture. My relationship to learners, their relationship to me, and their relationship to each other was changed by the proximity of our interactions to be something more like an informal tutorial session, and we all were conscious of our ability to participate in this relationship as the following excerpt illustrates:

*This excerpt is from a discussion we were having about the previous night’s homework, which was to write a paragraph on a topic I had specified.*

- Me: ...okay, any other questions from trying to do your homework last night?  
No, okay, is it getting as you do it okay now we've done one as a team, you're working on another one as a team, you did one by yourself, this was your kind of the fourth one that you're working on, is it feeling better? Are you starting to feel like, "Okay, I sort of get the rhythm of this and what I need to look for, and how I need to think about" [Frida: yeah ]  
[Ahmed: I think yes] Okay
- Ahmed: Yeah, but actually we need your feedback written feedback maybe we are right, but didn't [Me: Mhm] your feedback yes
- Frida: She gave us the feedback
- Me: Yeah, but everybody said they wanted to revise it so the second one except for a couple of people, so I'm not gonna give you feedback when people are gonna change it anyway, okay, that would be a waste of my time, okay [laugh] so I'm I didn't give feedback on your one from yesterday because several people said, "No, no I want to look at it again," [Frida: Yes] okay so that would be if I give feedback and you don't even look at it and then you turn another one in, that's really not efficient, okay, so yes you will get feedback, but again, you have to come with something that's finished so that I can look at it, okay, so yes, you will get feedback, and I will try my best to give it some on a daily basis until we finish, okay, but again, people can't come in and say, "Oh, I wanna fix it," okay, if you want my feedback, you have to come in with it done, okay. Hey Rebeca [Rebeca arrived late], okay. Any other questions? Okay, now did anybody go back

and fix Paragraph 3? Okay, Rebeca did, [Ahmed: Yeah] you did, okay, alright, so that's good. If you ask for time to give feedback that's great, or if you ask for time for revisions, that's fine, I don't mind giving you that time, but like I said, I'm not gonna give feedback until that's done, okay, because it's hard for me to remember, "Okay, this person said it's finished, but what if they decide they wanna fix it, and this and that," so, okay, we have to kind of all agree it's done, I'm giving feedback or we need more time, okay [Friday: Yes] it's fine with me either way. Alright, any other questions from the homework or anything like that? (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 28)

Notably in the excerpt, I (the teacher) address the learners, the learners address me, and the learners address each other (e.g., "She gave us the feedback"). The spontaneous nature of this multi-directional moment, which is in fact a typical moment in the campfire discussion circle, demonstrates the awareness that all members had of themselves as existing in relationship to one another.

Just as the physical structure of the campfire discussion circle created an awareness of existing in relationship, it also served as a way to integrate the second tenet of RCT that I had chosen, people feel connected when they experience mutual empathy. The physical act of standing or sitting face-to-face in a circle increases everyone's vulnerability. In the campfire discussion circle, members are physically vulnerable (there is no desk or computer in front of them), they are psychologically vulnerable (their presence is going to be acknowledged, and they are expected to be accountably present in some way), and they are academically vulnerable (they are going to be asked about things we have been discussing and their homework). Vulnerability is a

key component to mutual empathy because it is sign of willingness to connect, which is crucial to the expression of mutual empathy. By creating a situation in which all members placed themselves in a vulnerable position every day, I hoped that all members of the classroom CoP including myself would experience the deep sense of feeling appreciated and understood by others as well as the gratifying experience of causing another person to feel deeply appreciated and understood. Of course, in a classroom CoP like my academic writing class, feelings of appreciation and understanding or mutual empathy are primarily linked to members' experience of the course topic (academic writing) rather than their personal life experiences. To encourage mutual empathy beyond just creating a physical structure of vulnerability, as the teacher, I tried to model a relational-contextual view (Hartling, 2008) for understanding learners' challenges with Anglo-American writing as in the following example:

Me:           Okay, so yesterday we talked about writing e-mails in the university setting. And, before we talked about in your own countries, what you need in a formal e-mail, and really what we saw is that in most of your countries, it's quite similar, okay, what you need to do. There are maybe some differences, but what you need to do is kind of similar no matter which country you're in it seems except in Venezuela where you maybe you don't need to write an e-mail, you need to write something more formal than an e-mail. Okay, alright, the three things I focused on when I was talking to you were tone, content, and clarity, mkay, in terms of being important things to know about writing e-mails in the United States to your professors. Now, last night you guys each wrote me two e-mails, and I'd like to hear what you found difficult because usually it sounds easy until

you try to do it. Okay, it sounds easy until you try to do it, so when you did try to do it, was there anything that you found difficult? Okay, Frida's nodding, so Frida, tell us what did you find difficult when you tried to do it?

Frida: I didn't know what to write [Frida laughs and all learners laugh with her].  
 [Me: Okay, so] I was making, yeah, it's difficult I mean I had [unclear] uh what to write related to what I had to think [Me: Okay, so maybe content was what you found difficult?] Yes  
 [a few turns later]

Suh: Uh, it is difficult for me to make it direct but also make it uh try make polite and and put direct respect request at the same time.

Me: Okay, so making it direct and respectful at the same time seems difficult?  
 [Suh: Yeah] Mhm, and I imagine that's because for you, in your culture, directness is not that respectful [Suh: Yeah] so it doesn't feel respectful when you get really direct, okay. [Chorus of mhms from learners] And that is kind an issue when you write anything is that if you're doing it in another culture where people are more direct, inside you feel it less respectful even if on the outside, the other person doesn't see it that way, okay. So, for example, for me, if I'm writing in Spanish and my understanding is that in order to be respectful, uhm in order to be respectful, you need to be more indirect, okay, you need to ask more questions about family and how people are and things like this. Like for me, it feels like I'm being uhm tricky or something like that I'm not getting to the point I'm



taking up the person's time. So, I have my feelings on the inside versus what the other person probably thinks, okay. And, that's always a factor when you're writing, okay, especially in a situation like this, okay.

(Campfire Discussion Circle, August 30)

By acknowledging the effects of a basic value of Anglo-American writing (i.e., directness) on Suh, helping him to understand his own relational-contextual response, and describing my own response in a related situation, I was expressing empathy directly for him and myself but also indirectly for all the other learners who may have also had internal reactions to the values of Anglo-American academic writing. I was also providing a new way for learners to understand their challenges with Anglo-American academic writing by suggesting that cultural influences are a factor in writing without judging those influences in a negative way. The following exchange approximately one month later suggests that at least one learner, Rebeca, had internalized a relational-contextual view of academic writing to some extent:

*This excerpt is from a discussion that we were having about framing illustrations in their paragraphs.*

Rebeca: At the beginning, I thought like I have to be less precise and with the corrections we have taken, it's like I have to explain more.

Me: Uh huh, okay, yes, for some of you in your framing, you're leaving gaps, okay, and remember that gaps are places where you assume that your reader understands things exactly the way you do, okay, academic writing in the United States number one do not assume it's your teacher, number two do not assume that they've been thinking about your topic, number three do not assume that they've read your sources, okay, you must ex-

plain it as though they are an educated person but not a person who has been in your head the whole entire time, okay, someone outside of your head, okay, outside of your experience, so yes, I would say that in many cases, I'm seeing gaps, some gaps are inevitable like small gaps but what we don't want is giant gaps where the reader can't possibly jump that far and so they fall in the water, okay, small gaps they can jump, huge gaps probably not, okay. Now, someone from your own culture might be able to jump that gap, why?

Rebeca: Cause, they know how to how it works [Me: yes]

Me: Because possibly the gaps you're leaving are okay according to your culture and writing in your culture, okay, but remember that when you're training to go into an American university, you're not writing for someone that's reading from your culture, you're writing for someone who's reading from another culture. So, for example, research has shown that in Japanese writing there are big gaps, this is normal because in Japanese writing, the reader is supposed to think harder when they read, that's part of the process, but in American writing, especially academic writing, big gaps are considered not good, okay, because the reader is not supposed to think that hard they're supposed to follow you, okay, so cultures have real differences about how big the gap can be, okay, is that clear? [Rebeca: mhm] alright... (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 29)

The campfire discussion circle implemented the third tenet of RCT that I had chosen for this study, feelings of connection result in mutual empowerment, by both its use of proximity

and vulnerability. Members were physically close to one another, which increased the likelihood that they would interact with one another, and they were vulnerable, which increased the likelihood that they would feel connected to one another in a way that made them more likely to act. According to Hartling (2008), mutual empowerment is experienced as the ability or as Covington and Surrey (2000) the psychological strength to act on behalf of one's self or others. Due to its regular daily occurrence, the campfire discussion circle provided a prime public opportunity for members to practice their mutual empowerment and build their psychological strength as they did so. In an aforementioned excerpt from September 28, Ahmed tested his mutual empowerment by requesting feedback:

Ahmed:        Yeah, but actually we need your feedback written feedback maybe we are right, but didn't [Me: Mhm] your feedback yes

As the teacher, I was a bit taken aback by his request given the fact that I had given feedback as I alluded to in my response:

Me:            Yeah, but everybody said they wanted to revise it so the second one except for a couple of people, so I'm not gonna give you feedback when people are gonna change it anyway, okay, that would be a waste of my time, okay [laugh] so I'm I didn't give feedback on your one from yesterday because several people said, 'No, no I want to look at it again,' ... *I continue with my explanation of why I have not given more feedback.*

In fact, as my journal entries show, I was more than taken aback - I was irritated by his request:

I was annoyed today when I asked Class A what was coming up for them, and Ahmed said they needed more feedback. I was annoyed because I gave feedback on Paragraph 1

in 24 hours, and most had asked for extra revision time for Paragraph 3, so I didn't give feedback on it. I probably let my annoyance show because I just felt like I was being held to a ridiculous standard and that he wasn't considering his own accountability in not having the assignment ready to turn in yesterday. I did explain the feedback process to them and reassure them that some feedback would happen each day so long as they arrived prepared. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September, 28)

However, my irritation may in fact have been a sign that Ahmed was in fact growing in psychological strength (i.e., his ability to influence situations) because despite my teacher self-righteousness about the fairness of his request, I did in fact attend to his request and credit his psychological strength in making such a request as the following excerpt the next day shows:

*In this particular class, I actually did not begin the class with the campfire discussion circle. Instead, I had them first look over electronic feedback that I had given them on two assignments. Then, I asked them to convene the campfire discussion circle.*

Me: Okay, guys come on down quickly cause we've got an assignment to do today, so come on down. Alright we almost I don't know what's happening to this class it seems like every day we're having more and more people not show up [Members laugh] we haven't had a full class okay so we're almost full today [Members laugh] okay, now Eugenia and Suh are still coming to class they're just coming to the other class so they're not truly absent they're just not in this class, okay. Alright so, you've now done several different paragraphs okay and Ahmed was saying yesterday, "Feedback," okay [Members laugh] alright so now you have two more pieces of feedback, okay, what's going on, any questions coming up, are you noticing something that's becoming easier or are things becoming more con-

fusing, what are you seeing that you need to communicate? (Campfire Discussion Circle, September, 29)

In addition to reflecting and promoting the tenets of RCT that I had selected, the campfire discussion circle also reflected and promoted the three tenets of Positive Psychology that I had chosen. The tenets of Positive Psychology that I had selected for this study were chosen because I believed that their use would promote the development of healthy growth-fostering relationships within members of the classroom CoP (e.g., teacher-self, learners-self, learners-artifacts). The campfire discussion circle utilized and encouraged the first tenet of Positive Psychology that I selected for this study, individualization (Gallup, 2003; Levitz & Noel, 2000), by recognizing that each person was engaged in an individual developmental process, and that each person brought strengths to this process. For example, the first two campfire discussions of the session were each 50 full minutes (the length of the class) and involved the explicit request that all learners speak about themselves and their experiences:

*My initial request on the first day of class after I had introduced myself, and we had physically formed the campfire discussion circle*

Me: Now, one of the first things that I'm interested in talking about is you. Alright, so what I want you to do is bring your chairs up here, we're gonna create kind of a semi-circle right here, okay, so that we can all be a little more relaxed and you're not sitting in front of a computer.

*I assisted in helping learners to figure out the spatial arrangement.*

Okay, now, in terms of how many people will be in this class, I'm not really sure. It says on here that there are fourteen people, and it looks we only have seven here right now, so there probably will be half half as many more people, and

maybe more than that, I'm not sure, okay. One of the things you should know about my class is that I like for you to come up here a lot. I don't always have you bring your chair. Sometimes I just have you come up here and stand, but I do like to bring you up here a lot so that we can talk more face-to-face, okay. Uhm, the reason is that computers are very distracting, okay, when you have a computer in front of you, usually, you're paying attention to your Facebook, or to your instant message, or to the assignment that you're not quite finished with or something like that, okay. So, if I bring you up here, then you have to pay attention to me, and to each other, okay. First thing I wanna start with is this stuff that's on the board here. What I'm interested in is first of all your name and where you're from, and then the next thing I wanna know is something about writing, okay, because have all of you taken writing at the Language Institute already, you've taken 600? [Sounds of agreement] Okay, anybody not taken 600? Okay. What I want you to think about is I want you to tell us about some time in your life when a teacher gave you what you thought was a very challenging or difficult assignment in English. Doesn't have to be your 600 teacher, it can be any teacher, it can be in your own country, it can be here, it can be anywhere. And, I want you to tell us how you accomplished the assignment. You thought it was difficult, but you did it. How did you do that? Okay, I'm interested in knowing that kind of information, okay, so like a story about your relationship with some difficult writing assignment in English, okay. Is everybody good with that [Members nod] Alright. We're gonna start with those three things, and then we'll come to this ques-

tion after that [I point to a fourth question on the board]. Okay, so let's start with you [I indicate Carolina] (Campfire Discussion Circle, August 24)

Thus, as the excerpt illustrates, from our first classroom encounter, learners were aware that their unique personal experience with the topic of our class, academic writing was a point of interest to me and that from my point of view they had strengths in the topic area (i.e., they had accomplished a difficult assignment before successfully).

The pattern of acknowledging members' individual development and acknowledging strengths continued throughout the course. As previous excerpts have shown, individual members regularly personalized their own development by asking questions that reflected their personal understandings and confusions. In addition, I often personally asked each learner to respond to questions as in this example:

*This excerpt is part of a discussion that we had about the textbook I used for the course, They Say I Say: The Moves that Matter by Gerald Graff and Kathy Birkenstein (2010).*

Me: Now the book is not talking about paragraphs, it's talking about writing in general, okay. So, what did you find interesting? First of all, let me ask you did like the book, did it tell you some things that you were like, "Oh, that's a good point," okay

*There was a brief discussion with a learner who had not been able to get the book.*

Carolina, what about you?

Carolina: Yeah, I found interesting that when they say that I need to express what they say first [Sounds of other learners agreeing] not start with my my opinion only because people is gonna think, "What she sounds really, why is she saying that?"

Me: Yeah, we all want to start with ourselves, but what the book is saying is that we fit into a bigger framework, and there's a need to put ourselves into the framework, okay. MinA, what's something you found interesting in those two chapters?

Min A: Actually, I didn't read it, so

Me: Can you guys, when you do it this weekend if you get the book, okay [Sounds of agreeing] Suh, you remember something from the book that struck you as interesting?

Suh: I think both parts are important for me to write, to write the sentence or essay, it's pretty good.

Me: Okay, good. Jieun?

Jieun: Uhm, uh for me, uh keeping in mind the reader of what they say in our essay is very interesting

Me: Mhm, yeah because it's not just that you begin with what other people say, it's that you constantly keep bringing up what other people have said. That's part of the way you write as a response to what other people have said, okay. And, Soyoung?

Soyoung: My first thing is balance with source and my opinion is a good xxx

Me: Yeah, and that's very important what Soyoung is saying about realizing that writing, academic research writing, is a balance between what they say, and what you say, okay. And, that's a really complicated balance to understand when you are beginning as a writer because you have a tendency to just to do one thing--they say or I say. You don't you don't quite



understand how to balance it all together, and an expert writer is very good at putting those things together. They know the balance, they know when it's too much one way or too much the other way, okay. So, I think this book is very useful for the kinds of problems that you guys mentioned in the beginning when you said, "This writing assignment was difficult, blah, blah, blah" because this book really talks to you about that precise difficulty that many of you were having. (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 9)

Of course, simply asking each learner to contribute was no guarantee that learners would be aware of themselves as having strengths, so I frequently referred to learners' strengths in the campfire discussion circle. I often did this in a collective way as in the following excerpt:

Me: Okay, so Friday, you did some thoughts, okay, about how you are changing as a writer, uhm Jieun, that'll be something that I want you to answer on the class web site I don't know if you have yet or not. And, remember that you came into the class already knowing how to write certain things, okay, so that's a given. You already knew how to write some essays and paragraphs and the point of this class is not for you to do more of the same thing in the same way. The point of this class is for you to take what you know and to look at each part of what you know and then consider the goal that you have of going to an American university and where how we can make what you already know how to do closer to what those particular readers are going to expect from you, okay. (Campfire Discussion Circle September 19)

Thus, the campfire discussion circle emphasized the notion of learners as individuals developing with and from their strengths while it simultaneously focused on building relationships between participants.

The second tenet of Positive Psychology reflected and promoted in the campfire discussion circle, deliberate networking in the application of strengths (Bowers, 2009; Rath, 2007; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), was realized primarily in an indirect manner. The learners were of course deliberately networked in the sense that they were obligated by the physical structure of the campfire discussion circle arrangement and the procedures that took place in circle to become aware of their many relationships in the classroom CoP (to see themselves as part of a network). They were also deliberately directed to share their individual experiences, which included their experiences of understanding and not understanding the topics under discussion in the course within this network. The individual indirect benefit of this networked sharing is that individual learners' experiences became public knowledge. In essence, their shared experiences became a public resource available to anyone in the campfire circle discussion. One individual's publicly shared experience could become another individual's private "aha" moment. For example, I was one individual member of the classroom CoP, and I personally experienced many individual development moments through the public resource of shared individual experiences. One of those moments was in relation to learners' confusion regarding the difference between thesis statements and topic sentences. I was not trying to teach them thesis statements because I wanted them to focus exclusively on writing paragraphs for the first part of the course, so I only mentioned topic sentences. However, as the shared experiences in the campfire discussion circle made clear, many learners thought they were the same:

*We had been reviewing the basic parts and function of a paragraph.*

Soyoung: When we study in writing in 500 and 600 levels, we focus on the thesis statement and we conclusion in conclusion we restate topic sentence and it is not uh more important in that case. (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 7)

*Learners had been asked what was changing about their understanding of writing.*

Carolina: For me [Me: Yeah, Carolina] it was that what you say that about the thesis statement that it's not necessary in academic writing

Me: That it, that the thesis statement is different than the topic sentence?

Carolina: Yeah, [Me: Okay, so, mhm] exactly, so I don't know if I, do I need to write a thesis statement at the end of my introduction paragraph or I'm not sure about it. (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 8)

The fact that multiple learners shared this experience in the campfire discussion circle was important for my development because it made me aware of a difference between my own understanding and the learners' understanding. I realized that the learners were trying to put thesis statements and topic sentences into one category simply because they both were placed at the beginning of a written text. Consequently, I needed to acknowledge that they were distinct and explain the distinction more clearly for learners, or their overgeneralization would remain a misunderstanding.

The campfire discussion circle utilized the third tenet I had chosen from Positive Psychology, intentional development of strengths (Lopez & Louis, 2009), by consistently providing a future orientation for learners' individual development and explaining processes they could use to continue their development beyond the requirements of the class. The topics of the campfire discussion circle sometimes provoked learners to ask about their future development and at other

times, I simply invoked it. The following is an example of an exchange related to learners' intentional development beyond the classroom CoP:

*We had been discussing challenges they were having with writing paragraphs*

Me: ...okay, what else is still hard?

Ahmed: Linking between the illustrations [mhm, okay] it is difficult

Me: It is difficult, it is something you have to keep practicing, now how are you gonna get better at that besides just trying to do it?

Rebeca: By reading

Me: Reading, mhm, okay people who can link well are people who have read a lot okay they've noticed what other writers do when they are linking and they are using those other writers' techniques and words to make links, okay, so yes, linking is gonna be a challenge, but it is something that you will improve as you do it, but mostly you will improve the more that you read, but when you read, you have to actually pay attention to what people are doing. You can't just read and not pay attention to the writing, okay, you have to pay attention to how people are writing to improve your own writing, okay.

Ahmed: Is there some books that I [for linking?] I should yeah for linking

Me: Linking is a matter of experience, okay, so really you need to read. You need to read things that are academically written and pay attention to them, okay, uhm, it's not something that's there a formula for [Ahmed: uh huh] it's about repeating things that need to be repeated, using synonyms when they need to be used, using transition or pointing words when they

need to be used, and parallel structure, and it's about doing all of those things, all of the time not just one of them, okay, so it truly is a question of reading a lot and becoming familiar with how many links are needed, okay. It's also a question of building vocabulary for doing it, okay, sometimes you need to repeat something, it would be best to do it with a synonym and maybe you don't have that in your vocabulary, how do you build vocabulary for writing? Reading, okay, so there is no magic fairy with a wand that's gonna say, "Now, you can do linking," it's a question of time and your effort, okay, particularly your effort with reading, okay. What else? (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 30)

The campfire discussion circle proved to be a powerful classroom practice that certainly succeeded in meeting my pedagogical goal of having learners be well-versed in the meta-language of academic writing. Most of their participation in the campfire discussion circle was focused on issues that required them to interact with meta-language. The campfire discussion circle also proved to be a powerful classroom practice for building healthy external and internal relationships in the classroom CoP. Participants in the practice experienced and demonstrated connection to one another, yet they also were able to manage their individual self-development. The campfire discussion circle definitively maximized the quantity, quality, and directionality of the information flow by increasing the amount of relevant teacher and learner input to classroom discussion, providing more opportunities for the teacher to clarify learner misunderstanding, and allowing participants to regularly interact in three directions (e.g., teacher-learner, learners-teacher, learners-learners) rather than just one (e.g., teacher-learner). Perhaps, the best indicator

of the positive orientation to interactions that the campfire circle fostered is illustrated by the following comment:

*Soyoung offered this comment after being asked if she had any questions about the class.*

Soyoung: No, mmm in my opinion, it's not a 700 class, I'm a part-time student, so I take one or two class, so I cannot I'm not familiar with other students, so uh in other writing classes, there is no commu- community with me other, in 700 writing is, have a time to uh get together and speak what their own and my own opinion and question and ask or and you answer the questions, so uh this is very uh this is very I I think is very comfortable to the join the class, and I feel I have one of the students is group, so it's so good to me [Soyoung laughs] (Interview 1, Soyoung)

Soyoung's comments underscore the powerful role the campfire discussion circle ("have a time to uh get together and speak") played in establishing an orientation to interactions that focused on and succeeded in building healthy relationships.

*4.2.2 Practice of theory: The public writing forum.* As a teacher of Anglo-American academic writing, I am necessarily concerned with being efficient and effective in my use of the time I have dedicated to any one course. I am concerned with being efficient in my use of time because my time with students is limited. I have only 50 minutes per day for eight weeks to try to measurably improve their writing. I am also concerned with being efficient because teaching any one course is just one of my responsibilities. I teach other courses, I have other responsibilities, and of course, I have an entire life beyond teaching, so the amount of time that I can dedicate to any one course outside of class time is limited. Because my time is limited and I do not want to increase the amount of time that I spend on any one course outside of class time, I am

very concerned with using the time that I do have effectively. I want to say, provide, and do the things that will have maximum impact on learners' growth as academic writers.

From my point of view, maximum impact usually happens when learners are ready for the information or skills that the teacher is providing. By ready, I mean the learners themselves have a rising or emerging awareness that there is some missing piece of information or some missing skill that they need in order to proceed. I have found that when learners, including myself, are provided with the information or skills they need at these critical moments of emerging awareness, learner uptake and retention is significantly more likely.

Of course, learners are seldom all at the same moment of readiness in these matters, so in my opinion, my job as an academic writing teacher is to set-up situations that create the conditions for readiness for whatever I plan to teach and then, to provide opportunities for all of the learners to experience the impact that they are currently ready to experience. However, my concerns for efficiency and effectiveness with regard to the relatively short amount of time that I have with learners also demand that I strive to maximize those impacts for all learners at whatever state of readiness they inhabit without increasing the amount of time that I have dedicated to this course. Thus, my pedagogical goals for my academic writing courses include using time efficiently and effectively while simultaneously maximizing learner impacts.

Maximizing learner impacts without increasing teacher work hours is the eternal dilemma of academic writing teachers. In this study, the guidelines developed from the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology actually helped to resolve this dilemma as well as to establish an orientation to interactions that enhanced the flow of information in the classroom CoP. As mentioned earlier, the absence of other full members and advanced newcomers in a classroom CoP poses a challenge to the normal functioning of LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and puts enormous responsibil-

ity and demands on the teacher (full member) unless she devises a way to access learners' (new-comers') ability to serve as learning resources for one another. To address my concerns about the use of time, the amount of learner impact, and the flow of information in the classroom CoP, I utilized the learning management system (LMS) offered by institution to create a public writing forum.

The public writing forum was not a single repeated activity like the campfire discussion circle. Rather, the public writing forum was a set of different activities that were unified by the fact that they produced public written artifacts (i.e., texts that were not just shared between an individual writer and the teacher). To create the public writing forum, I used the on-line discussion tool in the LMS not as a discussion tool per se but as a tool for making private writing public. Instead of having learners turn in all of their written assignments as individual documents to me and only me, I created some writing assignments using the on-line discussion tool and had learners post their texts publicly as a response. The default setting of the on-line discussion tool is that postings are listed in chronological order according to the time they were posted, and they are posted with the name of the person who wrote the text. I retained these default settings in my use of the on-line discussion tool.

Then, in class, I would display all learners' postings on their individual computers using a computer program that allowed me to control learners' computer screens, and as a group, we would discuss the ways in which their examples were appropriate or not appropriate according to the standards for Anglo-American writing utilized in the classroom CoP. Of course, learners could also look at other learners' writing before they posted (the LMS is public to all members of the course) and utilize them as models for what they posted. In addition, learners could return to the on-line discussions after class and access them at any time to evaluate the strategies other



learners had used to accomplish their written texts. A typical in-class exchange about writing posted in the public writing forum would be the following:

- Me: Exactly, alright. Okay, I'm getting ready to take over your computers.  
Alright, so let's go to question 6. Your city has decided to build a statue or monument to honor a famous person in your country. Who would you choose? Use reasons and specific examples to support your choice. What kind of question is it?
- Multiple: Take a position, your opinion [Sounds of learners discussing and disagreeing]
- Me: It's not a position  
[Sounds of learners discussing among themselves]
- Eugenia: Provide reasons
- Me: Usually, what are you having to provide in this case the controlling idea or the topic?
- Soyoung: Topic
- Me: The topic, so you're having to propose a solution, okay. 'Cause you're proposing a topic, okay. They've already given you the controlling idea—this person's statue should be built in your city, right. You're proposing who that person is, okay. So you're proposing someone, okay. Now, is this a personal question or an impersonal question.
- Multiple: Personal
- Me: It's absolutely necessary to say my country?
- Multiple: No

Me: No, 'cause what can you do instead of saying my country?

Eugenia: The name of the country

Me: Just the name of the country. So, there's no real reason for you to make this a personal paragraph, okay. Remember that yesterday with question 5, we said it could go either way because you might personally use yourself in examples yesterday. Today, it's not likely that you've had any interaction with this person, so there's really no need to put yourself in this paragraph, okay. So let's take a look at what you did.

[I display all learners' sentences on computers. Learners computers are controlled by me at this point so that we are all seeing the same screen.]

Me: Okay, Min A, President Dae Jung Kim is the best person to build a statue or monument to honor in my country. Okay, we can see who she wants to honor? Now, Min A if I don't know you, I'm grading your TOEFL in a different country, how do I know what country you're from? Okay, so you've gotta say [Min A: Korea] Korea, okay. Now, there's a little bit of a grammar issue here. When I read this, what I see is that President Dae Jung Kim is going to build the statue [Undetermined: Yes] [Multiple: Oh] [Sounds of learner laughter] okay [Sounds of Min A laughing] [Min A: Okay] okay, so in the in this case, remember the question said your city is going to build a statue of someone, okay, so you could say, you could pick a city, the city of Seoul should build a statue to honor President Dae Jung Kim, okay, or whatever, okay.

Okay, Eugenia. Gustavo Dudamel deserves a monument in Caracas, Venezuela for so many reasons, okay. We know who deserves the monument, okay. We know the city, we know this [I'm pointing to the phrase "Use reasons" on the computer screen using the pointer arrow, okay, for so many reasons, okay. Now, for several reasons, for a variety of reasons, for many reasons, okay when you use that word "so," okay, I know you hear people use it in speaking a lot [Eugenia: Mhm] They use it to intensify things, "It was so much fun. It was so good. It was so bad," okay. You don't use it that way in writing, okay, so it makes it sound very conversational when you do that, okay. What do we expect to see in Eugenia's paragraph?

Multiple: Reasons

Me: Reasons that a monument should be built for this person. Okay, Ahmed, King Faisal is the person which the city should build for, okay. We can see the per- we can see the name of this [I'm pointing to the phrase "famous person" on the computer screen using the pointer arrow] , okay, I don't know the country or the city, so I'm missing all the rest of the information, okay, so you could maybe use Eugenia's as a model of how you could do it. Min A, you could use hers as a model too, okay, to make sure you give all the information necessary.

Soyoung, A ex-president, Mu-hyun No is a good person to honor in Korea for many reasons. Okay, we can see the person, but again, no indication

of monument or statue, okay, that has to be part of what is included because that's what the question said, okay.

[The next exchange is directed at Jieun. The learners' submissions are all labeled with their names on the computer screen, so contextually it's obvious to them who I am addressing.]

The previous president Roh Moo-Hyun is the most suitable person to be built as a statue or monument for many reasons, okay. We see the name of the person, okay, uhm to be built as a statue or monument is uh it gets the idea across, it's probably an awkward grammatical way to say it, okay.

So, it's it's a little bit easier to do something like [I write on whiteboard]

This [I indicate what I have written on the whiteboard] would be a more grammatically correct construction [Okay] okay, does everybody understand? [Multiple: Yeah] You could also say something like [I write on whiteboard] okay something like that [I indicate what I have written on the whiteboard] okay, so there's a couple of different ways you can say it, also the way Eugenia did it is fine, okay, so, both of these would work, okay.

Alright, Carolina, okay, Simon Diaz is a famous singer/songwriter in Venezuela and the government has decided to build a statue to honor him for many reasons, okay. Okay, we see the person, we see the country, the statue, the reasons, okay, so what I would probably suggest Carolina is to [Carolina: Comma] comma take out the "is" [Carolina: Okay] a famous singer/songwriter comma, okay [Carolina: Okay]. Uhm

Carolina: From Venezuela, or?

Me: You're probably gonna have to change the structure of the sentence to something like this [I indicate a sentence written on the board]. Now the other thing is you have slightly misinterpreted the question, a past tense who has the government decided to build a statue of, okay it's a propose solution, okay. So, you are the person proposing the solution, okay [Carolina: They should?] Okay, so you should say like, "Caracas should build a statue of," and give the person's name, a famous singer/songwriter, for many reasons. Okay, is every- is that clear [Carolina nods].

Uhm, Rebeca, in Venezuela, a monument to honor the magnificent talent of Franco De Vita as a singer and songwriter should be built because of several reasons, okay, remember that you don't use because of [Rebeca: Mhm] What do we say?

Ahmed: For

Me: For [Rebeca: For] for several reasons, okay. Now, uhm

Jieun: You can use it?

Me: Can use what?

Min A: Because of?

Me: No, no, it's incorrect. You should use what?

Multiple: For

Me: For several reasons, okay. Probably, the sentence is fine, Rebeca, except for this particular part here [I indicate with the pointer arrow a part of the sentence]. It's a little bit uh awkward the way it's expressed, so it would probably be preferable to change it to something more like one of these [I

indicate sentences written on whiteboard] just to put things closer together, okay. Uhm, and maybe, cause you could always say, “Venezuela should build a monument to honor,” or something like that. You could make it just a little bit more active in that way.

Rebeca: Is it okay to say as a singer and songwriter?

Me: I would take out “as”, and I would put the commas around “a singer/songwriter”

Rebeca: Okay

Me: Okay, Frida, Rene Favaloro, okay [We are all reading the sentence on the screen silently]. You got the name, monument, honor, what’s missing in Frida’s?

Ahmed: City

Me: City or country

Multiple: No, no

Me: Is it? Okay, got it, got it. Then, I would take the country move it to the front

Frida: It’s okay to be represented “in a monument”?

Me: Mmm, not represented uhm, mmm

Frida: The person’s honored?

Me: Honored, okay. It’s not the preposition that’s the problem it’s the choice of words.

Frida: Okay

Me: If you use the word honored, should be honored, you're gonna create a really long sentence structure 'cause you're gonna say, "Should be honored by having a monument built of him dah, dah, dah, dah, dah," okay. So, again, to simplify it, I would go to one of these structure [I indicate sentences on the whiteboard] and say uhm, "Buenos Aires should build a monument of Rene Favaloro, who was a famous doctor, for many reasons," okay, or something like that, okay. (Public Writing Forum Discussion, September 15, 2011)

As a classroom trope, the public writing forum pedagogically served as a way for me to provide formative feedback in a way that maximized the number of textual examples learners saw as well as the possibility that they would hear feedback that they were indeed cognitively ready to integrate without grading each person's writing outside of class. Thus, it met my goals related to use of time and maximum impact. Like the campfire discussion circle, the public writing forum also had the intention to build an orientation to interactions that would engender more positive relationships in the classroom CoP by using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology. I believe the public writing forum did, in fact, reflect and promote all of the six tenets that I had selected from these theories as the basis for creating an orientation to interactions in my classroom CoP.

The link between the tenets of RCT—people yearn for connection (Miller & Stiver, 1997), people feel connected when they experience mutual empathy (Miller, 1976), and experiences of mutual empathy lead to feelings of mutual empowerment (Miller & Stiver, 1997)—and the public writing forum is much less direct than the connection the campfire discussion circle had to these same tenets. The public writing forum, unlike the campfire discussion circle, did

not overtly seek to orient members of the classroom CoP to their relationships with others in the class through interactions. For example, the members were not expected to respond to one another in the on-line discussion posting. Rather, they were only expected to respond to the teacher's original prompt. However, I believe that the public writing forum had a subconscious influence on members' orientation to relationships with others because it complemented the experiences of relationship that members had in the campfire discussion circle.

To begin, the public writing forum, like the campfire discussion circle, created a visible virtual space in which members were made aware of their own existence and the existence of others as part of a community. As a matter of personal and pedagogical experience with technology, all members understood the networking principles underlying an on-line discussion, and they knew without me necessarily telling them that they could look at others' postings before they posted their own, other people would and could look at their postings, and postings were permanently accessible once posted. Although I did not ask learners specifically about the use of the LMS, several volunteered information in interviews that indicated appreciation for its use like the following:

*This exchange occurred at the end of Interview 1. There were two participants other than me in this interview, Ye Jin and Min A.*

Me: Okay, and do you have suggestions?

Ye Jin: Uhm, yeah I think using Forum from in this xxx is so good [Min A: Yeah] I think I think that way is more used time (*She means that she thinks Forums should be used the way they are in our class more often.*)

(Interview 1, Min A & Ye Jin)



One of the obstacles to mutual empathy in some academic writing CoPs is the absence of a sense of community with respect to the learners' *mutual* journey of becoming academic writers. In some academic writing CoPs, learners are primarily encouraged through classroom practices to focus only on their individual development as writers. In fact, they may have very little knowledge of how their peers write or how the teacher (full member) perceives their peers' writing. Even when learners are asked to participate in peer editing exercises, which are normal in many academic writing classrooms, they typically edit just one other person's text, and they do not necessarily ever know how their own perception of their peer's paper compares to the teacher's perception. The public writing forum is one way to remove the obstacle of isolation from peers and build an empowering sense of shared positive awareness. As Rebeca, one of the most self-reflective learners in the classroom CoP explains when she is asked for suggestions for the class at the end of Interview 2, "And, I mean I have noticed how my classmates are improving so that's good I, I feel that I'm not the only one who uhm feel better about writing. So, yeah I think I don't have any."

Indirectly, I believe that the public writing forum was a practice that did allow learners to practice mutual empowerment. The key concepts of mutual empowerment are that individuals through relationships feel empowered to take action on behalf of themselves and others (Harling, 2008). In other words, individuals feel capable of having an influence. In one way, the public writing forum simply guaranteed individuals of this capability by virtue of the fact that everyone contributed to the communal resource bank of writing, and everyone's writing was a potential topic of discussion and therefore influence in the next class meeting.

In another way, the public writing forum allowed every member to be an innovator, and to some extent, made them accountable for contributing something different than what others had

contributed. For example, one possible critique that a writing teacher might have of my use of the on-line discussion posting is that every learner is responding to the same prompt, and each learner can see what others have posted, which means that lazy learners can simply copy others' work. Admittedly, this possibility does exist, yet the learners in the classroom CoP, even the weaker writers, did not do this. It was clear in the comments I overheard between them that they had often looked at each other's postings, but learners typically submitted original texts. I believe this was due in part to their awareness that their submission could and potentially would influence others for better (as in the case of an appropriate example) or for worse (as in the case of an inappropriate example). Learners, like Frida and Rebeca in the following excerpt, seemed to appreciate and understand the influence that other learners' texts had on them, so it would stand to reason that they also had some sense of the influence their own texts had on others:

*The learners were discussing techniques of their favorite writing teachers with me.*

Frida: I think the best way to learn how to write in English is when you when teachers eh show other works [Rebeca: Mhm] of classmates. I think it's the really, really good. I understand that they have to put maybe focus on one student but see the other work is really good for me. And, I think many teachers

Rebeca: I think that's a good technique. For example, when I was in the other class or in break I realized that is not why it's that I realized that because I saw uhm other people's writing, so I I went like oh no it's not why I have to write that I'm wrong and they're right, so it kind of uhm makes me realize what are my mistakes from their mistakes

Frida: Yeah, it's because the idea that teacher explain is like the idea put it in the work [Rebeca: Yeah] you know so it's it's good to see [Rebeca: Yeah maybe] how classmate [Rebeca: Are getting the thing] yeah (Interview 1, Frida & Rebeca)

The public writing forum reflected and promoted the tenets of Positive Psychology-- individualization (Gallup, 2003; Levitz & Noel, 2000), deliberate networking in the application of strengths (Bowers, 2009; Rath, 2007; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), and intentional development of strengths (Louis, 2008)—in a fairly direct manner. As previously mentioned, Positive Psychology is focused on individual development through relationships. The public writing forum provided a clear virtual (on-line) and real (in-class discussion) relationship that was specifically intended to develop the teacher-self, learners-self, and learners-artifacts relationships by providing each individuals with the ability to share their strengths and individually participate in managing and directing their own learning.

Two important aspects of individualization or personalized learning are the development of individual strength awareness and the development of realistic self-awareness (Lopez & Louis, 2009). Individuals who lack awareness of their own competence are basically alienated from the most powerful force in their own development—themselves. In an academic writing class for international learners who wish to become matriculated learners in U.S. universities, alienation from self is particularly problematic. Academic writing is a high-stakes skill in U.S. universities, and international learners' ability to just survive (not necessarily thrive) in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers is seriously compromised when learners' have no self-awareness with respect to their own academic writing competence.

The public writing forum's fundamental design and operation was intended to make individuals aware of their own development in the context of others' development. Individuals received real-time individual feedback on their individual submissions from the teacher (full member representative of the real-world CoP), and this feedback included information on the strengths of what had been submitted (i.e., what was present in the text that was appropriate in terms of Anglo-American academic writing) and what the teacher did not see (i.e., what was missing from the text and needed for appropriateness in terms of Anglo-American academic writing). Individuals had the opportunity to respond to this real-time feedback and request more information or clarification. In other words, they had very personalized encounters about their writing despite the public nature of the practice. For example, the following exchange illustrates the personalized nature of teacher-learner interaction in the public writing forum:

*The entire class is looking at a display of all learners' text. At this moment, we are all looking at Rebeca's submission.*

Me: Uhm, Rebeca, in Venezuela, a monument to honor the magnificent talent of Franco De Vita as a singer and songwriter should be built because of several reasons, okay, remember that you don't use because of [Rebeca: Mhm] What do we say?

Ahmed: For

Me: For [Rebeca: For] for several reasons, okay. Now, uhm

Jieun: You can use it?

Me: Can use what?

Min A: Because of?

Me: No, no, it's incorrect. You should use what?

Multiple: For

Me: For several reasons, okay. Probably, the sentence is fine, Rebeca, except for this particular part here [I indicate with the pointer arrow a part of the sentence]. It's a little bit uh awkward the way it's expressed, so it would probably be preferable to change it to something more like one of these [I indicate sentences written on whiteboard] just to put things closer together, okay. Uhm, and maybe, cause you could always say, "Venezuela should build a monument to honor," or something like that. You could make it just a little bit more active in that way.

Rebeca: Is it okay to say as a singer and songwriter?

Me: I would take out "as", and I would put the commas around "a singer/songwriter" (Public Writing Forum Discussion, September 15)

In the preceding example, notably, Rebeca personalizes her own learning by asking about a feature of the sentence that I had not mentioned. Also, notably, another learner, Jieun personalizes her own learning by clarifying information that I had given to Rebeca that was clearly new to her. Thus, the public writing forum was highly reflective and encouraging of learners' developing self-knowledge and self-awareness with regard to their competence and the expectations associated with academic writing artifacts.

In LPP process, one important source of information for newcomers is other more advanced newcomers. A novice newcomer learns by seeing how another newcomer with slightly more experience does the same task or a more advanced task. In many academic writing courses, learners are isolated from other learners' texts. They may engage in peer editing with one other person regarding a specific text, but they are not likely to see multiple peer texts, and they

are not likely to actually know how the teacher would respond to the text that they are peer editing. The public writing forum utilized the tenet, deliberate networking in the application of strengths (Bowers, 2009; Rath, 2007; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), to address this potential communication obstacle.

In the public writing forum, learners were deliberately networked, and they were explicitly required to contribute texts that would clearly reflect their strengths as well as their challenges. In the follow-up in-class discussion, I tried to encourage learners to notice the strengths of others and borrow those strengths for their individual writing as in the following excerpt:

*We are discussing topic sentences submitted by learners on the LMS and have gone over a few prior to this comment, including Eugenia's text.*

Me: Reasons that a monument should be built for this person. Okay, Ahmed, King Faisal is the person which the city should build for, okay. We can see the per- we can see the name of this [I'm pointing to the phrase "famous person" on the computer screen using the pointer arrow], okay, I don't know the country or the city, so I'm missing all the rest of the information, okay, so you could maybe use Eugenia's as a model of how you could do it. Min A, you could use hers as a model too, okay, to make sure you give all the information necessary. (Public Writing Forum Discussion, September 15)

By referring learners to the work of another learner, I, as the full member of the real-world CoP, am positively valuing the strengths in her text for all learners, and I am suggesting that she and the public writing forum in general can be a resource of strategic strengths and ideas for each individual. Indeed, Rebeca and Frida commented on the usefulness of seeing other learners' texts in their first interview with me:

Rebeca: I mean we have been learning doing a lot with the book with uh using LMS the Forums it's a pretty good place where it's really good [Frida: Yeah yes the LMS gave us the possibility to see xxx] the other and yeah [Frida: That's good Forums] I think it is a good thing we haven't used I haven't used Forums until now so I think it's really good [Frida: I haven't ever yeah] (Interview 1, Rebeca & Frida)

In addition to improving the learners-self and learners-artifact relationships, the public writing forum was crucial for improving the teacher-self relationship by means of the third tenet of Positive Psychology selected for this study, intentional development of strengths (Louis, 2008). As a teacher, I would say that one of my strengths is that I do consider myself a full member of the real-world CoP to which the learners in classroom CoP aspire, which means that I regularly engage in the practices of that real-world CoP by producing artifacts for other full members of that CoP. I apply this strength in my classroom teaching by regularly requiring myself to do the same types of assignments that I give to learners so that I will understand fully what is required in terms of knowledge and skill to successfully accomplish the assignments. I create all of my own materials including models and examples. For example, if I want learners to analyze model paragraphs, I write the paragraphs myself using questions that I would normally give to learners as writing prompts.

However, my strength is also a weakness in terms of my own teaching and the learners' development as academic writers. To begin, the examples and models that I write are reflective of my long-term participation in the real-world CoP, so they are several levels beyond the range of the learners. Also, my examples and models reflect only one person's way of accomplishing a writing task, and as any full member academic writer knows, there are multiple ways to accom-

plish the same task in writing. I used the public writing forum to intentionally build my strength (providing authentic examples and models) by collecting another type of authentic samples and models from the learners. Essentially, the public writing forum became a source of instructional material for me, as the teacher, that improved my development as a teacher by providing simplified less-expert models of writing to serve as the basis for my instructional commentary and by providing a multiplicity of models, which allowed me to illustrate more clearly the range of ways that a single writing task might be accomplished. The following example illustrates how the public writing forum provided materials that added strength to my teaching by adding more appropriate models that I would have had the time or the creativity to create:

*This is part of an in-class discussion about texts posted in the public writing forum.*

Me: [The next exchange is directed at Jieun. The learners' submissions are all labeled with their names on the computer screen, so contextually it's obvious to them who I am addressing.]

The previous president Roh Moo-Hyun is the most suitable person to be built as a statue or monument for many reasons, okay. We see the name of the person, okay, uhm to be built as a statue or monument is uh it gets the idea across, it's probably an awkward grammatical way to say it, okay. So, it's it's a little bit easier to do something like [I write on whiteboard] This [I indicate what I have written on the whiteboard] would be a more grammatically correct construction [Okay] okay, does everybody understand? [Multiple: Yeah] You could also say something like [I write on whiteboard] okay something like that [I indicate what I have written on the whiteboard] okay, so there's a couple of different ways you can say it, also the way Eugenia did it is fine, okay, so, both of these would work, okay.



In the aforementioned example, the sentences I had written on the whiteboard were inspired by texts posted by learners, and Eugenia's text was visible in the public writing forum. The fact that learners often did produce appropriate texts in ways that I would not have conceived of was a great source of growth for me as a full member because it created a ready permanent resource of different but workable examples for my explanations.

Like the campfire discussion circle, the public writing forum achieved my pedagogical goals and my relationship goals. The public writing forum maximized learners' development in the use of artifacts without increasing the amount of time that I had to spend preparing or providing feedback for the course. The public writing forum also created and reinforced relational awareness while providing clear opportunities for learners' to individually recognize and develop their strengths. Through the public writing forum, all members of the classroom CoP gained access to information that otherwise would have been unavailable to them, and they were able to share and use this information to build their relational competence for the real-world CoP.

*4.2.3 Practice of theory: Parts-before-whole instructional approach.* One of the most pivotal moments in my development as a teacher, a researcher, and writer occurred in 2003 when I took a course titled Genre Theory. In that course, I was exposed to several ideas that are fundamental to how I manage my own membership development in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers and how I instruct others who wish to join that world. The first idea I learned was that genre is not a literary category, it is an action taken by a human agent. Specifically, the action of genre is an action of response, and genre is a typified response to a recurrent situation (Miller, 1984/1994).

The second idea I learned was that genre use is mediated through perceptions of social exigence (Miller, 1984/1994). In social groups of all kinds, events of all types occur (e.g., a per-

son sneezing, a person arriving late, a person needing to rush away from a conversation quickly) that create an exigence or need for a response. Over time, the events that are likely to occur in any discrete social group like a CoP become formally or informally codified and the appropriate or typical responses to those events become genres. Thus, acquiring membership in a group like a CoP requires newcomers to simultaneously learn to perceive social exigence in the ways that full members do and learn the appropriate genre for responding to those events.

The third idea I learned was that a genre is not a singular phenomenon. Indeed, Freedman (1994) suggests that genres are made up of a minimum of two texts (e.g., question/answer, writing prompt/essay/feedback). The first text is viewed as both projecting and inviting an uptake. If the second text correctly perceives the inherent rules, guidelines, or expectations projected by the first text for the response text and conforms appropriately to those, a generic response and a social action is achieved. However, if the responder does not understand the implicit projection of the first text and produces a response text that is inappropriate, a social disconnection is achieved, and quite likely the responder is recognized as an outsider—someone who does not perceive and respond like other members. In a CoP, legitimate newcomers, those who have been accepted as viable candidates for membership, should learn how to produce the genres of the CoP through the LPP process.

The fourth idea that I learned was that there are systematic ways to derive the textual rules of genres. Specifically, I learned about an approach to demystifying the rules of texts called moves analysis (Swales, 1990). The primary assumption of moves analysis is that texts are made up of rhetorical moves, and each move can be defined by its purpose. Thus, a text can be deconstructed to its moves. A collection of texts that are all deemed appropriate responses to the same initial exigence (or first text) can be deconstructed and compared to arrive at a general

pattern or description of what moves are necessary in the second text. Thus, moves analysis is one of the strategies available to anyone who wants to learn or teach the text types and genres of a specific CoP.

My ideas about academic writing and teaching academic writing are closely connected to the aforementioned ideas about genre. For instance, I believe that as an academic writing teacher and a full member of the real-world CoP of academic writers, I have a duty to train learners in genre awareness, genre perception, genre use, and genre analysis. By this, I mean that learners in my courses should become aware of the range of genres that are used in the real-world CoP, the ways that first texts and second texts are perceived by members of the CoP, the skills needed to produce genres, and strategies they can use to figure out how to produce appropriate second texts when they are new to the genre.

In an academic writing course like the one I taught for this study, my beliefs about genre strongly influence my choice of pedagogical goals and my approach to achieving those goals, particularly when I consider those goals in terms of the classroom CoP / real-world CoP connection. For example, I believe strongly in teaching text types that are extremely useful because they are used frequently in the real-world CoP (e.g., e-mails) or types that are extremely common because they are used in modified forms in many other text types (e.g., single academic research paragraph). I believe that genres are pairs of texts, so I believe that training learners to perceive the exigence and guidelines of the first text correctly is extremely important. I also believe that texts should be deconstructed and taught to learners as moves so that they can learn the specifics of how to accomplish a move as well as learn to understand any text as composed of distinct moves.

However, there are those who would say that the view I have articulated of genre diminishes it to a textual formula that ignores the concept of social action (Miller, 1984/1994), and there are those like Freedman (1994, p. 6) who oppose a “recipe theory of genre” in genre pedagogy. In terms of the concept of social action, I would argue that the text types I teach are a social action regardless of their real-world value because the classroom CoP is a real-life community (Lave, 1997). If the point of referring to genre as a social action is to underscore that it embodies both a formula and a set of social motives (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010), then acknowledging that a classroom CoP is a real community in which the genres used reflect, define, and configure the social practices and interactions of a culture indicates that the genres of that community are social actions.

In terms of concerns that genre is not reducible to formulas or recipes, I would agree. However, I would also argue that because the classroom CoP is theoretically intended to provide relational competence for a target real-world CoP and because in the case of Anglo-American academic writing that real-world is quite varied in its use of genre, ESL must select something that is representative of a general range of perceptual, cognitive, and linguistic skills that are commonly necessary in that real-world CoP. Carter (2007) describes four metagenres that he claims form the basis of most of the genres requested across disciplines on his campus. Among them is the research from sources metagenre. Of course, writers may produce research-from-source text types in many ways, but as the teacher, I am best suited to teach them how I, as a practicing member of the real-world CoP, conceive of and produce these text types. Thus, to anyone concerned about the overly formulaic nature of the way that I might use genre, I would say that, “Yes, I teach a formula for both thinking about and writing an abstract text type that represents a social action in my classroom CoP. However, I openly acknowledge that it is only a for-

mula and that other writers and teachers may do things differently, and I teach them a formula that has been successful for me (in other words, I teach from personal experience).”

My primary (but not only) pedagogical goal for the course I taught in this study was for learners to develop basic U.S. university level competence (i.e., a level similar to or better than the average freshman who succeeds in their first year of college) in the genre that results in the production of an academic research paragraph (i.e., writing prompt/response). I defined basic level competence as including the ability to refer to two different sources appropriately in the paragraph without using direct quotations and without plagiarizing. I developed this primary goal based on the number of useful and common skills that figure in the production of the academic research paragraph and the fact that learners in the real-world CoP quite likely write more academic research paragraphs or body paragraphs than any other type of paragraph. To achieve this goal, I adopted a parts-before-whole instructional approach that was inspired by moves analysis (Swales, 1990) and Freedman’s (1994) notion of uptake.

Like the public writing forum, the parts-before-whole instructional approach was a collection of different activities. These activities were unified by the fact that all of the parts were focused on producing a single text type (the academic research paragraph). To enact the parts-before-whole instructional approach, I divided the task of producing an appropriate (according to U.S. academic standards) academic research paragraph into perceptual (uptake) and procedural (moves analysis) steps according to my own experience and what I had observed through my work with learners over the years. Then, I created materials and activities that focused on these perceptual and procedural steps. The perceptual and procedural steps that I chose for learners included the following: understand reader expectations in U.S. academic writing; build meta-language for discussing the “whole” (i.e., an academic research paragraph); understand the

whole as the target goal; analyze the assignment; compose a topic sentence; brainstorm the structure; plan the supporting points (coherence); plan illustrations; compose the paragraph (cohesion); and compose the concluding statement.

Steps often included multiple sub-steps. For example, planning illustrations involved the sub-steps of selecting appropriate illustrations, summarizing without plagiarizing, citing correctly, and considering how the illustration would be framed to fit the supporting point. For each step, learners received a handout with detailed (but not overly complicated) information and examples appropriate for the level of the learners. In addition, each step included some type of application activity wherein learners applied the information related to the step to an actual perceiving, planning, or writing activity. Instruction and practice in one step lasted between one to four class days depending on my perceptions of the level of difficulty it posed for learners. Steps sometimes overlapped so that learners continued working on a previous step while simultaneously beginning a new step. The fact that I was using an instructional approach that included steps was openly discussed, and activities were even referred to by steps as in the following example:

*This was a typical part of the review phase of a campfire discussion circle.*

Me: So we've been working in a very intensive step-by-step process where you look at each particular thing, alright. Now, remember that the step 1 any time you get a writing assignment doesn't matter what kind of writing assignment it is is analyze the assignment. Step 2 if it is a paragraph, the next step is [Eugenia: Topic sentence] topic sentence you have to start somewhere. Remember that change is good, so you're not married to a topic sentence, you write one, but you can easily change it, okay. Step 3, the first part of Step 3 is [Rebeca: Brainstorming] brainstorming, and this is the part where at the beginning of the session, many of you

said, “I don’t know how to come up with ideas, that’s the part where I get stuck,” okay. So, what did we do to try and help your brain be more focused coming up with ideas, what’s our strategy for that? [Multiple: Answer questions] Create a question that gives your brain something to focus on, so when you’re brainstorming a paragraph, you wanna focus on two types of questions, one question for your supporting points, and the other questions are related to your concluding statement, okay because remember, you have these concrete beams, the concluding statement is the final beam. You don’t have to actually build it yet, but you need to have some idea of what you’re gonna do with it, that’ll make it easier for you when you get there. After you do that, okay, you go back to your brainstorming about your supporting points, and now what do you do? [Carolina: xxx reading] okay you go back and you start putting in the parallel structure for the supporting points because that can help you to see if uhm then you go back and you start putting them into parallel structure because what did we find out when we do that? Remember, we we all everybody did their homework and they’re like, “Ooh I got that done,” and then we started doing it and what did we find out [Frida: They didn’t match, yeah] [Eugenia: Maybe it’s the same. Maybe it’s too general. One’s too specific the other] Exactly when you start putting it into words, a lot of times what you find out is, “Oh, I don’t really have two different ones,” or, “I do have two different ones, but they probably won’t work with the concluding statement I had in mind,” okay, or one’s general and one’s specific, or something, okay, so that’s the point at which you start to realize you might need to make changes in those. (Campfire Discussion Circle, September 19)

As a pedagogical classroom trope, the parts-before-whole approach was particularly well-suited to achieving my instructional goals because it provided regular, attainable, focused goals for learners that if achieved would provide learners with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to accomplish the overall goal of composing appropriate academic research paragraphs. As a relational classroom trope, I used the parts-before-whole approach to create an orientation to interactions that particularly focused on building positive relationships between members, specifically teacher-learners and learners-teacher by using two tenets of RCT. I also used the parts-before-whole approach to build positive relationships within individuals (i.e., teacher-self, learners-self, learners-artifacts) by using two tenets of Positive Psychology.

Although the parts-before-whole instructional approach was not a classroom practice that created visible relationships between members like the campfire discussion circle or the public writing forum, it did create and mediate a relationship between the learners and me that I believe reflected and promoted the second tenet of RCT used in this study, mutual empathy. To explain, in a classroom CoP, a teacher obviously creates relationships between learners and herself through her interactions with them and her management of the classroom environment. For instance, teachers who express interest and concern about learners' personal lives beyond the classroom may be perceived as warm and caring by learners. Teachers who enforce strict tardiness policies or assigned seating may be perceived as authoritarian and inflexible.

However, teachers also create relationships with learners through their instructional approach and materials, for these practices and artifacts serve as tangible representations of the teacher in learners' memories and outside-the-classroom experiences (i.e., doing homework for the class). Thus, an instructional approach that selects "lecture" as the primary tool of instruction and "textbook" as the primary material for the course may create a more distant or removed rela-



tionship between the learners and the teacher than an instructional approach that selects workshop as the primary tool of instruction and hands-on activities as the primary material. For learners, the teacher's instructional approach and materials are truly part of their experience of the teacher and a mediating force for how they understand the teacher's relationship to them and their relationship to the teacher.

In this way, I believe my parts-before-whole instructional approach and materials was a mediating force for the RCT tenets of mutual empathy and mutual empowerment. Mutual empathy is the experience of feeling understood and accepted in both a cognitive and affective way as well as being able to make another feel understood and accepted (Covington & Surrey, 2000). As I explained earlier, my parts-before-whole instructional approach is based on my understanding of genre (as a practice and artifact) and how genre can be an obstacle for newcomers who wish to join a CoP. My parts-before-whole instructional approach uses what I know about genre as a practice and artifact through my full member status in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writing, what I know about the LPP process and potential obstacles to that process, and what I know about learners' backgrounds and experiences to "...join with another [learners in this case] at a cognitive and affective level without losing connection with one's own [my in this case] experience" (Covington & Surrey, 2000, p. 2).

In other words, I use the parts-before-whole instructional approach because it reflects my full member and teacher empathy for newcomers and learners' cognitive and affective levels with respect to Anglo-American academic writing. The approach reflects my belief that learners must understand how Anglo-American writers think while writing and reading others' writing as well as how to accomplish each of the discrete moves that might be required for realizing a single appropriate text in the real-world CoP. It also reflects my belief that learners often do not

receive enough information on the discrete moves because full members or teachers do not break tasks down into manageable chunks for learners, especially as the learners become more linguistically proficient. Learner comments like the following (which were quite common unfortunately) in interviews about past experiences in academic writing courses support this belief:

Ye Jin: Mmm, to me, uh some some teacher just say, “Alright, write essay about this topic,” and after writing essay after writing essay, she said shows, she after I show that to her, she say, “Just edit,” not I I I didn’t know what I write wrong, but she said, “Just edit,” and I show her, and edit xxx (Interview 1, Min A & Ye Jin)

Carolina: Never gave give us like clear instructions or steps and it was just like write about this topic and I don’t know you don’t want to be in that class. It was so bored so that’s what I feel.

Eugenia: Me too. That’s the teacher that said, “Okay, you have this topic, now, write.” And she didn’t say, “Okay, here’s the structure you need to follow, here’s the “

Carolina: When she gave us the results of the grade, there is not correct corrections very clear corrections that you can take it consideration for next time. It was xxx

Me: And did you feel, like she said she felt bored in that class, did you feel the same way?

Eugenia: I actually didn’t feel bored because I would say, “Okay, that this is easy. I’m only gonna write and then I can go and be free or whatever.” But, it

wasn't bored, but I wasn't learning so yeah. (Interview 1, Eugenia & Carolina)

Even in their comments about previous academic writing classes that they enjoyed, learners revealed that writing tasks were not managed in ways that left learners feeling competent about their abilities as in the following:

*In this excerpt, the learner is giving advice to English writing teachers based on her past experiences.*

Min A: Actually the organization is the most difficult to me, so I have to know how to organize in steps, so I want to learn how to organize it all of it like this, this, this, but actually in 600, it's good, but she always editing my essay, "You have to write essay, and I'll edit," like that, so I don't know how to write well, but just edit, "Oh, okay, oh yeah, I got it, I got it," but next time I will, "Oh, I can't, I don't know, how do I," and that repeat repeat difficult something like that, so I wanna I wanna know how to organize well, then the steps kind of (Interview 1, Min A & Ye Jin)

It is noteworthy that the learner has clearly been asked to write essays that were edited by teachers without actually receiving instruction in the skills that she knows that she needs, organization and structure. For most people in general and learners in particular, being asked to do a task over and over again that they already know they have specific difficulties with and not receiving any type of acknowledgement of those difficulties or instruction in how to overcome them is a frustrating and demotivating experience.

From a relational perspective, I used the parts-before-whole approach to learners to express my empathy for learners' experiences with the practices and products of both classroom

CoPs focused on Anglo-American academic writing and the real-world CoP of academic writers. I used the approach to acknowledge learners' own awareness of their strengths and difficulties in academic writing, to provide more detailed full member insight on appropriate ways to overcome their difficulties, and to give learners hope and assurance that they can become more competent with regard to academic writing in both their classroom CoP and the real-world CoP. The approach did affect learners' feelings about their relationship with me as the following exchange illustrates:

*The following exchange occurred during an interview between the external interviewer (EI) and a learner.*

EI:           Okay, good uhm so just in general, how do you feel as a student in uhm Lauren's class?

Soyoung:    Yeah, [EI: how do you feel?] mmm, very good [Soyoung laughs] yeah uh as I said, I feel the students and we uh connect the teacher and other students, so, and I we we learned the step-by-step the method the method of writing, and yeah, she's very kind and so, very helpful yeah

Although Soyoung does not include a linguistic marker expressly connecting the step-by-step method to her perceptions of me or my relationship with her, these ideas appear to be propositionally connected in her internal understanding judging by the sequential manner in which she expresses them. Thus, the parts-before-whole instructional approach did orient learners to a relationship with me that was characterized by empathy.

In both the theory of RCT and the practice of RCT, mutual empathy and mutual empowerment are closely connected. Mutual empowerment is the outcome of feelings of connection gained through mutual empathy, and it involves people feeling capable of influencing their own

and others' experiences in relationships (Hartling, 2008). In my classroom CoP, I used the parts-before-whole instructional approach to create an orientation to interactions that reflected mutual empathy and gave learners positive feelings of connection to me, and these feelings resulted in positive feelings about themselves. Once learners feel connected through mutual empathy, it is important for them to experience or enact those feelings through empowerment. The purpose of the classroom CoP is to provide learners with relational competence for a real-world CoP, and empowerment is a kind of relational competence. In my classroom CoP, the parts-before-whole instructional approach created a sense of relational empathy, and it provided a venue of sorts for empowered enactment. The following exchange illustrates the relationship that the parts-before-whole instructional approach played in learners' feelings and actions of empowerment:

Me:               Okay, have your feelings about academic writing changed since this course started?

Carolina:       Yeah, I like more now than before because I feel like I'm capable to do this and to follow this for me it was kind of bored and I was like, "Oh, I don't like this. Maybe I'm not good at," but now, I think, "Okay, I'm capable. Let's do it." And, and it's interesting to follow the steps. (Interview 2, Carolina)

Notably, Carolina now not only thinks she is "capable," she is also inspired to act, "Let's do it," and she has a strategy, "follow the steps," for doing so.

In addition to the mutual empathy and mutual empowerment tenets of RCT, the parts-before-whole instructional approach also reflected and promoted the tenets of individualization and intentional application of strengths from Positive Psychology. In the parts-before-whole instructional approach, I divided the accomplishment of the target goal (i.e., an academic research

paragraph that refers to two sources without direct quotation and without plagiarism) into perceptual and procedural steps. For each step, I created a learner handout with a brief description of what the step was about and why it mattered, a concise list of things to do and not do (include and not include) in order to accomplish the step, and one or more examples often with written explanations. The presentation and discussion of each step is followed by one or more practice applications that requires learners to use the information presented and discussed.

To illustrate, understanding the assignment is a perceptual step in my parts-before-whole approach. Learners received a handout that identified three areas they need to consider perceptually when they receive an assignment—requirements, purpose, and task. They received brief explanations of each area and the considerations they should make. For the area “task” which refers to analysis of the writing prompt, learners received additional information about ways to categorize questions (e.g., take a position, give reasons, provide evidence, propose a solution), they saw examples of each category with written explanations, and then, they were given an exercise with writing prompts from the TOEFL to categorize. After the learners did the practice, we discussed the answers in class, considering not only the correct categorization of the question but also what the question expected the reader/writer to do.

I found that the parts-before-whole instructional approach allowed learners to personalize and improve their internal understandings of their own abilities and the artifacts I wanted them to produce. The following exchange illustrates how the parts-before-whole personalized and improved Frida’s understanding of what she could and could not do well while improving her personal understanding of what was expected in the artifacts:

*At the beginning of the course, Frida had completed a Background Information Form, and in this interview she is being asked to compare her original answer to her current experience.*

Me: Okay, so that's moved down here to easy [yes]. Alright number 19, in your personal experience what has helped you to improve your academic writing the most, and you said, "Thinking before I start to write points to develop related to the structure." Okay, is this the same answer that you would give today?

Frida: Uhm, no I think the way that you explain the steps to write I think them have help- helped me help to me to understand the structure, so I think it's more easy, but the question is what I think that is because I didn't have clear the steps. Yeah, it's related to structure was my problem actually.

[Me: Okay, alright] yes. (Interview 2, Frida)

According to her comments, the parts-before-whole approach or "steps" has helped her to understand what the structure of an artifact actually is, something she was not clear about before ("the question is what I think that it is") and made her aware that structure has always been a challenge for her ("structure was my problem actually").

As the teacher, the personalized experience that each learner had with the parts-before-whole instructional approach served as a tremendous source of developmental information. In fact, their personalized experiences with the approach connect the parts-before-whole instructional approach with another tenet of Positive Psychology, the intentional development of strengths. As a full member of the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers, I am, like other full members, somewhat disconnected from the internal and external processes that

produce its artifacts because those processes are automatic for me. In effect, I am not always fully aware of the processes that produce the artifacts. Of course, as a teacher, I am probably more aware than the average real-world full member of a CoP, but as previous excerpts from my learners have demonstrated, even teachers can be out of touch with the challenges learners (new-comers) are facing.

As a teacher and a researcher, I am strongly committed to the process of recursivity, so as I used the parts-before-whole instructional approach for the benefit of the learners, I also used the approach to build my own strengths in terms of acquiring new information about learners' abilities and needs with regard to each step. I used the information that I learned by observing and interacting with them and the texts they produced for different steps to inform and change my understanding of each step and my explanations of each step. The following excerpt from Teacher Reflexive Journal illustrates how interactions with learners affected me, as well as my growth as a teacher and writer:

*We were working on the step that involved planning illustrations, and my understanding of the step was changed by the learners' and my experience of what that process actually requires.*

When we started looking for illustrations yesterday, I let them choose which paragraph we worked on from the two we were doing together. As we looked for evidence, I realized that both of the topics from those paragraphs did not lend themselves to "research" style paragraphs as they both required fairly sophisticated research (one because of its non-common position and one because it can easily be explained with common sense). We began research in class so that I could show them some things that come up. I continued the research on my own and spent 2-3 hours trying to find suitable learner-friendly



sources. I realize now that part of the problem with teaching learners how insiders think and do things is that it takes a lot of time. As a teacher, I'm used to making the learner's task fairly straightforward as in there's not a lot of ways to go "wrong" in the task. However, when teaching a process, I'm seeing that I have to be willing to let them go "wrong" as a way to illustrate how to do things, and I have to be willing for tasks to be messy or not so clearly defined. For example, for tomorrow, I told them to find illustrations in the sources to support our points or to find illustrations that suggest new points. I have no idea what they will come up with because I'm allowing it to be "messy". What will they think is an "appropriate" illustration? There won't be a right/wrong answer, and more than likely there will be a lot of problematic answers. How can I teach from such a "borderless" activity that could lead in so many directions? I think it will be a challenge because any of the following could occur: a) they identify common knowledge as expert illustrations; b) they identify illustrations that don't match points; c) they identify illustrations that are really the same as the points; d) they identify illustrations as points; and so on. Once we get past that, then I need to be concerned with what they know about putting it all together, and how to work with them on that part of writing. In addition, I essentially have them writing one paragraph with me and one by themselves, so I have to provide some kind of guidance and feedback on their solo venture. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 20)

As with the campfire discussion circle and the public writing forum, I had pedagogical and relationship goals for the classroom practice I call the parts-before-whole instructional approach. The approach achieved my pedagogical goals by allowing learners to improve their understanding and production of texts in a genre sense. The approach achieved my relationship

goals by improving learners' relationships with me, with themselves, and with the artifacts. The general consensus of learners' interviews was that they felt good or better in some way because of the steps. I believe the parts-before-whole approach had a strong impact on the quality of the flow of information and that impact appeared to be specifically related to clarity. In their overall feelings about the course, learners to varying degrees expressed sentiments like the following:

EI:            Alright, well uhm, what would you say is the most helpful about Lauren's teaching approach?

Rebeca:       It's helpful that she explains every detail that she uh give us handouts and that we can see in the handouts examples of what of what she wants us to write and she also uses LMS. I don't know if you know what LMS that's a web site on internet from the Language Institute, so we have we have Forums there and we were reading uhm our book and that was really useful too because it has a lot of information useful information for our writing to improve our writing and so, we have forums there and every assignment was there, and when we submit the assignment, then we get a response from her, so we can check that information every time we want to, and that's really useful. And, also, uhm that when she explains everything and we have a question, she answer that in a really good way. We have no doubts after after that. And, I was thinking about something else uhm yeah maybe that she's really clear in what she wants us to write and how she wants us to write yeah I think that's the most useful thing about her.

(Interview 3, Rebeca)

*4.2.4 Limitations to the practice of theory.* Although I find significant and encouraging evidence that the classroom tropes I developed and used—campfire discussion circle, public writing forum, and parts-before-whole instructional approach—did reflect and promote the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology that I had selected for this study, I also know that there were ways in which they did not. My own incomplete understandings of the tenets, my own preferences as a teacher, my personality, and the nature of the classroom environment itself are but a few of the possible reasons that the tenets may not have been fully reflected and promoted at all times even within the classroom tropes that were most intended to do so. I will briefly describe what I consider to be limitations in my enactment of the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology for each classroom trope.

My selection of tenets from RCT and Positive Psychology was based in large part on my idea that these theories envisioned the relationship between an authority figure and a layperson in a more empowering way for both parties. Specifically, I felt that these theories espoused a more egalitarian and collaborative relationship between persons that have traditionally been considered of different status in Western societies. My choice of specific tenets was designed to encourage an orientation to relationships that improved many types of relationships (e.g., teacher-learners, learners-teacher, learners-learners, teacher-self, learners-self, and learners-artifacts) by imbuing them with more of a sense of equality and cooperation. For example, the tenet of mutual empathy from RCT was selected to promote the quality of mutuality between members because I believed a sense of mutuality would foster more egalitarian and collaborative interactions.

Each of the classroom tropes did achieve the relational goals of RCT and Positive Psychology, and each of them did fail those goals in some ways. To begin, the campfire discussion circle was very effective in creating positive relationships between all members while simultane-

ously providing opportunities for individual development, but it was not an egalitarian relationship. One thing I noticed as I transcribed the campfire discussion circle is that I talked too much in those circles. My intention was for members including me to participate in something that was more like a collaborative sharing of experiences rather than a lecture. However, when I review my speaking turns, which were extremely long in comparison to the other members, it is clear to me that the campfire discussion circle probably felt like a lecture to other members at times. Of course, my own experience of it as the person who got to do most of the talking was generally positive as the following excerpt shows:

*This is excerpt is from my reflections on the campfire discussion circle after the first class meeting.*

...the idea of the impact stories was really helpful and went extremely well in the first class. In fact, the first group is very articulate compared to the second group. I worked hard on reflecting what learners said because I want them to feel heard, and I really want to understand. One thing that surprised me a lot was how many of them selected coming up with ideas or brainstorming as the most difficult part of a writing project for them.  
(My Reflective Journal, August 25, 2011)

On the other hand, there were moments when my experience was not quite so positive like the following:

*This is excerpt is from my reflections on the campfire discussion circle*

I was annoyed today when I asked Class A what was coming up for them, and Ahmed said they needed more feedback. I was annoyed because I gave feedback on Paragraph 1 in 24 hours, and most had asked for extra revision time for Paragraph 3, so I didn't give feedback on it. (My Reflective Journal, September 28, 2011)

In retrospect, Ahmed was orienting to an egalitarian interaction style. I had asked them what was coming up for them in their writing, meaning what needs were they noticing, and his request for feedback was completely in line with my question. However, instead of receiving his question with an equal orientation to an egalitarian interaction style, I clearly felt and responded from an orientation to a hierarchical interaction style. Therefore, I feel that one of my limitations in the campfire discussion circle is that I led it in a teacher-centered way.

The public writing forum was also very effective in creating positive relationships and providing opportunities for individual development, but in my opinion, it was under-utilized. I did use the LMS often and create a public writing forum by using it, but my own lack of experience with the LMS and my own understanding of just how effective it could be as practice for building relationships was limited. For example, I utilized the LMS to create a public writing forum when we went over the step on writing topic sentences, and it worked extremely well from both a pedagogical and a relational standpoint. However, I only used it with one other step, which I feel in hindsight was a huge missed opportunity. Since I taught this particular course, I have refined my use of the LMS and now every step is followed by a public writing forum on the LMS, and because there is more public writing available, in my current classes, I am able to say things like, “X and Y both submitted really good examples of brainstorming, so if you don’t understand my feedback on your brainstorming, please look at what they did in their postings.” In other words, I am much more intentional about my use of the LMS to create relationships now than I was in the course I taught for this study. This is probably due to my own emerging awareness of the utility of the LMS captured in the following excerpt:

*This was part of my last entry in Teacher Reflexive Journal after the course had ended.*

The use of LMS was incredibly helpful for establishing outside-of-class lines of communication between teacher-learners and learner-learners. I think seeing multiple classmates' work was motivating and clarifying for many learners. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, October 12)

Unfortunately for the learners in that class, I did not fully grasp the relational potential of the LMS until the course had ended.

Just as the campfire discussion circle and the public writing forum were effective in creating positive relationships and providing opportunities for individual development, the parts-before-whole instructional approach was also extremely effective. However, I did not manage the overall implementation of the steps or the implementation of specific steps as empathetically as I might have considering the feedback I was receiving. To explain, my implementation of the parts-before-whole instructional approach included learners' composing written texts but not composing full paragraphs until we had actually finished going over the steps. For example, when we did the step related to topic sentences, I asked learners to produce just topic sentences. Likewise, for other steps, learners composed parts of paragraphs rather than whole paragraphs often by having some parts of the paragraph provided by me. For instance, I might give them several entire paragraphs and ask them to simply produce concluding statements for each one based on the contents of the paragraphs.

For some learners, this approach created anxiety. They worried that their ability to compose a whole artifact would not be practiced enough. Often, they expressed these worries to me in the interviews I had with them as suggestions for the course as in the following excerpts:

Me:            Okay, alright, and how are you feeling about your academic writing right now? How do you feel about it?

Min A: Actually, in last session, we have a lot of writing, writing, writing essay, but actually this time just one writing, so I'm I'm worried about it because I think we have to write and then you have to you edit something like that and you advise me, so I learned about because doing something by doing something, but yeah actually it is it was so good you taught me, but I think by doing is more I learned about I think, yeah (Interview 1, Min A & Ye Jin)

Me: Right, yeah, so do you have any suggestions for the class?

Jieun: Mmm, uhm, I I want to write more and more, but [Jieun laughs] I, I'm not confidence in that, but I want to write more and more to learn about expression what American use to (Interview 1 Jieun)

In fact, the following excerpt from my own reflexive journal indicates that I shared their concerns:

Today, I was feeling the need to push and rush through some lessons because I haven't actually asked them to do a "long" writing assignment other than the diagnostic yet. In comparison to previous sessions in which I've followed a similar breakdown of topics, we are "behind". However, in comparison to other sessions, these learners may understand things better or strategies better. For example, I did give more explicit instruction and practice on brainstorming this time, so this does affect the schedule. I also am introducing thinking about the concluding statement as part of the planning process, which also adds difficulty to the steps I'm teaching. All of this to say that I told myself to relax. The learners are not as far as I can tell finding all of this easy, nor are they able to do all

of this without assistance, so it does matter to give them time to process and proceed.

(Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 15)

As my journal illustrates, I did have some empathy for myself and provide some positive self-coaching for my own concerns (“I told myself to relax”), but admittedly, I did not address the learners’ concerns in a similar fashion. Instead, I basically remained silent on the topic of their anxiety and provided logical teacher-knows-best types of explanations for why we were following the steps even though I shared their concerns as is noted in the following excerpt:

*This excerpt is from Teacher Reflexive Journal*

I have tried to share more openly with students why I am having them focus on these “detailed” aspects of the paragraph, and certainly at the level of planning a paragraph, it is clear to me that most struggle with coherence (i.e., a common mistake has been not selecting “different” supporting points). Still, I’m feeling uncomfortable with the lack of “product” (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 20)

My logic versus feeling approach to their anxiety reflected again a hierarchical orientation to relationships in which I, as the teacher, knew best and undoubtedly minimized their feelings, which is not an indication of mutual empathy. Thus, I missed the opportunity to connect empathetically with these learners in particular, and we all missed whatever the positive results might have been of such a connection.

### **4.3 *Obstacles to the Practice of Theory: Question 2***

Resistance, in the form of subtle or not-so-subtle tension, between newcomers and full members is a common and predictable feature of any CoP (Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Full members subconsciously and consciously know that the future survival of their CoP depends upon them allowing some newcomers to become full members, which means not only al-



lowing them access to practices, perceptions, and artifacts of the CoP but also allowing newcomers to exercise some influence on the CoP through their constructive naiveté (Lave & Wenger, 1991). For example, newcomers' misinterpretations of practices must sometimes be granted legitimacy as they may represent improvements on the CoP's current practices (i.e., newcomers' mistakes can become discoveries).

In a classroom CoP, resistance is also common and predictable. It is also complicated by the hierarchical power structure that is pre-ordained for the classroom CoP, and it is complicated by the fact that the classroom CoP's goal is not to reproduce itself but to produce legitimate newcomers for a related target real-world CoP. Inherent in all of this complication is members' awareness that any particular classroom CoP is a time-limited arrangement. The CoP may last eight weeks or one semester, but it will not continue for any of the members in perpetuity. Thus, resistance in classroom CoPs is not just the organic kind linked to the process of LPP wherein full members resist replacement. It also includes members resisting power structures beyond the CoP like formal education as one of society's controlling systems (Foucault, 1975) or resisting the idea that school has real effects on the world like perpetuating racialized identities (Lave, 1996).

In an academic writing classroom CoP that is expressly focused on international learners who wish to gain admission to U.S. universities, culture may also play a role in resistance. The confluence of cultures in such a situation adds complications. For example, the person filling the role of teacher represents a culture (or many cultures as some might argue). The teacher represents the culture of education and perhaps a specific school. The people filling the roles of learners in this case represent multiple cultures. The learners in this case represent multiple cultures of teaching and learning. The topic of the course, Anglo-American academic writing, rep-

resents yet another culture. Thus, in a classroom CoP such as the one I participated in for this study, resistance or obstacles were a potential for a number of reasons. However, in general, I would say that I did not feel that I encountered unusual obstacles or extreme resistance.

In this section, I will discuss the primary obstacles that I faced internally and externally. Before I discuss these obstacles, I would like to comment on why I have included a research question that addresses obstacles. Kumaradivelu (2006) maintains that critical pedagogy as it is currently practiced in ESL settings lacks attainable goals and actionable plans. As I consider myself to be practitioner of critical pedagogy, one of my goals for this study is to illustrate for myself and hopefully others that theories associated with social justice can become practice without sacrificing the pedagogical goals of the teacher, the learners, or the school. However, I am sensitive to the fact that real classrooms have real factors to consider that theories cannot account for, and I understand that teachers want to know and should know the obstacles they may face.

Understanding what the obstacles may be provides teachers with information that they can use to reject a particular theory, but it also provides teachers with information that they can use to creatively plan for anticipated obstacles as they enact a theory. Knowing both the potentially positive outcomes and the challenges for what lies ahead can be motivational, and certainly, it counters the feeling that one is alone in the journey. I intend for my journey to be useful and inspirational not because my one way is best or right but because I think education needs to change, I think critical pedagogy that is based on the principles of social justice is crucial to that change, and I want any potential critical pedagogues who come into contact with the journey chronicled here to know that I am with them in the complexity that is the journey including the obstacles.

*4.3.1 Internal obstacles to the practice of theory.* For me, internal obstacles like negative feelings or doubt were present throughout this study. In fact, I would say that I began the study with doubts and I proceeded through the study with doubts as the following excerpts reveal.

*This excerpt is from reflections I wrote the day before the class began*

What does a critical pedagogue do on the first day of class and why do they do it? The kind of class I want is based on authenticity and mutuality—how does that happen? I’ve tried negotiating the syllabus before and that was largely unsuccessful, so what other moves make a community form? What other moves define a strength-based approach from the beginning? (Teacher Reflexive Journal, August 23)

*This excerpt is from reflections I wrote almost one month later*

I feel like I haven’t been consciously thinking about RCT and strength-based ideas enough, so now I’m wondering if I’ve gone off-track somewhere. For example, I did not “assess” what they knew about illustrations before we began even though I did that before we began topic sentences, and it really helped. (I also didn’t do it before supporting points come to think of it.) (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 20)

I worried throughout the study that I was not being kind enough or praising learners enough, and a noticeable result of this preoccupation was that I found teaching with an emphasis on relationship building to be very tiring as I noted immediately after the first day of trying out the practice of theory in the following excerpt:

My main thought or feeling about the first writing class was, “Wow! Being a strength-based teacher is exhausting.” I noticed that when I went to the Reading class, where I didn’t necessarily use that approach, I also felt a lot of internal dissonance because I felt like I was doing something “wrong” (Teacher Reflexive Journal, August 25).

I also found being a teacher committed to producing a project for critical pedagogy difficult and tiring as the following excerpt shows:

I'm also finding keeping up with the record keeping for this project laborious. It's hard to write up the lesson plan every day and download the recording and journal and so on—all while wondering if I'm using RCT and strength-based ideas enough or correctly (September 20)

I also struggled with internal expectations that I believe were related to my culturally internalized beliefs about what teachers should do and how they do it. For example, there are repeated references in my journal regarding my concerns about pacing and how doing things the way that I was doing them (i.e., RCT and Positive Psychology) was slowing me down.

*This excerpt is from my early concerns for pacing*

I did feel as I went into class today a bit anxious about pacing—like I needed to rush through evaluating the e-mails, but I resisted because I do think that part of mutuality is respecting the “pace” of other members. I think I need to continue researching strength-based approaches and integrating that knowledge into my own working knowledge-base as well as looking at examples of what people do to be strength-based (August 30).

*This excerpt is from my later concerns for pacing*

My concern since we began the research paper has been time. I've been preoccupied with accomplishing the task at a reasonable pace for the learners while still being able to “finish” the task. I'm not certain that my approach to the research paper has been so strength-based although I did try to create strengths for it by focusing on the research paragraph throughout the session (October 10).

Interestingly, I have often privately critiqued other teachers for what seemed to me to be an excessive focus on pacing especially when they used it to reject a new idea for teaching, yet I found that I had the exact same resistance to my own new ideas in this case.

In addition to what was clearly my culturally-influenced (i.e., U.S. educational culture) preoccupations with pacing, I also encountered an internal resistance or obstacle with regard to uncertainty. At different points in this study, I felt uncertain about how to proceed based on my understandings of RCT and Positive Psychology, and my cultural beliefs about how teachers should act in classrooms seemed to be the source of my discomfort. The following example illustrates my fish-out-of-water feeling with regard to how the practice I was implementing compared to my internal expectations:

I feel particular discomfort right now because I'm not even sure how to prepare for my next class. Allowing the "lesson" unfold without any real concept of how that will happen feels irresponsible. As a teacher, I've always taken great pride in being able to anticipate questions and problems accurately and use my anticipations to "frame" lessons. With the illustrations activity, I'm really not able to anticipate or frame. Their strengths and needs could go in many directions, and I'm feeling under-prepared walking into tomorrow's class. Yet, of course, the process of allowing them to select will reveal what they know or think just as letting them select supporting points reveals what they know or think. I feel like I'm following their lead instead of them following mine, which is more than a little unusual for me (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 20)

Thus, doubts, fatigue, and internalized cultural expectations about the role and duties of teachers presented some internal obstacles for me as I did this study. None of these obstacles were sufficient enough to cause me to abandon the path that I had chosen, but I was also con-

ducting a research project not just teaching a class. If I had simply been teaching a class, would the obstacles have been as great or would I simply have been less exacting on myself in terms of my practice of theory? If I had simply been teaching a class, would I have stuck to my practice and worked through it or would I have abandoned it for practices that were more comfortable and familiar? These are very real questions to consider, and I honestly cannot say that I know the answer for what I would have done then. However, knowing what I know now after having done this study, I would definitely stick with the practice, discuss my feelings about it with a community of practitioners including my learners, and look for ways to honor my feelings while continuing the practice.

*4.3.2 External obstacles to the practice of theory.* When implementing new ideas in educational settings, particularly ideas that may affect the learning outcomes or curriculum, there are a number of obstacles that teachers may face. One of the primary obstacles noted immediately by most teachers is the institutional obstacle. The institutional obstacle includes things like the school leadership, the departmental curriculum, and other teachers. In my case, I was fortunate that these were not obstacles for me, but I do want to recognize that they could have been. I had my director's support, I was relatively free to pursue the curriculum I wished so long as it met the primary goal of preparing learners to produce acceptable texts at a university level, and I was free to develop and select the materials I deemed appropriate. I am grateful that I did not experience external obstacles in these areas.

In classrooms, learners are also a source of obstacles or resistance, and I did have learners, so I did experience resistance from them. From the beginning of the course, I wanted to practice mutual empathy, yet, also from the beginning of the course, some of the learners and I were on different pages in terms of goals. For me, the course was about becoming an academic

writer that could thrive in the real world (i.e., the U.S. university) of Anglo-American academic writers. Thus, I pre-selected a focus on texts like e-mails in the U.S. university context, the academic research paragraph, and the analytical research paper. However, for some learners, the goal of actually getting into the university by achieving a higher TOEFL score was much more compelling. This mismatch of goals was something that was brought to my attention early and something that I had to carefully consider as the following field note illustrates:

*On the first day of class, each learner discussed how they had accomplished a challenging assignment in English. In the course of their descriptions, many identified the TOEFL essay or timed writing as their challenging assignment and expressed some desire to work on improving it in our class. I explained that the TOEFL was a one-time writing event and that they needed to also consider writing beyond the TOEFL.*

Hope that explaining the “artificialness” of TOEFL and why we won’t be practicing it specifically is useful for adjusting expectations. Ques for me: If it is their preoccupation, should it be mine, or can a CP [Critical Pedagogy] teacher use their expertise to assess the worthiness of preoccupations? (Field Notes, August 23)

Their preoccupation with TOEFL continued throughout the course, and in my opinion, created unnecessary confusion for them. For example, their comments frequently made it clear that they were comparing the information I gave them about writing an academic research paragraph to things they had learned about writing the TOEFL, and these comparisons did not improve their understanding of writing academic research paragraphs (e.g., in previous data, I have mentioned their confusions about thesis statements versus topic sentences).

Having different goals can create a relational disconnection, and I do think that in some cases learners resisted development because they felt like their goals were not being addressed.

The following excerpt illustrates one learner's point of view about the course and her goals:

Me: Okay, alright, okay. Now, we're gonna think about all of your English writing teachers that you've ever had in Korea or here [mhm] okay and I want you to think about who was your favorite English writing teacher, you don't have to tell me who, why was this person your favorite, what did they do that made them your favorite?

Jieun: In here?

Me: Wherever in all of your experience

Jieun: Uhm, maybe someone uh teach me if someone teach me how to write uh I don't know, mmm, I think I am different from the other student, so if if I wanted to be a university student in U.S. mmm, my favorite teacher would be the teacher how to write academic writing, but I don't want to be university student, so I think the favorite teacher would be the teacher teaching me business letter or business document, how to write business letter or business document, that's that would be my favorite teacher, yeah

Me: Okay, alright, so in your experience of studying English, have you had many writing teachers [no] no, okay, so it's not something you've studied over and over again [mhm, yeah] okay, alright, uhm, alright, that makes sense, so let's change then to if you're talking to a friend, in Korean, and you say, "Oh, I'm taking 700 writing," and they say, "Oh, what are you learning in 700 writing?" What would you say?



- Jieun: 700 I learned about how to write academic paragraph that's
- Me: Okay, alright, how are you feeling about your writing right now?
- Jieun: Mmm, I was very confused or confused how to write academic writing, but now I have I mmm, I learned about how to make beam, I think beam is very important to write something. Now, I learned about how to build beam and how to add illustrations, so that's good for me if I want to be a university student [Jieun laughs] (Interview 1, Jieun)

Jieun's comment, "...so that's good for me if I want to be a university student," clearly indicates that the course is not aligned with her goals, and I think is indicative of a relational stance of opposition. To be fair, Jieun never behaved in any oppositional ways, but she was significantly less engaged in the class than others.

Another important external obstacle to my practice of theory was learners' self-contradicting expectations about how writing was best taught and learned. For example, most learners were highly appreciative of the parts-before-whole approach and clearly felt that it metaphorically spoke to their needs, but several learners still retained the view that the only way to improve their writing was to write more even if what they were writing did not make sense to them. I will use the case of one particular student to illustrate what I mean. Min A claimed in Interview 1 that she wanted to learn how to organize, and she did not want for her teacher to just edit her texts as the following illustrates:

- Min A: Actually the organization is the most difficult to me, so I have to know how to organize in steps, so I want to learn how to organize it all of it like this, this, this, but actually in 600, it's good, but she always editing my essay, "You have to write essay, and I'll edit," like that, so I don't know

how to write well, but just edit, “Oh, okay, oh yeah, I got it, I got it,” but next time I will, “Oh, I can’t, I don’t know, how do I,” and that repeat repeat difficult something like that, so I wanna I wanna know how to organize well, then the steps kind of (Interview 1, Min A & Ye Jin)

Then, she suggested also in Interview 1, that we should be writing more, but she simultaneously claimed that she was learning from what we were doing excerpt shows:

Min A:           Actually, in last session, we have a lot of writing, writing, writing essay, but actually this time just one writing, so I’m I’m worried about it because I I think we have to write and then you have to you edit something like that and you advise me, so I learned about because doing something by doing something, but yeah actually it is it was so good you teached me, but I think by doing is more I learned about I think, yeah (Interview 1 Min A & Ye Jin)

In, Interview 2, she continues to claim that she was learning through what we were doing as follows:

Min A:           Actually, improve I think improve the research paper yeah, this is because we have to write research paper on xxx so I have to find something yeah to xxx to organize it, so that kind of process helps me to improve (Interview 2, Min A)

And, in Interview 3, she returns to her claim that we should have written more and that I should even have given more homework as follows:

Min A:           Uh, other class? [Like that that class that you took with Lauren, what could, if you could change something about the class] mmm [what would

you change to make it better for you?] Yeah, practice I think. Practice because uh when we learned, then I think after class we forgot something like, so we have to remind all day something, so she, I think a lot of homework is good because yeah a lot of homework is hard for us but I think it's helpful because we heard but, "Oh yeah, I know, ah, yeah, yeah I remember like that," so I think that practice and a lot of homework something is helpful to student I think (Interview 3, Min A)

The ironic thing in all of this is that Min A did not even turn in all of the writing assignments she was given (i.e., learners were asked to do 7 complete academic research paragraphs after we completed the shorter writing assignments given after each step in addition to a research paper), and she had to be reminded to turn in several of them late.

Adult learners, especially adult ESL learners wanting to attend a U.S. university, tend to be relatively highly motivated. High motivation is often linked with the presence of goals, so it is reasonable to expect in a classroom CoP such as mine in an IEP that learners' goals may be an obstacle to relationship building if their goals and their feelings about their goals are not acknowledged in some way. It is also reasonable to assume in a classroom CoP such as mine that learners have studied writing before, and their experiences have influenced their expectations of future writing teachers and classes. Again, as with goals, if learners' expectations are not explored and addressed in some way that empathetically recognizes and affirms their existence, those expectations may become an obstacle. I was aware of these obstacles as I taught the course, and I did feel challenged by these obstacles. I do not think the presence of these obstacles was a sign that the practice of theory I was enacting was inappropriate in any way. In fact, long experience shows me that these obstacles are fairly consistent no matter what practices a

teacher chooses. Thus, I would say that overall, my biggest obstacles to enacting my practice of theory was truly myself, which is not exactly what I would have predicted prior to doing this study.

#### **4.4 Implications**

In general, my feelings after teaching the course and my feelings now are that establishing an orientation to interactions in my classroom CoP that reflected the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology was possible and was successfully achieved albeit with some limitations. Although there were internal and external obstacles, none of them were insurmountable. The relationship building fostered by classroom tropes that reflected and promoted the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology was rewarding for learners and for me. In fact, in my final journal entry, I commented on my overall satisfaction with the results of my development of an orientation to interactions that focused on building healthy relationships:

And, importantly, I feel like a sense of good will was maintained throughout the courses that is reflected in how the learners interact with me and each other. I enjoyed teaching these courses. I enjoyed the challenge of handling things in a new way, and most of all, I enjoyed interviewing the learners. For me, the rapport that was established in the beginning and maintained throughout was very gratifying. I feel like learners that normally might have had attendance problems or not done the work tried very hard to complete the course. I feel like learners felt personally seen and heard in many ways (Teacher Reflexive Journal, October 12).

I feel that this study has several implications for teachers of all kinds and for ESL writing teachers more specifically. For all teachers, I think this study shows that learners do yearn for relationships in classrooms, and teachers can use their power in classrooms to build healthy rela-

tionships that address more than just the teacher-learner relationship. I think it also demonstrates that practicing mutual empathy or a relational-contextual (Hartling, 2008) perspective increases feelings of trust and good will between members of a CoP, and these feelings improve everyone's experience of the class. In addition, I think this study illustrates that individual development can occur in the absence of individualistic practices. Thus, for all teachers, I would suggest the following based on this study: expand concepts of which relationships matter in classrooms and seek ways to create more opportunities for relationship; participate as a person not as a teacher role in interactions with learners, and offer learners the same sort of compassionate interpretations of experiences that are usually reserved for friends; and focus on individual development however it can be achieved rather than individualism.

For ESL writing teachers, I think this study underscores the fact that learners need to not only experience mutual empowerment but enact it as well. Our ESL academic writing learners are not leaving our classrooms for kinder, gentler classrooms. Instead, they will likely encounter teachers and learners that are unfamiliar with their struggles and perhaps unwilling to accommodate their linguistic or cultural challenges. Therefore, our learners need to practice in the safety of our classrooms taking action for themselves and others (Covington & Surrey, 2000) so that they will be able to do it successfully and comfortably in less safe contexts.

This study also demonstrates the importance and utility of deliberately networking our ESL learners. They are truly a resource for another even when the texts they produce are not exactly like our own. In fact, the *messiness* of their novice texts can actually help other novices to understand that writing is messy in the sense that there always many appropriate ways to do the same thing. Therefore, ESL writing teachers should move beyond notions of one-to-one peer

editing and instead consider how learners can share their texts as resources for strengths development.

Finally, this study highlights the fact that teacher self-development for ESL academic writing teachers is crucial for maintaining and improving their ability to truly provide their learners with relational competence for the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers. ESL academic writing teachers must maintain their membership in the real-world CoP of academic writers, and they must allow themselves to be constantly affected by their membership in that CoP as well as their membership in their classroom CoP. In other words, ESL academic writing teachers need to seek and create opportunities to produce their own academic writing for academic audiences. They need to stay current with what the typical practices of academic writing are in universities, and they need to actually write in accordance with those practices. Tools, practices, and artifacts change, and ESL writing teachers must be always seeking to understand the hidden processes of their own writing and their learners' writing in order to improve learners' artifact competence.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, this study is a result of my own awareness that what I believe about how learning happens and how I should teach are not always reflected in what I do. With this study, particularly with my first and second research questions, I wanted to investigate my own ability to resolve my own theory-practice divide. I began the study hopeful and determined but uncertain. Despite my desire to resolve my theory-practice divide, I did not want to discover that either my theory or my practice were not as they should be, yet the very act of participating in this study basically suggested that they could be improved, and they were. I now have a practice-inspired theoretical framework for how I think about teaching and learning

as well as a theory-inspired pragmatic framework for what I do when I am teaching and learning. Perhaps, the most important change of all is related to my notion and use of the term pedagogical goal, which I have used several times in this chapter. Before this study, I maintained a clear distinction between pedagogical goals as goals that led to relational competence in the real-world CoP and relational goals as goals that led to more positive relationships. I now realize that relational goals are and should be a pedagogical goal because learning emerges from relationship.

## 5 PRACTICE TO THEORY: RESEARCH QUESTIONS 3 & 4

As I discussed in Chapter Four, the aims of critical and feminist pedagogy include notions of collectivism and inclusiveness. In this study, I intentionally sought to develop an orientation to interactions that fostered the growth of healthy relationships, and in so doing, I focused on an aspect of interaction and learning that is often marginalized in classrooms and research—feelings.

Feelings in classrooms and research are, in my opinion, somewhat similar to the concept of an invisible minority. Invisible minorities are often readily acknowledged in abstract conversations (e.g., “Yes, of course, there are many gay people in the world”), but routinely ignored in everyday contexts (e.g., “Oh, you’re married! What does your husband/wife do?”). Feelings, like invisible minorities, are commonly acknowledged as existing and even being powerful in classrooms and research on teaching and learning, but they are relatively ignored in the everyday contexts of classrooms and research.

In this study, I chose to develop an orientation to interactions that fostered the growth of healthy relationships precisely because I believed that this type of orientation would result in positive feelings and that these positive feelings would have a positive impact on learners’ academic writing knowledge and skills. Thus, in this study, I am interested in feelings’ outcomes, and I privilege the feeling aspect of teaching and learning academic writing by making it a primary rather than a secondary or lesser goal of the classroom experience. My research questions related to feelings are as follows:

3. How will the use of an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on



strengths) affect ESL learners' feelings about Anglo-American academic writing in general?

4. How will the use of an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology affect ESL learners' feelings about their own abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing successfully?

In this chapter, I will discuss the invisible minority status of feelings in the teaching and learning of second or foreign language as well as the teaching and learning of academic writing. I will explain how feelings fit into the conceptual framework of this study, and I will describe the feeling outcomes that are associated with the theories selected for the pragmatic framework of this study. I will present and analyze learner data that addresses each research question. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of this study and offer pedagogical implications.

### ***5.1 Invisible Minority Status of Feelings***

Feelings in second or foreign language learning contexts academic writing learning contexts are clearly omnipresent. In fact, I doubt that there is any researcher, teacher, or learner in these areas that would disagree with the idea that feelings are present and influential. Nonetheless, the literature about teaching and learning in these same areas does not offer a great deal of insight on how much influence feelings might have or how teachers and learners might acknowledge and address the presence and influence of feelings. The extreme contradiction between the important role that feelings play in everyday life and the relatively little attention that feelings receive in the everyday contexts of teaching and learning second or foreign language and academic writing is really quite puzzling from both an intuitive and an analytical perspective.

*5.1.1 Feelings as an invisible minority in second and foreign language learning.* To be fair, feelings are definitely acknowledged both in the literature on the teaching and learning of second and foreign languages as well as the teacher training of most ESL teachers in university programs. The legacy of Krashen's (1981) *affective filter hypothesis* basically ensured that researchers and educators in second or foreign language teaching and learning would understand that this invisible minority exists and has significant influence on learners. Despite this widespread understanding of the presence and importance of feelings, affect (i.e., emotions) in second and foreign language teaching and learning is considered a topic that has received little attention. To wit, post-Krashen enthusiasm resulted in some research on emotion (e.g. Arnold, 1999), but eleven years later, researchers like Brown and White (2010) are still commenting on how understudied the topic of affect is in language learning.

To be sure, research on language attitudes or language beliefs have contributed to helping second and foreign language educators to understand the usually pre-formed complexity of dispositions that learners bring to the classroom and the topic, but it says little about how the feelings engendered by classroom interactions actually impact learners. One notable exception is Garrett and Young (2009) who conducted a study of a foreign language learner's affective experience using narrative method and grounded theory.

In Garrett and Young's (2009) study, the learner was actually one of the researchers who was enrolled in an intensive 8-week Portuguese as a foreign language course. In developing categories for the learner's affective responses, they realized that the majority of her affective comments were related to social relations in the classroom. She reported feeling uncomfortable, competitive, threatened, insecure, and anxious in her relationships with others during the first four weeks of the course. Around the fifth week, she reported feeling more comfortable, and she be-

gan to use “we” instead of “I” in her affective responses. By the end of the course, she reported feelings of interdependence. One of the major realizations of the learner-researcher in this study was that her emotions were not only or even primarily affected by the teacher. Rather, her relationships with other learners had a strong impact on her emotional state.

Another study that looks at foreign language learners’ affective experience is Brown and White (2010). The researchers collected and analyzed the emotional reactions of three learners enrolled in an individualized program for Russian as a foreign language course. They found that two of the learners, Janice and Natasha, experienced so many negative emotions like disappointment, frustration, lack of enjoyment, and frustration that they left the individualized program which offered one-to-one meetings with instructors for the regular classroom program. The other learner, John, experienced frustration at times but generally felt confident and good about his progress. Brown and White (2010) credit the difference between the learners to their capacities for emotional self-regulation. John had and used strategies to cope with his negative emotions that allowed him to successfully finish the individualized program, whereas the other learners were not able to self-regulate their emotions.

In both of the aforementioned studies, feelings were experienced by learners, and the learners’ experience of those feelings was perceived by them as impacting their development in the language. Importantly, in both studies the learners reported that interacting with other learners produced positive feelings that benefited their language development. For example, the learner-researcher in Garrett and Young (2010) reported feeling more comfortable the more she started to bond with another group of learners, and she said that being able to work with others improved her performance on a quiz and made her feel more successful. Likewise, in Brown and White (2010), John enjoyed the group conversation settings that were part of his individualized

Russian program because he could be more “at ease”, “joke around”, and not be worried. Janice, who left the individualized Russian program, waited nine months for a classroom version of Russian to be offered, and found that her experience in the classroom made her feel confident again. Thus, for the learners, feelings experienced through relationships were important mediators of their informational learning experience.

*5.1.2 Feelings as an invisible minority in academic writing instruction.* In English-as-a-native language composition research, feelings are perhaps even more ignored than they are in second and foreign language research. In the 1980s, there were a few researchers who discussed the role of emotions in writing (e.g., Elbow, 1987; Brand, 1987; McLeod, 1987; McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985). However, most of their discussions focused on the relationship of emotions to writing rather than the influence that interactions in classrooms might have on creating emotions that influenced writing. Instead, their concerns were more for things like teachers guiding learners in becoming aware of their emotions when writing (Brand, 1987) or for teachers to assist learners in developing coping strategies for their emotions when writing (McCleod, 1987). In some research, it was suggested that teachers’ interactions with learners might play a role in creating emotional blocks to writing (Rose, 1980) or removing emotional blocks to writing (Oliver, 1982).

However, even with regard to the topic of writer’s block, which is generally considered to be an emotional state, there is very little interest in acknowledging feelings or their impact in the literature on academic writing instruction. In fact, some academic writing experts like Silvia (2007) go so far as to claim that, “Academic writers cannot get writer’s block” (pp. 45-46) because it is not a feeling or emotion but simply “...the behavior of not writing.” Thus, the primary feeling that anyone who has ever written academically or otherwise would own and discuss is

summarily dismissed as not existing. This dismissal is very strange considering that Silvia (2007) makes this claim in a book that is written for academic psychologists who would presumably be interested in feelings.

The presence of feelings and their impact on writing and writing instruction cannot be so easily dismissed, and fortunately there are a few researchers who have addressed this issue. Bane (2010) links emotions to cognitive functions. She explains that stress or threats shifts brain control from the cerebral cortex to the limbic system (i.e. fight or flight system). When this shift happens, people cannot think critically and creatively in the ways that are necessary for writing. People are generally not aware that this shift has occurred, so they often blame their inability to write on a lack of will-power, character, or ability. However, their inability to write is truly the result of the limited reactions allowed by the limbic system, which are freeze (e.g. writer's block), fight (e.g., reject feedback), or flee (e.g., avoid writing with distractions). According to Bane (2010), teachers can play an important role in either causing feelings that produce the cognitive shift to the limbic system or providing information that assists learners in managing their feelings.

Cameron, Nairn, and Higgins (2009) also highlight the role that teachers could play in acknowledging feelings and their impact in the academic writing instruction of graduate learners. Because many aspects of expert research writing are hidden from novices (e.g., the emotions, the recursivity), they lack procedural knowledge of writing that could foster positive feelings. Instead, in their study, they found learners struggling with fear, anxiety, and insecurity, all of which were making it harder for them to write. Learners felt better when they discussed their feelings and realized that others had the same feelings. Thus, they advise teachers to invite emotions into their teaching and their discussions of writing rather than banishing them.

The invisible minority status of feelings in second or foreign language learning and academic writing instruction is truly an irony. In both cases, the researchers, the teachers, and the learners know that feelings matter and admit that their feelings affect their performance. Yet, the exact nature of the feelings, how they come to be, why they come to be, and how they might be influenced in a more positive direction is largely ignored. The critical and feminist pedagogical perspective adopted in this study will not ignore feelings, and it will not accept the idea that they have no value in considering ways to improve educational practices. Instead, in this study, I adopt the following perspective offered by Brand (1987):

Understanding the collaboration of emotion and cognition in writing is both fundamental and far-reaching. It is in cognition that ideas make sense. But it is in emotion that this sense finds value (p. 442).

## ***5.2 Feelings and the Conceptual Framework***

As I have previously discussed, this study had a theoretical conceptual framework of how learning occurs or might occur in the classroom that was based on the learning process described by LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991). By using LPP as a heuristic (Lea, 2002) or analytical viewpoint (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991), I identified a specific aspect of the learning process that could be an obstacle to learning. The obstacle that I identified based on LPP was communication between members of a CoP. More specifically, in a classroom CoP, I proposed that communication as a potential obstacle could impact the quantity, quality, and directionality of the information flow in CoP, which of course, would impact the pedagogical outcomes for learners. I theorized that communication could be improved by developing an orientation to interactions that was focused on building healthy growth-fostering relationships (Miller, 1976).

To develop my orientation to interactions, I utilized a pragmatic framework that integrated tenets of two theories used in counseling psychology, RCT (Miller, 1976) and Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). My pragmatic framework outlined the ideas that guided me in developing classroom practices. The classroom practices that I developed were designed to reflect and promote the following tenets drawn from RCT and Positive Psychology: people yearn to connect vis-à-vis relationships (Miller & Stiver, 1997); people feel connected when they experience mutual empathy (Miller, 1976); feelings of connection result in mutual empowerment (Miller & Stiver, 1997); individualization (Gallup, 2003; Levitz & Noel, 2000); deliberate networking in the application of strengths (Bowers, 2009; Rath, 2007; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005); and intentional development of strengths (Louis, 2008). As I will explain in the following sections, feelings play a role in all of the theories - LPP, RCT, and Positive Psychology - that I used to create my conceptual framework.

*5.2.1 Feelings and LPP.* LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is a theory of situated learning that emphasizes the social process of learning. Learning occurs because a newcomer desires for the sake of growth or survival to understand and participate in a particular CoP situated in a specific context. However, newcomers' desire alone is not enough to achieve the goals of understanding and participation, their desire must be reciprocated to some extent by those who are already members of the CoP. There must be interaction between newcomers and members for LPP to function.

The purpose of this interaction from an educational perspective is an informational transaction. Members and newcomers interact so that both groups can share knowledge, skills, perceptions, and strategies that will eventually allow them to share a common ground of what constitutes membership in a CoP. The result of this interaction could be identity change toward

full-er membership or identity change away from full-er membership depending on the encounter. As Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss, members can create obstacles during these interactions, which means they can also remove obstacles during these interactions.

As I see it, informational transactions are complex interactions that involve more than just the simple giving and receiving of information. Information is seldom given or received without the simultaneous awakening and consequent transaction of emotions or feelings. Thus, the results of newcomers and members' interactions include feelings or emotions in addition to information, and it seems likely that these feelings or emotions are just as important as the information in determining if identity changes toward membership or away from membership.

It would seem that the awakening of negative feelings during an interaction would diminish the informational results of the exchange and potentially decrease newcomers' desire to pursue more interactions. For example, if I want to join a CoP of ballroom dancers and I am given a lesson by a member of this CoP but I am criticized for asking stupid questions, I will probably feel sad or angry, and either feeling may lead me to avoid interactions with that member or any other member of the CoP. Thus, I will lose the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, perceptions, and strategies that would make me more like members. It is also likely that during the lesson because of the member's attitude toward my questions, I become preoccupied with my feelings of sadness or anger, and I cease to participate in the interaction with any true desire to learn. Thus, although the informational transaction continues, I am no longer really participating in the informational exchange, and again, I lose the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, perceptions, and strategies that would make me more like members.

In fact, the concept of willingness to communicate which has been studied in both first language (McCroskey & Baer, 1985) and second language contexts (MacIntyre et. al., 1998),



suggests that social factors and feelings play an important role in determining if a learner, especially a second language learner, will use the target language. The model of variables affecting willingness to communicate developed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) is based on situations in which the L2 learner has a specific person with whom to communicate through speaking. The variables that affect the actual realization of the speaking behavior include desire and self-confidence. Desire is designed in a social sense as desire to affiliate with the specific person or desire to control or influence that person's behavior. Self-confidence is defined as self-perceptions of linguistic competence and absence of anxiety (Clément, 1980, 1986).

From the willingness to communicate model, it seems that it would be reasonable to surmise that if the specific person with whom the L2 learner wanted to communicate were replaced by a community of people like the members of a CoP, the other aspects of the model would remain the same. Learners or newcomers' willingness to communicate and thusly develop membership would be influenced by their desire to affiliate or control in social interactions with members of the CoP and their state of self-confidence. Therefore, their willingness to communicate would basically be mediated mostly through feelings, which of course, are not entirely influenced by social interactions (personality does play a role) but are strongly influenced by social interactions.

Therefore, the feelings and emotions communicated in and resulting from interactions in a CoP can be as much of an obstacle as a lack of clarity in expressing information. In an IEP classroom CoP focused on academic writing, this may be especially true for a number of reasons. First, an IEP classroom CoP is a second language classroom, which means that the learners are already emotionally vulnerable due to the fact that they are unable to express the complexity of their thoughts adequately. IEP learners may hold advanced degrees in their own countries, but in

an IEP course, their communication is limited to their linguistic proficiency in English. IEP learners' identities of competence are challenged by their English language abilities, and these identity challenges can be emotionally destabilizing.

Second, many IEP learners are international students which means that they are living and studying in a culture that is unfamiliar to them, and this lack of familiarity often provokes culture shock. For most, culture shock is a time when sensitivity and emotions are heightened due to feelings of vulnerability. During this time, learners' may be especially reactive emotionally because they feel anxious and afraid.

Third, in addition to living in a new culture, some IEP learners are also living independently of their families for the first time. In many countries, adults live with their families and/or share life maintenance responsibilities with family members until they marry, and in some countries, this is true even after marriage. Learners living independently for the first time in their life are often underprepared and overwhelmed by the experience. They may also feel very lonely.

Finally, an IEP classroom CoP focused on academic writing is not just a language classroom. The purpose of the academic writing course I taught is not to simply teach learners how to express their thoughts in a written form in English. The purpose is to provide them with relational competence for the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers. In other words, the purpose is to teach them how to think, perceive, and act like members of a very specialized culture.

This specialized culture revolves around a topic that is considered high-stakes or gate-keeping with regard to the university. The potential consequences of developing membership in this specialized culture carry important life-long advantages (e.g., career opportunities, earning

power, status), and many IEP learners in this study were well-aware of the role that academic writing plays in gaining university admission because of their experiences with taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and writing personal essays or statements for admission requirements. Because learners who are in the university or wish to be in the university perceive the potential consequences of developing membership as very valuable by, the topic of academic writing may make learners feel emotionally vulnerable. Obviously, from the literature reviewed on graduate writing, learners feel fearful, anxious, and isolated (Cameron, Nairn, & Higgins, 2009), which most would agree indicates that they are in an emotionally vulnerable state.

Given that communication between all participants in a CoP including newcomers is necessary for LPP and that willingness to communicate is highly influenced by feelings, it stands to reason that feelings are as much of a facilitating or hindering factor in developing membership in a CoP as the flow of information. In an IEP classroom CoP focused on academic writing, the learners may already be emotionally vulnerable due to identity and life experience factors as well as high value perceptions of the topic itself. This emotional vulnerability already predisposes them to feelings that could interfere with learning and willingness to communicate. If the role of feelings in the acquisition of relational competence is ignored, the desire to achieve it and feelings about one's ability to achieve it are likely diminished. If relational competence is not acquired in the classroom CoP, then it is likely that learners' legitimacy as newcomers in the real-world CoP will be compromised. Thus, feelings are an important aspect of the LPP process.

*5.2.2 Feelings and RCT.* RCT (Miller, 1976) is a relational model of counseling that is based on the mutual sharing of empathy between the counselor and the client. As would be expected from a model of counseling, feelings play a central role in the operation of this model. The difference between this model and more individualistic or traditional models is that in RCT,

the feelings of the counselor are actually included in the sharing. Both the counselor and the client are expected to have feelings and share them.

In the practice of RCT, mutual empathy results in the “five good things” (Miller, 1986, p.

- 3). These things are feelings, and they include the following:
  1. Each person feels a greater sense of zest (vitality, energy)
  2. Each person feels more able to act and does act in the world
  3. Each person has a more accurate picture of her/himself and the other person(s)
  4. Each person feels a greater sense of worth
  5. Each person feels more connected to other persons and exhibits a greater motivation to connect with other people beyond those in one’s primary relationships (Miller, 1986, p. 2).

From a RCT perspective, if mutual empathy is not practiced in relationships, then participants do not experience connection. Without feelings of connection, people experience feelings like lack of energy, inability to act constructively, confusion, diminished sense of worth, and desire to avoid relationships (Miller, 1990). Continuing feelings of disconnection lead to condemned isolation, a state in which individuals blame themselves and become increasingly isolated.

If willingness to communicate with participants in a CoP is influenced by feelings, clearly having the five good feelings would positively impact self-confidence and the desire to affiliate. The first three good feelings (zest; ability and willingness to act; realistic self- and other-view) would seem to indicate high feelings of competence and low feelings of anxiety which would indicate high self-confidence (Clément, 1980, 1986). The other two good feelings (sense

of self-worth and motivation to connect beyond one's immediate personal network) would seem to indicate a sense of legitimacy and a desire to interact which would indicate a desire to affiliate.

In an IEP classroom CoP focused on academic writing, feelings of zest could result in ongoing engagement with classroom activities. Ability to act and willingness to act could result in task completion and risk taking. A realistic view of one's self and others could result in decreased isolation and anxiety. A sense of self-worth could result in increased commitment to development. And, feelings of connection and motivation to connect could result in continued growth in the real-world CoP that the classroom CoP represented. The results of any of the feelings would most certainly improve the external and internal relationships that were discussed in Chapter 4.

*5.2.3 Feelings and Positive Psychology.* Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) is a model of individual development in which cooperative, collaborative relationships are the vehicle for individual development. In Positive Psychology, counselors focus on discovering and developing their own strengths as well as those of their clients. The primary idea behind strength-based counseling or education is helping all participants build a more positive present and future by focusing on what they can do rather than what they cannot do (Hewitt, 2005).

The beneficial emotional outcomes of strengths-based counseling or education include Miller's (1986) "five good things" (p. 3). In addition, other beneficial outcomes include the following: sense of peace and authenticity (Anderson, 2004); sense of focus, persistence, and autonomy (Lopez & Louis, 2009); resilience and optimism (Hewitt, 2005); and sense of ownership (Dixon & Tucker, 2008; Tagagau & Pettit, 2006).

In an IEP classroom CoP focused on academic writing, any and all of these feelings could potentially increase the amount of relational competence gained by learners. For example, a sense of peace could lead to less stress, which would allow learners to operate from the cerebral cortex rather than the limbic system. Persistence could lead learners to continue exerting effort even in the face of difficulty. Optimism could lead learners to provide positive support to themselves and others. A sense of ownership could lead learners to seek opportunities to expand or use their relational competence in new ways. Any of these results would lead to greater relational competence and greater chances of legitimacy in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers.

### ***5.3 Learners' Feelings about Anglo-American Academic Writing: Research Question 3***

In LPP, learning equates with change, specifically change in a direction that makes the learner more similar to or more aligned with how members of a CoP think, perceive, and act. In a classroom CoP focused on academic writing, this would mean that learning equates with among other things changes in learners' perceptions of the topic (i.e., academic writing) that bring the learners' perceptions to a position more similar to and aligned with the real-world member's (i.e., the teacher's) perceptions of the topic. In theory, the teacher is a full member representative of the real-world CoP that the classroom CoP represents, so the teacher's perceptions should be more or less the same as other full members. (Of course, as I have discussed, the teacher is not always a full member of the real-world CoP, which would certainly be a challenge to the appropriateness of the teacher's perceptions. However, I will address this argument in Chapter 6.)

In this study, I am proposing that changes in perceptions are closely connected to feelings. I am suggesting that positive feelings may allow perceptions to change and to change more

than they might have changed if there were negative or neutral feelings. In my study, I sought to develop an orientation to interactions that would build healthy internal and external relationships, believing that the processes that built these relationships and the existence of healthy relationships would engender positive feelings. I also theorized that these positive feelings would bring my learners' perceptions of Anglo-American academic writing into closer alignment with my own and that this alignment would potentially increase their legitimacy in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers. (It is important to note that I do consider myself a practicing full member of the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers.)

In order to begin addressing the question of how learners' feelings about Anglo-American writing changed in relation to the orientation to interactions that I intended to develop, I think it is important to first consider learners' perceptions of the topic at the beginning of the course. Learners' provided their original perceptions by filling out a general information form. Two of the questions on the form were, "What do you think academic writing is?" and "How is academic writing different from other types of writing? Learners in my IEP classroom CoP described their perceptions in the following manner:

*L1 Korean*

I think academic writing has more specific theme and gives research information.

Academic writing is very formal and can give accurate resources about information used in writing. (Soyoung)

Report or essay on which we express our opinion or report some information.

Academic writing has more strict rules than others. (Jieun)

Giving academic information and telling writer's opinion.

Other types of writing is talking about common sense, and they have no exact structure.

(Min A)

### *L1 Spanish*

It is to write in a higher level. In academic writing you should do research and paraphrase to avoid plagiarism. Maybe it has different structure and definitely has academic words not the common words that we use to talk. (Carolina)

I think academic writing is the way that American's culture writes formally.

No answer. (Frida)

Academic writing is a formal manner of writing that is normally used in educational institutions. When writing an academic paper, there are several aspects people should consider: structure of the paper, topic, vocabulary, purpose. By contrast, other types of writing many not have the same kind of characteristics and may not be related to academic subjects. (Rebeca)

### *L1 Arabic*

I think it is the method which students and faculties use to write in a formal way.

It is more formal with using academic vocabulary. (Ahmed)



Learners' perceptions reveal understandings related to content, style, structure, purpose, text type, and culture. However, with one exception, Rebeca, none of the learners commented on each of these features. For example, Soyoung and Carolina comment on the "research" content of academic writing, and Rebeca and Min A comment on the "academic" informational content of academic writing. All learners, with the exception of Min A, commented on the style of academic writing usually by stressing the "formal" nature of academic writing. Carolina, Rebeca, and Min A explicitly mention "structure" as a characteristic of academic writing. Jieun refers to the "strict rules," which I think could be taken to include style or structure. Jieun, Rebeca, and Min A mention the purpose of academic writing. Jieun's perception was that academic writing is a way for writers to "express our opinion or report some information," which is also Min A's perception. Rebeca simply mentioned that academic writing has a "purpose." Jieun and Rebeca believe that academic writing is related to text types. Jieun perceived it as a "report or essay," while Rebeca thought that it is a type of writing "normally used in educational institutions." Three learners—Jieun, Frida, and Rebeca— suggested that academic writing has some cultural expectations. Jieun commented on the "strict rules", Frida commented that "academic writing is the way that American's culture writes," and Rebeca situated academic writing in a specifically "educational" cultural setting. As an academic writing teacher, I found their initial perceptions more or less accurate and useful for their future development. I additionally found it interesting that although a few mentioned text types, each learner referred to academic writing essentially as a way of doing writing, rather than a product.

On the general information form that they completed at the beginning of the course, learners also answered questions related to their feelings about writing. Two of those questions were, "Do you like writing in English? If yes, what kinds of things do you like to write? If no,

why not?” and “In general, how do you feel about writing in English? Explain why you feel this way.” Soyoung, Carolina, and Rebeca said they did like to write in English, and the other learners all said they did not like to write in English. Soyoung, Jieun, and Ahmed all referred to feelings as the reason for their like or dislike. Soyoung described that her interest for English increases with writing, Jieun discussed how her confusion about the comprehensibility of her word choices decreases her enjoyment of writing, and Ahmed reported that his fear of mistakes while writing decreases his enjoyment.

Learners' general feelings about writing in English were as follows:

*Learners who said they “liked” writing in English*

Writing in English is very challengeable to me. Because I am very shy person, speaking is difficult to me. With writing, I can learn English more comfortable. (Soyoung)

I feel that I understand the structure and I can express my ideas clearly but my lack of vocabulary limit my writing. (Carolina)

Writing in English is so different from writing in my own language, so it was challenging for me when I started in Spring 1. However, I have had incredible teachers who have helped me to improve my skills in this subject. I started to love writing in English. Finally. (Rebeca)

*Learners who said they “did not like” writing in English*

I am always confused whether any expression in English I wrote is common or understandable to native speakers. (Jieun)

Writing in English makes me feel stressed because I have to think about, vocabulary idea and structure at the same time. (Frida)

I feel it difficult to write new essay. I have to think about topics, then pararise. That process makes me stressed. (Min A)

I feel that I'm improving my writing skills very well, but sometimes I feel frustrated when I want to express some things, but I forget the English meaning or spelling for some words. Also, because of my small mistakes in grammar. The most important is I spend long time to write and that make me nervous. (Ahmed)

Learners who like writing in English expressed feelings related to comfort, competence, and joy. Learners who did not like writing in English expressed feeling states like stress, a sense of being overwhelmed, frustration, and nervousness. Based on descriptions of brain functions (Bane, 2010) and the model of willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et. al., 1998), it would seem that the learners who are beginning with negative feelings may routinely experience a limbic system (fight or flight) response to writing in English, and this response may have been affecting their ability to change their perceptions and practices of academic writing.

Approximately four weeks after the course began, I asked the learners to complete a written mid-point reflection on the LMS. One of the questions I asked them was, "Has your understanding of writing in English changed since this course began? How has it changed? Try to provide some examples of changes. If it hasn't changed, why do you think it hasn't changed?"

All learners except Jieun, who was absent and never completed the mid-point reflection, replied that their understanding of writing in English had changed. Among the changes they noted, were changes in perceptions of how academic writing was accomplished (i.e., what internal and external processes are required) and satisfaction with their new understanding in comparison to their past understanding.

*Learners who “liked” writing in English at the beginning of the course*

After beginning this course, I have changed my understanding of "writing in English".

First of all, analysis of assignment is the first thing what I have to do and the most important step to achieve my task accurately. And then, writing topic sentence, brainstorming step, and constructing frame of my essay guide me to write my essay more comfortable. The book, "They say, I say", is very helpful to write academic writing because it provides several templates and explanation for beginners. (Soyoung)

Yes, my understanding of "writing in English" has changed since this course began because I have learned things that I didn't know before. For example, the organization is more clear now, the way of how do I need to write a topic sentence and the controlling ideas is kind a new for me. Also in this course we learned about express others ideas instead of only talk about ours. Everything has a clear structure now, you can notice and follow. In other courses this structure was not clear. (Carolina)

I think that my understanding of "writing in English" has changed since this course began in several ways. First, I feel more comfortable writing a simple but accurate topic sentence to start my writing. Second, I feel more oriented about coming up with ideas in an

organized brainstorming. In addition, since supporting points are really important in "writing in English", I think this class has provided me useful information to write adequate supporting points in my writing. For example, I did know supporting points were important in writing. However, this class has taught me how to correctly think about and write them. Finally, I also have learned from this class how to find the target or audience of my writing and therefore how to end my writing with information that would matter for that target or audience. (Rebeca)

*Learners who "disliked" writing in English at the beginning of the course*

Since I have begun this course, my understanding of writing in English has changed because I could catch the whole idea related to the structure of academic writing. It has changed as a result of good explanations provided. Many times, it is not easy when steps are not clearly explained. (Frida)

I have changed my understanding of "writing in English" since this course began.

At the first time, I didn't understand why we should write thesis statement and do brainstorming. Now I'm understanding why we have to write thesis statement because it contains the focus of my essay and tells the reader what the essay is going to be about. Also, brainstorming helps me think how to write an essay clearly. For example, I don't know how to write thesis statement, but I know that topic and controlling idea. (Min A)

Yes, I understand that writing in English changed since this course began. It changed from several aspects. First, understanding the question. Second, analysing the assign-

ment. For example, before this class I was write the answer directly without taking care of the requirements and all the purposes. Third, the way which I should to follow to write topic sentences and supporting idea. For instance, concentrating in both of them to be either general or spicific. The most important aspect is the concluding statement in each paragraph. I didn't hear about this before. I heard about the conclusion in the end of an essay but in each paragraph It was new for me! However, it was easy for me by using who? and why questions. (Ahmed)

As the teacher-researcher, in the learners' comments, I find it important to notice that many learners are expressing changes in the thinking aspect of writing (i.e., what happens before words are put on paper). For example, Soyoung, Rebeca, Min A, and Ahmed all explicitly refer to changes in pre-writing processes like "analyzing the assignment" or "brainstorming." Rebeca and Ahmed also both refer to the thinking aspect of writing that takes into consideration the idea of an audience for the writing. Rebeca shared that she had learned "how to find the target or audience" and how to conclude her writing "with information that would matter for that target or audience." Ahmed described the idea of concluding a paragraph was "new" for him, but that the strategy of using "who? And why questions" made it "easy" for him. Rebeca also commented on changes in relation to her understanding of "how to correctly think about and write" supporting points.

These changes in the thinking aspect of academic writing were important to me as a teacher-researcher, because I feel that the thinking aspect of academic writing was often the most occluded for learners. As Cameron, Nairn, and Higgins (2009) indicated, for graduate students the recursivity of research writing is often hidden, and students are not exposed to more expert

writer's draft work, only their finished products. For undergraduates and IEP learners, the thinking aspect may be even more occluded because their teachers may be practitioners of a very different type of academic writing than they expect their students to do, which means that they may simply be unaware of the thought demands of the writing tasks they assign. For example, I consider myself a practicing member of the CoP Anglo-American academic writers, but the genres I use as a practicing member are substantially different in terms of both the thinking and expressive aspects of writing than the writing I think undergraduate learners of Anglo-American academic writing are expected to do. Therefore, I see these learners' identification of changes in the thinking aspect of writing as indications of increasing understanding and alignment with member practices and perceptions.

Another aspect of these learners' responses that I find interesting were their comparisons between their current and their past understandings or perceptions. Their comparisons sometimes stated but often implied that their feelings have changed. For example, Carolina, who liked writing in English from the beginning, used the word "clear" three times and referenced a lack of clarity about structure in previous courses as a primary change for her. One possible implication is that Carolina is referring to change from the feeling state of confusion to the feeling state of clarity or confidence or competence. Frida, who did not like writing in English, also invoked the concept of clarity, "clearly explained," and implied that her past confusion made writing "not easy" in comparison to now.

Rebeca and Soyoung both referred to themselves as "more comfortable," and Rebeca added "more oriented" in regards to academic writing. These feeling changes suggest that their prior states included discomfort and confusion. Ahmed indicated that this past feelings were uncomplicated because he did not know about certain aspects of academic writing like analyzing

the assignment of including a concluding statement. In his words, he wrote: “without taking care of the requirements and all the purposes.” The implication is that now he feels more responsible, and he even alludes to “concentrating” more. However, he also seemed to feel that this additional responsibility is not a burden because he appears to be experiencing that some things even though new are “easy” for him.

Thus, it seems that all learners are changing their perceptions about academic writing in way that aligns with my view, which was obviously a primary pedagogical goal of the course, and they are also changing their feelings about that topic in ways that reflect RCT and Positive Psychology which was a primary research goal of the course. Learners like Carolina, Frida, and Min A were feeling greater clarity, which could be a change in feeling state linked to both RCT and Positive Psychology. Learners like Rebeca and Soyoung were feeling greater comfort or peace, which could be a change in feeling state linked to Positive Psychology. Rebeca was feeling more oriented or focused, and Ahmed is feeling more responsibility or ownership, both of which could be linked to changes in feeling states linked to Positive Psychology.

Near the end of the course (approximately Week 7 of an 8-week course), learners were interviewed by me and asked the following questions: “Have your ideas about academic writing changed since this course began?” and “Have your feelings about academic writing changed since the course started?” Because the learners were speaking rather than writing, their answers this time (they wrote their answers on the general information form and the mid-point reflection) were quite long. Therefore, I am going to focus on the final thoughts of one learner who initially liked writing in English, Rebeca, and one learner, who initially did not like writing in English, Ahmed. I am choosing these learners because despite their differences with regard to liking writing in English, both of these learners were similar in terms of their reflective commentary (they



both gave the longest responses in comparison to others) and in terms of the high-stakes nature of their professed goals for studying English (Rebeca wanted to study pre-med, and Ahmed was beginning graduate school soon after the course ended).

In terms of perceptions of the topic of academic writing, Rebeca and Ahmed both identified characteristics or aspects of academic writing that they had either not known before or had understood in a less complete way as changes to their perceptions. Ahmed also identified changes in his procedural “how to” knowledge as part of his perceptual shift. Their responses are as follows:

Me: Have your ideas about academic writing changed since this course started?

Rebeca: Well I thought that I knew we had to include others’ opinions and information that we took from any academic source maybe books or internet but I didn’t know how important or yeah how important was the fact that we should find credible sources and also that it’s important to mention what others’ say and to contrast that information with what I say and also uhm yeah basically everything that I have read in the book is so helpful because I had some ideas about that but not so clear as they are stated in the book (Interview 2, Rebeca)

Ahmed: Of course yes really. Actually, many way. First of all, really the concluding statement in the paragraph the body paragraph the first time I heard about it. Actually before that I had the concluding statement in the concluding statement no I didn’t hear about concluding statement in the body paragraph and who care or why it help me a lot. Uh also how can make illustration how can I take illustration actually in the previous session Level

6 and Level 5 I always use for example according to study done by Oklahoma University I didn't know but I putted that because I need to be my body paragraph uh make bigger but nobody no teacher told me that is wrong because that's plagiarism or something like that from where you get this information and now, I'll be careful about that don't say anything about uh what else, also actually in the body paragraph how can I make I select topic sentences and supporting idea as equal in each body paragraph let all of them one of them specific and the other general or something like that uh my writing [okay] (Interview 2, Ahmed)

In Rebeca's case, it seems that her initial perceptions were confirmed and expanded on by the course. She "thought that [she] knew" before the course, but before this course, she did not realize the importance of certain aspects of academic writing like "credible sources" or using what others' say in contrast to her own thoughts. In Ahmed's case, it seems that there were gaps in his initial perceptions of academic writing that were filled in by the course. Ahmed mentions that he had never heard of concluding statements for paragraphs, that plagiarism was wrong, and that his supporting points should be balanced in terms of being equally general or equally specific. For both learners, their perceptions of academic writing made important shifts in terms of becoming more aligned with my own perceptions. The fact that Rebeca's perceptions may have been closer to my own in the beginning than Ahmed's is also likely reflected in their actual written texts and my evaluation of those texts. Rebeca's final course grade was A, while Ahmed's was B+.

In terms of their feelings, Rebeca and Ahmed both indicated a change of feelings. (Ahmed said he felt the "same," but his description suggested that he felt different, so his initial an-

swer may have been a misunderstanding of the question.) Interestingly, in an overall sense, Rebeca seemed to feel that academic writing had become harder, while Ahmed felt that it had become easier.

Me: Have your feelings about academic writing changed since this course began?

Rebeca: Yeah [Me: okay] I feel more comfortable now writing that kind of paragraph but I think once you get more information at the same time you feel like okay what I'm gonna do with all this information [Rebeca laughs] so maybe if I like in 600 I didn't know anything about research paper it would I don't know now that I know that information and is responsible for writing with all this information in my paragraph to have the structure to uh to correctly quote the information to mention others' ideas and to frame the quotations, so I think that we can we get responsibility once we have that information so we shoul- we have to use it in the correct way. So, I hope that with practice it will uh get better but it's I feel like a little bit pressured that I know all this information and I have to put it in practice (Interview 2, Rebeca)

Ahmed: Yeah, actually, I feel same because now I have uh some strategy like for example when I start now any assignment for writing I will start with uh not in the introduction usual no I will start in the how can I make topic sentence supporting idea I will view it as equal or not after that I will put it like the beams and concluding statement after that I will looking to illustration and if I didn't find something I will change at the topic sentence.

After I finish, I will start in the introduction and the conclusion will be easy for me. [Me: okay] and also, uh for me I don't like to change my idea but now when I thought that I should to pick some topic as you equal or something like that that's I realize I should to change it different way  
(Interview 2, Ahmed)

Rebeca felt “more comfortable,” but she also had the feeling that her new perceptions of academic writing had given her more “responsibility” and create more pressure for her. On the contrary, Ahmed’s new perceptions of how academic writing is accomplished have given him an easier way to begin and complete the task. He also felt a greater sense of freedom and flexibility to “change” if things are not working as he needs them to work.

In terms of RCT-like changes, Rebeca appeared to have a more realistic picture academic writing and her role as an academic writer. I suspect in her comments about the need to “correctly quote the information” and “frame the quotations” that she is also exhibiting a greater sense of connection with the potential readers of her written texts, which would be members of the real-world CoP. She clearly felt that it is important to align her use of quotations with the expectations and practices of the real-world CoP as a sign of affiliation. Ahmed appeared to be feeling a greater sense of zest and more ability to act. He felt confident that he has a specific plan of action for future writing situations.

In terms of Positive Psychology-like changes, both Rebeca and Ahmed seemed to feel a stronger sense of autonomy and ownership. Rebeca owned the “responsibility” to use her new perceptions in a “correct way,” and she clearly intended to do so despite feeling “pressured” by her new perceptions. Ahmed had transformed one of his inner obstacles to writing, his feelings about change. He will now give himself permission to change when things are not working be-

cause he understood that academic writing was about choices. He now felt empowered to decide to change his ideas as a strategic move for successful completion of his academic writing tasks.

#### ***5.4 Learners' Feelings about Their Abilities to Accomplish Anglo-American Academic Writing: Research Question 4***

As is clear in the learners' comments discussed in the previous section, the line between a perception and a feeling is blurry. Learners' perceptions of academic writing were often accompanied by their feelings. In addition to the blurry line between perceptions of and feelings about academic writing, the line between learners' perceptions and feelings about academic writing versus their own abilities to accomplish academic writing were often overlapped. Most learners' perceptions of academic writing changed in accordance with their perceptions of their own abilities, and learners' feelings about academic writing were likely also linked to their feelings about their abilities to accomplish academic writing. Nonetheless, learners did appear to understand that their knowledge of something like academic writing and their ability to act on that knowledge were not exactly the same thing. As Min A said when describing her inner dialogue with her writing self in her previous writing instructional experiences, there were times when she felt like, " 'Yeah, I know that kind of fact, but how can I make thesis statement something like that,' it's still difficult to me" (Interview 1, Min A).

Just as learners' perceptions and feelings of academic writing may have an influential link to one another so too do learners' perceptions and feelings about their abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing successfully. One problem among many when learners' self-report perceptions of their abilities is that often these perceptions are based on feedback that they have received from teachers rather than their own assessments. In other words, learners report what they have been told regardless of whether or not they truly own the value of the perception.

Because there is really no way to avoid this, I asked several questions on the general information form at the beginning of the session about things like perceptions of most difficult aspects of academic writing, perceptions of easiest aspects of academic writing, techniques or strategies that had helped improve writing, and noticeable differences between L1 formal writing and L2 formal writing. The information they provided does provide insight into their perceptions of their own abilities, but I think the question that perhaps best captures their perceptions of their own writing abilities is, “What is the one thing that you would most like to improve about your academic writing in English?”

By describing the improvement they would most value, learners were providing insight as to what abilities they found valuable and needing development for their ability to accomplish academic writing more successfully. They were also setting personal goals for themselves that could be used as a point of reference for future comparison. Their perceptions of what they valued and needed in terms of academic writing development included the following:

*Learners who indicated they “liked” writing in English at the beginning of the course*

After reading articles, I would like to improve about restating with my own words. I think that paraphrasing and summary are keys in academic writing. (Soyoung)

I would like to write strong sentences with academic words. I would like when people read my essay think that was written with a high level of English. (Carolina)

I have not written a research paper, so I would like to learn how to write it effectively.  
(Rebeca)

*Learners who indicated they “disliked” writing in English at the beginning of the course*

How to express my opinion in the common way American used. (Jieun)

I would like to improve the speed and do not have to think about the structure. (Frida)

Write logical, persuasive essay with good structure. (Min A)

Using more academic vocabulary and writing more than five paragraphs. Also, improving my conclusion in essay. (Ahmed)

Learners’ perceptions-as-goals reflected attention to features of academic writing like specific elements of academic writing, style, text types, and structure. For instance, Soyoung recognized plagiarism as an element of academic writing that she wanted to learn more about, and Ahmed did the same for conclusions. Carolina, Jieun, and Ahmed all stressed style as one of their points of focus, specifically they wanted to be able to express themselves with academic vocabulary. Rebeca and Ahmed were interested in producing more complex text types (i.e., “research paper” and “more than five paragraphs” respectively). Frida and Min A were interested in better structure. These perceptions-as-goals were aligned with how learners originally defined academic writing, but there were a few perceptions that went beyond what learners had originally revealed about their perceptions of academic writing. For example, Carolina indicated valuing and desiring the ability to please an audience (e.g., “when people read my essay”), and Frida was concerned with the amount of time involved in academic writing for her (e.g. “improve the speed).

In addition to having perceptions of what they valued and needed, learners also had some perceptions of how writing teachers could better help them achieve what they valued and needed. Rather than ask them what their teachers could or should do to help them, I phrased the question as if they were offering advice to English writing teachers. The prompt for their response was as follows: “Think about all of the English writing teachers you have ever had. What advice would you give them? Complete the following sentence. I wish my English writing teachers would...” I felt that this prompt would indirectly help me to understand not only how they perceived their own abilities but also their perceptions and feelings about the role that writing instruction played in developing their abilities to accomplish academic writing successfully. Their responses were the following:

*Learners who “liked” writing in English at the beginning of the course*

Actually, I met very good writing teachers in this institute. They taught me a lot of writing skills so I feel that English is not difficult and hard. (Soyoung)

Be more strict. I would like to have the confident that when a teacher give me an “A” is because I really did a good job, not because I am a good writer compared with the rest of the classmates. (Carolina)

Give special assignments to try to improve their students weaknesses. Ex = interactive activities, outside-research activities... (Rebeca)

*Learners who “disliked” writing in English at the beginning of the course*

Give me a lecture about formal correspondence used in business. (Jieun)



Sometimes, they don't give you good tools to understand how to write. (Frida)

Teach how to think about topic. Brainstorm then pararise. Finally, whole essay. It means I want to learn the process in detail. Not editing my essay. (Min A)

To set with me individually to correct my mistakes writing and explain what is my weaknesses in this area. Also, give me more assignments in writing and clear responce, and ideas how I can improve my writing skills. (Ahmed)

I found that their comments indicated that most of them wanted their teachers to relate to them in ways that reflected the tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology. For example, Carolina wanted her grades to truly affect her abilities and not the abilities of her classmates, which seemed to be a request for authenticity on the part of her teacher. Authenticity is a key component of mutual empathy (Miller, 1976). Likewise, Jieun, Min A, and Frida wanted their teachers to have more relational-contextual awareness (Hartling, 2008). That is, they wanted their teachers to express mutual empathy by understanding their point of view. Specifically, Jieun wanted a teacher that cared about her relational history and experience as someone who did not want to be an academic writer but a business writer. Frida wanted a teacher that cared about giving her “good tools” that would work for someone with her relational history and experience, and Min A wanted someone that cared about explaining the “process in detail” rather than editing.

Rebeca and Ahmed's desires reflected tenets of Positive Psychology. Rebeca and Ahmed wanted better development of their abilities through individualization and intentional develop-

ment of strengths. Both of them wanted “special” or “more” assignments that would “improve” their abilities. Both wanted to know about “weaknesses,” which, of course, is exactly what strengths-based development is about, but understanding one’s strengths usually does imply utilizing them to build upon weaknesses. Both wanted relationship as part of the process of individual development. For example, Rebeca suggested “interactive activities,” and Ahmed wanted the teacher to “set with me individually.” Thus, for each of these learners, relational aspects of the classroom were perceived as important for their development of abilities they valued and desired.

After four weeks, learners were asked to reflect in a written format on how they felt about their writing abilities. Specifically, they were given the following prompt: “Do you feel that are a “different” writer now than you were at the beginning of this course? Explain. Try to provide some examples of how you are different. If you don't feel that you are different, explain how you are the same, and try to provide some examples.” In general, learners’ comments reflect feelings of increased competence. In this data display, I have categorized their comments according to whether their original advice for teachers was more related to the tenets of RCT or Positive Psychology. One learner, Soyoung, did not have advice for teachers in the beginning because she had only had good experiences. I put her comments in the category of learners who are satisfied with their teachers. Their comments are as follows:

*Learners who are satisfied with their teachers*

I think that I become a “different” writer. When I read a question in past, I need much time to write a topic sentence and supporting points. I need to wait time to do this, but the time has been shorter than before. I feel that I can integrate other words into my text appropriately using the templates of the book. (Soyoung)

*Learners whose advice for teachers reflected tenets of RCT*

I feel that I have the tools to write better paragraphs now. I am more confident because I have strong explanation and examples that can help me. For example, before this course when the teacher gave us a topic I felt kind of lost. I didn't know where to begin. Even when we did brainstorm, my writing was not organized and I felt that I lost concentration and focus on the topic. Now, like I said before my topic sentences and controlling ideas will help me to maintain the focus.... I hope :) (Carolina)

Jieun

Absent

Now, I can understand the order of things when I am writing in English. I feel more confident in the way that I write because I have the tools to do it and I can think more quickly about the topic I picked up. Before it happens, choosing a topic was easy for me, but what to write and how to do it did not. (Frida)

I feel that I am a "different" writer now than I was at the beginning of this course.

When I wrote an essay at the first time, I didn't know how to organize and also what I should write. However, it changed a lot. I didn't think the process of brainstorming, also how to write thesis statement, but now I know the process of brainstorming. For example,

I have to think what the purpose I write an essay is, who is the readers, and what the readers want to know. It helps me write an essay easily and clearly. (Min A)

*Learners whose advice for teachers reflected tenets of Positive Psychology*

I feel that I am sort of a "different" writer now than I was at the beginning of this course because I have learned many things that make my thought more organized and my writing more carefully written. Writing in a language different from the native language is not easy especially is the new language has several differences from the native one. However, since this class, 700 writing, is the last one in the intensive English program, I think it at the time has provided me useful information to improve my writing and correct mistakes I hadn't notice until now. (Rebeca)

Ahmed

Did not answer this question specifically

Each learner who responded indicated a change of feeling response that reflected a positive shift in feelings. In particular, the learners who were either satisfied with their teachers or desired more mutual empathy from their teachers expressed feelings that indicated a greater willingness to act which is one of the five good things Miller (1976) mentions. For instance, Soy-oung felt more competent because she can respond to writing prompts more quickly and "integrate other words" (*she means what others say*) into her text "appropriately." Min A too felt more competent which gave her the ability to "write an essay easily and clearly." Carolina, who used to feel "lost" when she received a topic, now felt "more confident," and she felt that she

was able to “maintain the focus.” Frida also feels “more confident” and able to “think more quickly.

Rebeca who had expressed a desire for greater individualization and intentional development of strengths associated with Positive Psychology reported feelings of greater competence as well. Her thoughts were “more organized” and her “writing more carefully written.” In addition, her comments indicated the development of a more realistic awareness of herself. She was able to “correct mistakes I hadn’t notice until now.” As previously discussed, Rebeca’s perceptions and feelings about academic writing involved realizations that there was more to it than she had previously thought, so it makes sense that her feelings about her own abilities are related to making her competence more precise. Thus, all learners who responded felt that they were different writers than they had been and were able to describe specific areas in which they perceived improvement. Their difference as writers included not only skill development but also positive emotional states, which again suggests that feelings matter in cognitive development.

After the course ended, an external interviewer spoke with each learner. Learners had the opportunity in this interview to discuss the course, their development, and me in a more distanced manner. Two key questions that learners were asked were, “In general, how did you feel as student in Lauren’s class?” and “How do you feel about yourself as an academic writer?” In the previous discussion of research question 3, I focused on Rebeca and Ahmed’s responses in interviews because of their similarities in terms of reflexivity and goals. In this discussion, I will also focus on two learners, Soyoung and Frida. I have chosen these learners because they were quite similar in terms of my evaluations of their abilities to successfully accomplish academic writing. According to grades I assigned each of them, Soyoung was consistently slightly better than Frida on most assignments. They were both in the C to B range on most assignments but

seldom in the A range. I also chose these learners because Soyoung reported that her experiences with writing teachers in our institute had been positive, while Frida reported dissatisfaction with her previous writing instruction.

In overall terms, both Soyoung and Frida reported having positive feelings in my IEP classroom CoP and having positive feelings about themselves as academic writers. Soyoung's responses are as follows:

EI: Okay, good uhm so just in general, how do you feel as a student in uhm Lauren's class?

Soyoung: Yeah, [EI: how do you feel?] mmm, very good [Soyoung laughs] yeah uh as I said, I feel the students and we uh connect the teacher and other students, so, and I we we learned the step-by-step the method the method of writing, and yeah, she's very kind and so, very helpful yeah

EI: Okay, uhm and how do you feel about yourself [Soyoung: mhm] as an academic writer [Soyoung laughs]

Soyoung: Beginner [Soyoung laughs] very beginner, uh huh yeah, uh it is this class is to chance to know my ability to of for academic writing academic writer, so this is the beginning, so before 500 and 600 level is uh I build up my basic, and I didn't know didn't know the right writing English, so I build it build it in 2 classes, but this that is not this is not a style I think this 700 level writing is the beginning of academic writer yeah

EI: So then how do you think that uhm Lauren's class [Soyoung: mhm] affected your feelings [Soyoung: mhm] about being an academic writer?

Soyoung: Uh, I have a little bit [Soyoung laughs] confidence to I be I can to go college college or university in graduate school, so yeah good (Interview 3, Soyoung)

In Soyoung's comments, she clearly indicated positive feelings about her abilities. She feels "a little bit confidence," and she feels that she "can go to college or university in graduate school." In other words, in RCT terms, she "feels able to act in the world" (Miller, 1976), and in Positive Psychology terms, she feels autonomy (Lopez & Louis, 2009) as well as optimism (Hewitt, 2005). Soyoung also feels that although she is "beginning," she is now at "the beginning of academic writer," which in RCT terms, could indicate a greater sense of worth (Miller, 1976). The world in which Soyoung's feelings matter is two-fold. On the one hand, her positive feelings certainly increase the likelihood that she is engaging with the information flow in the classroom CoP and benefiting from it. She will likely gain more relational competence from these types of behaviors. On the other hand, her positive feelings also increase the likelihood that she will approach her entry to the real-world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers from a more empowered and self-legitimizing standpoint. She will engage, she will take risks, and she will choose encounters with the understanding that even though she may sometimes fail, she does have the ability to learn how to do academic writing tasks.

An interesting feature of Soyoung's reported feelings is the emphasis she placed on relationships in connection to her feelings. She felt "very good" in class, and this was somehow related to her feeling that "the students and we uh connect the teacher and other students." Thus, the development of an orientation to interactions that focused on building relationships, particularly external relationships, was important for Soyoung's positive feelings. Soyoung also referenced the "step-by-step" method or as I called it, the parts-before-whole instructional approach

in relation to her “very good” feelings. Seemingly, this instructional approach is linked to her perceptions of me as “very kind” and “very helpful.” As the instructional approach itself was not capable of being “kind” or “helpful,” I can only surmise that she found this approach as having relational-contextual awareness (Hartling, 2000) for her background and experiences as a writer.

Frida’s interviews revealed many similarities with Soyoung’s. She also ended the course with positive feelings about her abilities to accomplish academic writing successfully. Frida’s responses are as follows:

EI: Good. Okay, so just in general, I would like you to tell me how did you feel as a student in Lauren’s class?

Frida: Really good. Yeah. I mean I never felt frustrated because you you are all the time sharing your works with your partners so it’s impossible to feel bad. I mean maybe and also she she put the feedbacks of your writings uh on the papers in the computer, so you you don’t have much contact with her I mean if you have question of course you can ask, but is the general works is like through the computer so I mean you don’t you don’t feel bad. Uhm she’s really cozy with us. Yeah.

EI: Yeah, well then, can you tell me how you feel about yourself as an academic writer?

Frida: I feel really good. I feel better writing when I’m writing. I think I have the things more clear than before, so I feel really good. I think this this class was useful. [EI: okay, uhm] because basically I think classes depends on the teacher that you have not just only the language institute that you go you know. I mean a lot of people say that this language institute is



one of the best one but depends on the teachers basically for me. So, I had teachers that really didn't work for me, so it's not the case of Lauren. I mean I'm working with Lauren in Reading class and she's exactly the same as Writing class. I mean I have every day to read something you know so I think also that my speed in reading is even better, so I think I cannot say anything negative

EI: Okay, well then, uhm, how do- how did Lauren's class affect how you feel as a writer, as an academic writer?

Frida: Uhm, no the class didn't affect me.

Frida, who did not like writing in English at the beginning of the course, now felt "really good" and "better writing when I'm writing," Considering that her goals at the beginning of the course revolved around improving "the speed" and not having "to think about the structure," both fairly instrumental goals, it appeared that she had shifted in some way to a more integrative stance. She feels "more clear," and this resulted in her feeling "really good." In RCT terms, Frida appeared to feel a greater sense of zest (Miller, 1976). Feeling good about writing seemed to energize her to want to write more. In Positive Psychology terms, she may also have felt a sense of peace (Anderson, 2004) because she had complained in earlier exchanges about not having the "tools" she needed to write, which no longer appeared to be the case.

As with the case of Soyoung, Frida's interview alluded to the fact that the development of an orientation to interactions that focused on building healthy relationships had some connection to her positive feelings. According to her, she "never felt frustrated." She linked this absence of frustration to "sharing your works with partners" and indicated that the sharing made it "impossible to feel bad." She referred to the use of the computer as the means for the sharing of works.

From this, I took it to mean that she appreciated the use of the public writing forum and that she found the ability to look at others' writing useful from both a skill and feeling perspective. It is noteworthy that the public writing forum did not make her feel competitive with other learners, which was a negative feeling reported by Garrett (2009) in her feeling responses to other learners' performances in class. Perhaps, other aspects of the course like the campfire discussion circle established connections that alleviated the feeling that one needed to compete, or perhaps Frida simply was not a competitively oriented person.

Frida's comments about teachers indicated that she held them highly responsible for her learning. In her opinion, "classes depends on the teacher." Fortunately, for her and for me, she found me "cozy" even though she also stated that, "you don't have much contact with her I mean if you have question of course you can ask." Interestingly, despite her positive feelings about her abilities and the relationships in the class, she claimed that, "the class didn't affect me." More than likely this was a misunderstanding of the question, but I think it is possible that for Frida, the "class" meant something different than the relationships in the class. To me, Frida's learning style appeared to be very relational in the sense that the opportunity for relationships and the quality of relationships allowed her to develop more individually than she had experienced in previous courses in the institute. In any case, both Soyoung and Frida's comments underscored their awareness of relationships in the classroom and their appreciation for the role that relationships vis-à-vis feelings played in their learning.

### **5.5 Limitations**

One of my assumptions as a researcher is that the researcher affects the researched in all cases. Thus, this study was no different from any other. As the teacher-researcher, I was clearly in a position of authority in relation to the learners. Although they knew and were repeatedly

told that what they said or wrote would not affect their grade or my interactions with them, they were also building a relationship with me. As such, they may have felt an investment in providing responses that they perceived would indicate a positive feeling change. The desire to please an authority figure is strong and can result in different perspectives about what is the appropriate response as Lave (1996) found in a third grade classroom. Although children may have a stronger desire to please their teachers than adult IEP learners, even adult learners generally want to please the teacher, and the teacher who is practicing mutual empathy will undoubtedly reveal her feelings to responses in the classroom that would cue the learners to what her desires were.

Of course, another limitation is that the learners' perceptions and feelings are not necessarily causally linked, nor do I intend to imply that there is a causal relationship. Learners' sometimes displayed causal relationships like *because* or *so* between perceptions and feelings, but more often, perceptions and feelings were simply stated in close proximity, which suggests but does not prove that learners felt them to be related in some way. One way to clarify my analysis of learners' comments would have been to interview them a fourth time after I had completed my analysis as a type of member checking. I was not able to do this as the nature of an IEP, especially the highest-level course, is that learners generally leave.

## **5.6 Implications**

From my analysis of the feeling results of this study, I have drawn three primary conclusions that have important pedagogical implications for IEP academic writing classrooms. First, learners are having feelings in IEP academic writing CoPs. Their feelings include feelings about the topic, their abilities, the writing instruction, the teacher, the classroom practices, and their relationships with others in the CoP. They arrive to the CoP with feelings based on previous experiences, they have opinions about what they want to feel and how those feelings might be

achieved, and they leave the CoP with feelings that they will carry into their next experience.

Based on the preponderance of feelings happening in the IEP academic writing CoP, one primary implication is that teachers and research need to acknowledge and address feelings more directly. It seems that paying attention to feelings helps learning in learners' perceptions, so teachers may want to carefully consider the feelings that they foster or do not foster in their choices of classroom practices.

Second, in this study, positive feelings did seem to be linked to willingness to communicate not only in the classroom CoP but also in future imagined situations. Their positive feelings were linked with know-how, and this combination energized them to take the risk of writing with some certainty that they knew how to do it or could learn to do it. Several professed the certainty that they would be able to use their skills and feelings in other contexts. The implication I draw from this is that positive feelings and know-how have some type of reciprocal relationship, and IEP academic writing teachers could perhaps increase know-how through a focus on feelings.

Finally, learners' comments revealed a strong awareness of relationships in the classrooms as Garrett (2009) also found. They were concerned with their individual development, but they were aware of and appreciative of the presence of relationships in the classroom CoP. Learners, of course, were never told that I was trying to build an orientation to interactions that focused on building healthy relationships, yet they seemed to notice that relationships existed and they viewed them positively. Furthermore, they appeared to notice that the three classroom practices I described in Chapter 4 either contributed to the existence of healthy relationships or the existence of positive feelings. The implication I take from this is that IEP academic writing teachers may want to consider developing and utilizing practices that create community, and they may want to do this even if it decreases the time spent on practicing know-how. Hearing what

other learners were experiencing and being able to use their written work as resources for development really seemed to appeal to the learners. Soyoung's suggestion to the external interviewer at the end of interview 3 supports the idea that relationships mattered in her learning and perhaps in the learning of others as well:

- EI: Okay, well that's all the questions I have. [Soyoung: yeah] [Soyoung laughs] Is there anything else that you'd like for me to know?
- Soyoung: Mmm, uh I don't know what is your project yeah is is purpose of your project? Is I want to uh spread others other teachers of Lauren's teaching method.
- EI: You want other teachers to [Soyoung: yeah] to what? I didn't hear the verb.
- Soyoung: Oh, other teachers to teach like Lauren's method, yeah.
- EI: Oh, oh, to use her method [Soyoung: yeah, yeah] okay.
- Soyoung: Uh, I have three, one 500, two 600, writing class, but there is there is uh little conversation between teacher and students, yeah, I think yeah (Interview 3, Soyoung)

### **5.7 Conclusion**

Although I think Soyoung was very kind to suggest that my method is what other teachers should use, I do not necessarily agree with her. I agree with Spear (1978) who argues that teaching is to some extent a matter of personal style. She argues the following:

Successful composition classes work not simply because the teacher uses a particular technique, whatever that technique may be, but because through that technique the teach-

er is able to be empathetic, self-congruent, and unconditional in his or her regard for students. Any successful methodology is primarily a personal style” (p. 374).

However, I do think all academic writing teachers or anyone who teaches academic writing as part of their instructional task would be well advised to acknowledge the invisible minority in the classroom (i.e., feelings) and enact a pedagogy that values the contribution it makes.

## 6 PRACTICE TO THEORY: RESEARCH QUESTION 5

Feelings are present and powerful in influencing teachers and learners' experiences of the academic writing CoP. In addition, it seems likely that feelings have some influence of learners' ability to receive information about the topic, academic writing, and their willingness to communicate using academic writing. However, for most teachers and many learners the educational value of an academic writing class depends on the extent to which the learners' written texts actually improved.

In this chapter, the fifth and final research question which addresses my views on the learners' actual progress in producing appropriate academic texts will be addressed. The research question is as follows:

5. In an ESL academic writing course in which the teacher uses the tenets of RCT (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths) to develop an orientation to interactions, how will the learners' abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing change over the duration of the course?

This chapter will begin with a brief description of what academic writing is and how it is linked to the primary theories used in this study. Then, I will discuss the issue of writing task selection in ESL/EAP, and I will analyze my own process in selecting writing tasks for this study as well as my perceptions of writing task development throughout the course and learners' improvement with regard to the writing task. I will present three learner cases and analyze the features of their writing in relation to my own expectations. In addition, I will compare learners' own perceptions of their changes in writing to the changes that I saw. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of this study and propose pedagogical implications resulting from my findings.

## **6.1 *Anglo-American Academic Writing and the Theoretical Framework***

In this study, Anglo-American academic writing is a term that describes the writing that occurs in American colleges and universities. This term recognizes that English is more than a language - it is also a cultural practice that operates differently according to the context in which it is used. Accordingly, the English taught in ESL classes is typically not an international English (notwithstanding recent interest in World Englishes) but an English that is culturally connected often to a specific national culture like Australian, British, or American. Within a national culture, of course, English-as-a-practice can vary according to co-cultures which include academic culture. Thus, ESL academic writing instruction is value-laden on many levels, and for ESL learners, understanding these values can be crucial in developing a member-like understanding of the practice. In this section, I will discuss academic writing and academic writing instruction in relation to the theories that form the conceptual framework of this study.

*6.1.1 Academic writing.* Academic writing is a broad term that could be used to describe any type of writing that occurs within a formal educational context. For example, e-mails that are sent between the campus parking ticket office and a student could be, and in my opinion, should be considered academic writing. Often, the term academic writing is not used quite so broadly, and it refers more narrowly to the type of writing that a teacher requests of a student (of course, academic writing can also refer to scholarly writing for publication, but in this study it does not). For instance, a teacher may request an essay, a lab report, an on-line discussion posting, a journal, or something else. In this case, the writing is academic because it has been requested in an educational context, and it will be evaluated (usually) by a teacher who will assign it some type of grade.



For both the student and the teacher, the exchange and subsequent evaluation of academic writing has internal and external value that is likely accompanied by some feelings. Internally, students acquire through this exchange a sense of their relative competence in the content area for which the writing was assigned (e.g., history, psychology) and/or the skill area referred to as academic writing. For example, the exchange of a history essay exam for a failing grade could result in students believing that they do not know the content material of history well enough or that they do not express themselves well enough in academic writing to make their knowledge of the content clear or both. Almost certainly, no matter what internal value the students ascribe to the essay-grade exchange, they will have feelings that accompany that value. In the case of the essay-for-failing-grade exchange, they may feel angry at themselves if they did not study enough, frustrated with the teacher if they feel the questions were unfair, depressed or hopeless if they feel that they just cannot express themselves in academic writing, or any number of other possibilities.

Externally, the exchange ultimately results in students being assigned an academic value that is often equated with intelligence, and that academic value is often used as the basis for awards, scholarships, and even future job opportunities. In other words, the exchange may also become part of the economic and social positioning of the student in the post-educational context. This external value is also likely accompanied by feelings. High grades often provoke feelings of pride and confidence - feelings of inclusion in the academic community, while low grades may provoke feelings of shame and inferiority - feelings of exclusion from the academic community.

For teachers, the internal and external value of the academic-writing-for-grade exchange is similar and is also accompanied by feelings. For some teachers, internally, the exchange may

serve as an indicator of their relative competence and effectiveness as a teacher. Of course, this depends entirely on the teacher's perspective on locus of control matters. For example, the history-essay-for-failing-grade exchange could result in teachers' re-considering how they taught the material or how they tested the materials (i.e., the way they expressed the questions). It could also result in teachers simply assuming that students did not study. If teachers view the exchange as a sign that they should re-consider their own actions, feelings like guilt, fear, shame, or frustration with themselves may be present. If teachers view the exchange as a sign of students' inappropriate behavior, feelings like anger, hopelessness, frustration, and even sadness may be present.

Externally, for teachers, the academic-writing-for-grade exchange is indirectly linked to a job performance value. Academic-writing-for-grade exchanges are expected parts of teachers' jobs, and teachers' effectiveness may be evaluated by both students and colleagues in relation to the perceived quality of these exchanges. If perceptions are that teachers manage these exchanges fairly, then the exchange may ultimately lead to the judgment and labeling of those teachers as good teachers. Of course, performance-based labels provoke feelings, and positive labels likely lead to feelings of inclusion in the academic community. As with students, these labels position teachers economically and socially in specific academic communities and in society.

Thus, academic writing, in any culture, is a product like a written text, but it is also an exchange practice that is used to determine teachers and learners' literal and affective status with regard to academic communities. Literally, the exchange can determine if teachers and learners remain in a particular academic community because failure could lead to exclusion. Affectively, the exchange can determine the engagement or trajectory individuals assume with respect to the community. As Wenger (1998) explains, trajectory options include inbound (pursuing more en-

gement), outbound (pursuing less engagement), and boundary (pursuing selective engagement).

Importantly, the trajectories enacted or enforced in an academic community may be reflected in communities outside of or beyond the academic community. Eckert and Wenger (1994) found that school trajectories are transferable. In their research, they found that the inbound trajectory of institutional affiliation enacted by jocks in school and the outbound trajectory of institutional non-affiliation enacted by burnouts were transferred to the workplace. Former jocks and former burnouts adopted the same trajectories in their jobs that they had adopted in school. Therefore, the academic-writing-for-grade exchange that influences real and affective trajectories in academic communities likely has a strong impact on individuals' post- or extra-academic participation in other communities.

In terms of critical and feminist pedagogy, academic writing is a practice that is often associated with class, race, ethnicity, gender, and linguistic privilege among others. Because academic writing is connected to educational contexts, particularly higher educational contexts, some people have more cultural preparation to enhance their development of this practice, and some people have more access to opportunities to develop this practice. Most critical and feminist educators would agree that academic knowledge and skills in most societies are controlled by a specific dominant group and reflect the values of that group. Thus, people from that group would find it easiest to acquire academic knowledge and skills because they are culturally prepared and supported in this acquisition. In other words, in an LPP (Lave & Wenger, 1991) sense, people from the dominant group are privileged with de-facto legitimacy in an academic CoP.

When members of a CoP view newcomers as legitimate, as I have previously discussed, they generally have more investment in their progress toward membership and may interact with them in more ways that facilitate that progress than they do with newcomers that they do not perceive as legitimate. Of course, as I have argued, legitimacy is also a perception that newcomers carry within themselves, and members of the dominant group typically arrive to an academic CoP with an inner sense of legitimacy. Therefore, a practice like academic writing may be easier to acquire for members of a dominant group because their acquisition is facilitated through more helpful interactions with the members of the academic writing CoP. Academic writing may also be easier for members of the dominant group because it reflects the values of their cultural group, and they have already acquired those values prior to learning the practice of academic writing.

Thus, academic writing has personal and political value in most societies. It is a practice that can lead to greater academic, professional, economic, and social inclusion or exclusion. Even if individuals want to resist the dominant group's control in some way, it is likely that being able to selectively engage by using the practice of academic writing in ways similar to fully affiliated members of the academic writing CoP will be a "necessary evil" (Canagarajah, 2004, p. 84). In the case of the academic researchers to whom Canagarajah refers, if they do not practice the academic writing style and conventions of Western journals and publish their perspectives of their local contexts, they may begin to only see themselves through the eyes of others despite their local, real experience.

*6.1.2 Anglo-American academic writing.* In this study, my obvious pedagogical objective was to facilitate learners' development of knowledge and skills with regard to Anglo-American academic writing in universities. This type of writing likely has many distinctive characteristics

when it is compared with other types of writing. Two of the distinctive features that seem to be most problematic for learners that I have encountered are plagiarism and the concept of writer responsibility (Hinds, 1987). In my opinion, both of these features are linked to the cultural value of individualism that is characteristic of many Americans, particularly those that are part of the dominant group or strongly affiliate with the dominant group, which is “the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 2000). (Of course, an individual does not have to necessarily avow the identity hooks describes to actually be a member of the dominant group. Not avowing the identity does not negate the privileges that come from being a member of that group.)

For Walker (2003, p. 1), “hyper-competitiveness and deterministic control” are key features of the Western concepts of individualism. In the United States, individuals are to some extent expected to understand life as a survival-of-the-fittest endeavor, and they are expected to believe in a pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps philosophy. Individual success equates largely with individual choice and effort in the belief system of the dominant group of the United States. Plagiarism and writer responsibility are linked to these ideas of individualism.

Plagiarism is linked to the idea of individual ownership. Words and ideas like cars and houses belong to specific individuals, and because they give individuals a competitive edge, their ownership must be acknowledged. If they are not acknowledged, the offender has in effect stolen something that belonged to someone else. Thus, in terms of competition, plagiarism gives the offender an unfair advantage, while it denies the owner their rightful advantage.

Pecorari (2003) argued that plagiarism in academic writing should also carry the notion of intentionality to distinguish it from *patchwriting* (Howard, 2001). According to Pecorari (2003) and Howard (2001), patchwriting is a developmental strategy during which novice writers

string together their voice with ideas from their source texts without voice markers forming a “pastiche” (Howard, 2001, p. 1). In my comments about plagiarism to learners, I did not make the distinction of intentionality that Pecorari (2003) does. Rather, I told them that regardless of intentionality, the consequences in the real-world CoP of Anglo-American writing could be extreme. The consequences in my own IEP course were less extreme as I did consider linguistic and rhetorical knowledge and ability factors in learners’ management of the use of borrowed information.

Writer responsibility is linked to the idea of autonomy. Autonomy is generally thought of as independence or freedom to make decisions or choices about one’s own thoughts and actions. Writer responsibility (Hinds, 1987) refers to the amount of responsibility writers bear in their relationship with readers. In a writer responsible culture like U.S. academic writing, writers are highly responsible for ensuring their readers’ comprehension. If writers leave too many gaps in their arguments or fail to point readers in the direction that they want them to go, readers are not willing and perhaps not able to make sense of the text. Of course, the idea of any culture’s written artifacts falling into neatly delineated categories like writer-responsible or reader-responsible has been critiqued for its essentialism (Kubota & Lehner, 2004). Still, the concept of writer responsible is descriptively useful for explaining why Anglo-American academic writing is characterized by features like repetition of key words.

In academic writing in the U.S., if writers do not appropriately assume their responsibility, readers are denied the autonomy of making informed decisions about the information in the text because it has not been presented clearly enough. Likewise, if writers do not appropriately assume their responsibility, they relinquish their control of their argument. They are not guiding readers to where they want them to go. Instead, they are allowing readers to interpret their own

meanings, which may be the purpose of some writing like poetry but is not the purpose of academic writing. To be sure, writers cannot control readers' interpretations even with writer responsible prose, but with their writing, they can strongly suggest the interpretative they would like readers to take and make it easier for readers to take than any other. Thus, a lack of writer responsibility in academic writing interferes with writers' and readers' self-deterministic control to some extent.

For ESL learners, Anglo-American academic writing is a written product, it is an exchange process, and it is also a cultural method of perceiving, thinking, and expressing one's ideas in writing. In LPP terms, Anglo-American academic writers represent a CoP, and Anglo-American academic writing is a practice, a social action (Miller, 1984/1994), that determines newcomers' trajectory with respect to the CoP. This particular CoP also articulates with other CoPs in the university system so that an outward bound trajectory in the CoP of Anglo-American academic writers may make the likelihood of an outward bound trajectory in some other CoP like the CoP of political science majors more likely. Thus, the value of Anglo-American academic writing is quite high for all university students. However, for ESL learners, the development of the practice may include internal changes to longstanding cultural and/or individual methods of perceiving, thinking, and expressing one's ideas. Changing longstanding cultural and/or individual methods is a cognitive as well as an affective process, and the affective may outweigh the cognitive as it often does in cases of culture shock.

In terms of critical and feminist pedagogy, ESL learners are at a minimum linguistically marginalized once they matriculate to U.S. universities. Even if ESL learners are part of the dominant group of their own country and even if they have significant privileges associated with their membership in the dominant group, once they enter U.S. universities, they are *otherized* to

some extent in a variety of ways from their official status as international students to the specialized types of tests or preparation classes they may be asked to take for language development. Some ESL learners are less marginalized. Vandrick (2012) discusses how social class privileges can mitigate ESL learners' marginalization. For example, stable and plentiful financial support can improve learners' living situations and healthcare options. However, for ESL learners in U.S. universities, regardless of their social status, Anglo-American academic writing is a practice that can lead to greater inclusion or exclusion not only in the academic community but the world beyond.

*6.1.3 ESL academic writing instruction.* Considering the potential long-term consequences of academic writing for ESL learners as well as the unique difficulties it may have for them, ESL programs and academic writing instructors have a special responsibility to facilitate learners' development of Anglo-American academic writing. In fact, I think that ESL academic writing teachers should especially focus on developing ESL learners' academic writing with extra consideration for the cultural aspect of that writing. The cultural aspect of Anglo-American academic writing may or may not be part of the knowledge-base of U.S. English Composition teachers, but it likely is not part of the knowledge-base of the average instructor in a discipline other than English. Still, even in those disciplines, academic writing is required, and ESL learners in those situations are writing for potentially less-than-sympathetic readers, and they are writing for readers who may not know how to help them because the readers themselves are fairly unaware of their own writing process.

One of the controversial topics in ESL academic writing instruction is the choice of writing task. Exactly, what writing tasks should an ESL academic writing instructor teach in order to be the most helpful to the learners? Answers vary from discipline specific views, wherein teach-



ers focus on the writing tasks of a specific discipline, to traditional English Composition views, wherein teachers focus on writing tasks like “argumentative/persuasive essays, the hallmark of English department writing” (Leki, 2007, p. 252).

Both of these views surely have their advantages, but they are each problematic as well. For example, ESL writing instructors are not necessarily practicing members of discipline specific communities like engineering or business. (In truth, they may not be practicing members of the Anglo-American academic writing CoP.) In addition, they may have groups of learners who are not all pursuing the same discipline. Therefore, selecting writing tasks from a disciplinary point of view in the absence of a specific bridge connection between courses seems like a risky choice for both the teacher and the learners. Following an English Composition model also seems risky because as Leki (2007) found in her longitudinal study of matriculated ESL learners, they were never asked to write an argumentative/persuasive essay in their courses. Thus, focusing on a text type that is not common may not be useful for learners and may actually put them at a disadvantage.

Another point of view for the choice of writing task for ESL academic writing instructors is the English-for-general-academic-purposes (EGAP) approach (Anderson, 2010). The basic idea behind this approach is that even though writing tasks across the university vary, there are some basic processes of thinking and writing that are included in multiple text types. If ESL academic writing teachers focus on these processes, ESL learners will be able to transfer those skills to any text type. Both Anderson (2010) and James (2009) have found evidence that ESL learners do transfer academic writing skills to new writing tasks, but Leki (1995, 2007) found that matriculated ESL learners did not actually refer to their ESL courses very much as a source of skill development for their present courses. Undoubtedly, differences in research methodolo-

gy could account for these contradictory findings, or perhaps as James (2009) mentions the conditions under which transfer occur are just complex.

Despite inconclusive findings with regard to transfer, Johns (2009) endorses the adoption of a metagenre (Carter, 2007) approach, which is a type of EGAP approach, and I concur with her endorsement. Carter (2007) conducted an investigation comparing 51 undergraduate programs across 9 colleges in his university. He compared their assessment plans and interviewed faculty. Based on his findings, he proposed that despite variation in text types and expectations, there are four general academic writing processes. These include the following: problem-solving, empirical inquiry, research from sources, and performance. Of course, in an 8-week course, even within a small set of four processes, a writing instructor might have to be selective in what she chooses as her focus.

In my case, I chose research from sources as the primary metagenre of focus in my IEP classroom CoP. Admittedly, this metagenre may not have been a match for the future needs of all of my learners. Carter (2007) did find that these metagenres were not used equally in all disciplines. However, this is a metagenre that I know, and if I am to serve as a representative of a CoP, I must teach a practice that reflects my experience in that CoP. I do not believe that it is impossible for me or any other academic writing teacher to learn an unfamiliar metagenre well enough to teach it, but I also agree with Spack's (1988) assertion that, "The writing projects we assign and evaluate should be those we are capable of doing ourselves" (p. 41).

In addition to being a metagenre that I know well, research from sources is a metagenre that I think is particularly problematic for ESL learners because of the hidden cultural values it assumes that learners will know or simply understand without explanation. For example, plagiarism and writer responsibility in terms of amount of explanation are important aspects of the re-

search-from-sources metagenre. Thus, from my point of view, the choice of this metagenre is a critical and feminist pedagogical choice because it is a type of academic writing that is common and possibly uniquely difficult for ESL learners, which means that its potential to position learners for inclusion or exclusion in a CoP is great. It is also a type of academic writing that I produce regularly, and I feel that I can use my personal experience of being a full member of a CoP that produces this type of writing to create the conditions for a more authentic LPP process. Finally, as I believe cognitive development is linked to affective factors, I am, by virtue of my own personal experience, better equipped to understand and respond to the feelings aspect of teaching and learning the research-from-sources metagenre.

#### 6.1.3.1 My journey of selecting an academic writing task for my IEP classroom CoP.

One of the benefits of curricular flexibility when one has it is the freedom to choose classroom tasks. Of course, choosing the primary writing task in an ESL academic writing course also comes with significant responsibility. My reflexive journal indicates that I was preoccupied from the beginning with writing task selection and actually chose to focus on a new-for-me task for the course. The following comments reveal my in-situ decision-making:

Four strong impressions I have from learner comments: coming up with ideas, vocabulary, time management, using ideas from sources. I have decided to ask them to buy *The Moves that Matter* book to try to address the voc. issue. For coming up with ideas in short time, we may do timed brainstorming as part of a daily practice. I probably need to do more explicit self-planning of time for longer projects with them. I will begin working on using ideas from sources from the beginning.

I completely changed my idea for tomorrow's diagnostic based on what learners said about difficulties. My "standard" activity is to have them find diffs btwn formal and in-

formal writing, discuss & categorize those diffs, then write a paragraph about the diffs.

The “problem” is that by categorizing the diffs in our discussion, I’m probably assisting too much in the concept development phase of writing. Also, this diagnostic doesn’t really get at the reading/writing connection that I plan to stress in the class, so it’s really a modified TOEFL. The new diagnostic is more like what I did in May—read two related texts and write an answer that is based on and uses both of them. We will discuss the texts briefly to ensure comprehension. I think this diagnostic will show a lot about how they process & organize information as well as what they understand about plagiarism. I’m wondering how and if I can modify my paragraph activities to focus more on writing about reading. I think I may have to incorporate more short reading in the writing class just to contextualize the writing in the beginning. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, August 25)

My writing task choices were based on my theoretical knowledge of academic writing instruction and my knowledge of the learners’ needs in the context in which I teach. All learners are unique and different, but because most learners who were in my course had taken the previous level, they also had some similarities with regard to writing experiences. My knowledge led me to focus on academic writing tasks that included academic e-mails, the academic research paragraph, and an analytical research essay. In the course, most of the instructional time and practice was spent on the academic research paragraph, and that particular text type is the focus of this chapter.

I use the designation academic research paragraph to refer to a text type that I created for this course that may or may not appear as I used it in this course in natural contexts of Anglo-American writing. The text type I created was similar to the structure of the body paragraphs of English Composition research papers that I had been asked to teach in my previous experience.

In my descriptions of this text type in discussions with learners, I did compare it to body paragraphs, and I also suggested that it was a text type that might be used when a teacher asked for a short essay on an essay exam. However, I did include features in my vision of this text type that may or may not be necessary if the paragraph were truly the body paragraph of an undergraduate research paper. For example, I insisted that learners include a concluding statement at the end of each paragraph. In the kinds of things that learners read to produce research papers (e.g., textbooks, research articles), it is not actually true that all body paragraphs end with a concluding statement. However, based on my personal experience of previous learners in this program, I knew that practicing the skill of wrapping things up and providing a final, meaningful interpretation was something that they had not practiced much.

I also based my understanding of how learners should approach writing an academic research paragraph on my own experience and process. I wrote academic research paragraphs using questions that were similar to what I might give learners, and as I did, I noted the internal and external steps that I followed. I also analyzed my own writing for how I achieved important aspects of academic writing like cohesion and coherence. In addition, the way that I understood what steps learners might need to follow was also influenced by their comments and questions. Their uptake (Freadman, 2002) was often my cue for understanding a part of the process that I might have assumed them to understand that actually needed to be articulated.

For example, I introduced all of the components of the academic research paragraph (e.g., topic sentence, supporting points, illustrations, concluding statement) before we began, and had learners analyze some of the paragraphs I had written to locate those parts. When we did this, several of them asked questions about the concluding statement that made it obvious that their primary concept of concluding was to repeat the topic sentence. Later, I realized as I was teach-

ing learners about brainstorming and selecting ideas that part of their challenge with the concluding statement was that they were not considering their concluding interpretation earlier in their thought process. When I realized this, I changed the way that I taught the brainstorming move, and added brainstorming about the conclusion. The following comment from my field notes documents my change:

I also added brainstorming about the concluding statement in advance. I did not add this to the organized plan handout, but I do think that my “new” thoughts about the topic sentence, supporting points, and concluding statement forming “concrete beams” of the paragraph suggests that they need to think about the CS pre-emptively. (Field Notes, September 13)

Thus, the text type - academic research paragraph - that I taught learners was an abstract representation of the research-from-sources metagenre. The physical representation that I gave this paragraph was in some cases affected by my unique desires for learners. The processes I taught as useful for accomplishing the paragraph were unique to my own experience of writing sample paragraphs and were also informed by observing and interacting with my learners’ experiences of writing them. I required some things of learners like writing with an impersonal tone that are controversial in terms of both critical and feminist pedagogy. However, I made choices based on what I thought would best serve the learners in their future academic writing CoPs, and I did tell them frequently that writing is discipline specific, and every teacher has unique preferences.

In terms of LPP, writing change in this classroom CoP that brought writers into closer alignment with the vision I had of the research-from-sources metagenre was considered a sign of increasing relative competence. Even though the text type I taught this was my personal vision, I

believed that I, as a currently practicing Anglo-American academic writer who had spent many years producing the research-from-sources metagenre, had selected a text type that would create a kind of exigency that would logically result in the learners' realizing that they needed certain types of academic knowledge and skills that they might not have had. Furthermore, I believed that the processes necessary to produce the academic research paragraph as I conceptualized it were the processes necessary to produce research-from-sources text types in any context. I do think that if I were not a practicing member of the CoP Anglo-American academic writers who write research-from-sources text, I would not have been able to select my text type with the same confidence. I definitely think that my insider knowledge as an academic writer of research from sources afforded me insights and understandings of the connection between the relative competence I wanted to foster in the classroom CoP and the relative competence that might be useful in the real-world CoP that could only be achieved because I was an insider.

Turning again to the specifics of the academic research paragraph that I selected as the primary task, I conceptualized the academic research paragraph for the learners in the following way: a paragraph that includes a topic sentence, two supporting points, illustrations for each point, and a concluding statement (we did discuss the number of supporting points as optional); a paragraph that includes references to credible outside academic sources primarily in the illustrations without plagiarizing; a paragraph that is written in U.S. academic style in terms of word choice, grammar use, and conventions (e.g., no contractions, impersonal); a paragraph that is characterized by choices that form a coherent, logical argument; and a paragraph that is characterized by the use linguistic devices like repetition, signal words, and transitions to create a tight cohesion between ideas at three levels. The three levels of cohesion that I wanted them to understand included the following: Level 1 cohesion is the use of repetition, synonyms or related

words, parallel structure, and signal words to make the topic sentence, supporting points, and concluding statement easily identifiable to the reader; Level 2 cohesion is the use of repetition and synonyms or related words to obviously connect the first sentence of the illustration to the sentence that introduced the supporting point; Level 3 cohesion is the use of all aforementioned strategies to link each sentence of the illustration to the sentence that preceded it.

I selected the academic research paragraph as my choice for theoretical reasons (i.e., it reflects the research from sources metagenre that I know well, and it is an important and difficult metagenre for ESL learners). I also selected it for practical reasons. The practical reasons are related to the efficient and effective use of time, which I believe is a concern for all teachers. Two practical beliefs influenced my choice of writing task. The first belief is that my belief in the utility of the moves analysis approach (Swales, 1990) for analyzing and teaching writing. I knew that I would be breaking whatever task I chose into moves and developing instructional materials and practice activities related to the moves. Given my schedule, I needed a task that would include relatively short practice texts for the moves so that I could reasonably provide feedback on multiple practice attempts. For example, it is reasonable for me to provide feedback on five topic sentences per person from one class to another, but it is not reasonable for me to provide feedback on five entire paragraphs from one class to another.

I also needed a task that would be time efficient and effective for the learners. I needed a task that would allow them to practice the crucial internal cultural perceiving, thinking, and expressing skills as well as the external linguistic skills that I think are most challenging for ESL learners. I also knew that their final writing task had to be an extended writing task (i.e., a research paper). Therefore, I needed a writing task that would prepare them for the research paper by practicing skills they would need for the research paper so that the transition from one task to



another would be smooth. The academic research paragraph as I conceptualized it was very similar to the body paragraphs of a student research paper that I had been asked to teach for an English Composition course for matriculated ESL learners, so I reasoned that focusing on this type of paragraph and the processes it invoked would provide time-saving and useful preparation for their final task of writing a research paper.

Finally, I do not believe that quantity trumps quality. I believe that at an advanced level as these learners were, it is more important to learn how to do one short move well than to write whole paragraphs and essays in which the learner repeatedly does the same thing incorrectly. When learners write whole paragraphs and essays day in and day out, I think it is possible that they never receive direct feedback on repeated mistakes within moves because the teacher is attending to the entire text rather than specific moves of the text. I also do not believe that ESL learners who meet with me five days per week should have to do homework every weekend, or for that matter, that I should have to spend extensive time every weekend providing feedback. In this course as in all of my courses, I gave some homework every night, but weekends are left free except for the final weekend of the course when learners are often working on their research papers. Thus, focusing on the moves of the academic research paragraph before doing a whole paragraph appealed to my beliefs about how my time and learners' time could be best utilized.

The writing task that I chose and the parts-before-whole approach that I used was something I returned to in my journal fairly often. For example, the following comments are collected from different points in the course:

I'm feeling nervous about the pacing because I know that I am also going to slow things down by teaching an extra step on locating appropriate, credible information for points. However, presumably, all of this is going to pay off with them having certain knowledge

and skills earlier in the session so that the research paper isn't the first time they "think" about needing that knowledge or those skills.

I'm seeing more and more how difficult the task of coming up with content is for them. They were absolutely right when they identified "coming up with ideas" as a major difficulty for them or "understanding how ideas fit together" as another major difficulty. The "organized" or "focused" brainstorming approach of teaching them how to "come up with a relevant question" to focus on is really helpful I think. I've used that in the past when teaching the essay, but this time I'm teaching it from the beginning, and I think this too will pay off.

Although I'm worried about pacing, I think focusing on the academic *research* paragraph and taking lots of time on it is really going to help. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 15)

I'm having the true or false sensation that learners may feel like they're not writing enough in the class because in truth, we aren't writing—we're planning. I feel like I'm giving them access to a process that they haven't necessarily "seen" before by working on all of these other aspects of writing together, but I realize that they may not share that view and that is disconcerting to me. I primarily feel this way because one student said something about not writing and not getting feedback in his mid-point reflections.

I have tried to share more openly with students why I am having them focus on these "detailed" aspects of the paragraph, and certainly at the level of planning a paragraph, it is clear to me that most struggle with coherence (i.e., a common mistake has been not selecting "different" supporting points). Still, I'm feeling uncomfortable with the lack of

“product” even though I’m enjoying the pacing and think this type of process approach will prove useful. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 20)

In Class A, I was able to discuss improving the speed of writing by establishing the “beams” of your writing as a way to deal with the time requirements more effectively. This is a “hidden” discovery on my part because I certainly had not thought of the utility for timed writing that this particular approach might have. However, watching them work in teams helped me to realize that this truly is an “approach” that might be successfully taught that would have benefits not only for out-of-class but also in-class writing. I am pleased that teams are moving more quickly through their paragraphs although it still takes them more than 25 minutes or 35 minutes to complete a paragraph—I would say that in teams, they still need 55 or so minutes even when the topic is familiar. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 29)

Normally, the research paper time is when some learners simply stop doing the work and disappear figuratively from the course. These learners understand that they must pass the paper to pass the class, but still they disappear. In this case, all learners but one who was absent today have submitted a first draft, and all learners turned in “beams”. Frankly, I was surprised. However, it is true that this session I have probably had more consistent attendance and assignment completion than ever in the past. Some learners have *not* done things but by and large, learners have kept up with attendance and assignments. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, October 10)

From my comments, it is clear that I was somewhat besieged with doubts about my choice of writing task with regard to how long it took to teach and practice each of the moves. I was worried because of the lack of quantity in terms of written product and because learners also seemed to expect more quantity. However, my comments also reveal that the approach was “paying off” because I even made new discoveries for how to guide them in improving the speed of their writing. In addition, my comments indicate that learners in this course were able to accomplish something that learners in previous courses had not done, namely turn in a draft and an outline. Of course, this could be related to the learners’ personalities, but it could also be a reflection of the orientation to interactions that focused on building healthy relationships and the choice of a writing task that provided a realistic, achievable, and helpful goal for learners.

6.1.3.2 My impressions of learners’ academic writing development throughout the course. Just as I commented on my feelings about the choice and implementation of the academic writing task throughout the course, I also commented in my journal and my field notes on my perceptions of their progress. Often, these comments were based on my interactions with them in class after discussion in the campfire discussion circle or discussions of the public writing forum. The following comments detail my impressions of the ease or difficulty of the particular writing task and the moves that I was teaching the learners:

The learners are not as far as I can tell finding all of this easy, nor are they able to do all of this without assistance, so it does matter to give them time to process and proceed.

(Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 15)

I can tell in some cases that in-class work and feedback is “changing” what learners are trying to do. I can also see that learners are experimenting a lot with framing and refer-

ring to references. I think providing sentence stems for the topic sentence, the supporting points, and the concluding statement has made a huge difference in allowing learners to be able to practice the information integration and cohesion piece of illustrations. I also think it's helped them to "organize" their thoughts and coherence. Tonight, they will do a paragraph without stems, so I will be interested to see how many of them re-use what I've been giving them. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 28)

I've started grading Paragraph 5 and I've graded two so far—Rebeca and Ahmed. I must say that I'm greatly impressed that I'm receiving assignments that I can now correct using track changes versus just comments. Usually, I won't use track changes until the corrections are all mostly of the linguistic variety, so the fact that I can use track changes shows that structurally and informationally, they're getting things in the "right" places. Rebeca was already a strong writer, but I think Ahmed has improved a lot with regard to academic writing. I'm very pleased with the in-class team approach and the outside-of-class individual approach—they seem to be reinforcing each other effectively. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 29)

Think Ss feel more confident about research after our 7 paragraphs. They seem to recognize struggles, but I'm framing their struggles as experimentation and encouraging them to continue experimenting. (Field Notes, September 30)

I have felt as we near the end of this course that all learners have changed their writing, but some learners simply are not "near" the target of being able to do work that might

pass in a U.S. university. I feel very conflicted about this even though I've been clear that I would not be "helping" anyone by allowing them to pass if they truly were not in the proverbial "ballpark". (Teacher Reflexive Journal, October 10)

Writing class ended today with a final that was similar to the Diagnostic. No matter how the learners do on the final, I feel confident based on what learners have done and said that they gained something "new" from the class. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, October 12)

In general, my comments reflect a general sense that the academic writing task I had chosen and the parts-before-whole approach I was using were not too easy or too hard for the learners. My comments obviously reflect my sense that they were making progress even as they struggled. In addition, my comments acknowledge that not all learners were writing in alignment with my criteria, which I think given the differing types of writing experiences they had before my course makes perfect sense.

Throughout the course, I also commented often on the specific challenges that learners seemed to be facing with the academic research paragraph task. Because of the moves approach that I was using, I was able to pinpoint some specific areas of challenge that were perhaps uniquely related to cultural features of Anglo-American academic writing. The following provides a sampling of my comments on my perceptions of their challenges:

Quite clear in both classes that planning phase is harder than the Ss thought. Most indicated that they would revise their plans based on what we had done. Making sure the "beams" connect and support one another seems to be "hard" for several of them. (Field Notes, September 14)

Still some problems with topic sentence, but many had the “formula” figured out

Planning still seems difficult though they are getting better. (Field Notes, September 15)

Most common problem is not selecting two different points. Did tell Class 2 that this is a pre-writing problem that can make writing go “wrong” before it begins. I probably should emphasize this with Class 1 as well. (Field Notes, September 20)

The rest of the teams struggled with framing or sometimes expert illustration selection, but they didn’t plagiarize. In Class B, more than one team didn’t finish, and Class B’s paragraphs were in general less accurate in terms of adding illustrations than Class A. It has been my impression all session that Class A had a more “advanced” understanding of academic writing than Class B, so perhaps this is true.

I began class today with questions about the feedback or last night’s writing assignment. Class A had multiple, sophisticated questions that reflected “awareness” of self-process in writing. The questions covered things like finding multiple illustrations for one point and how much framing was necessary. Class B was not uncharacteristically quiet when asked for questions. Victoria was really the only person with questions.

One thing that was clear in both classes is the fact that question up-take is a source of misalignment in the assignments. For example, in both classes, the learners had a hard time understanding that last night’s question (categories of non-verbal communication) and today’s question (meanings of non-verbal communication) required “different” types

of supporting points. I realized the problem in Class A, but it was resolved quickly (I think). (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 27)

I can tell in some cases that in-class work and feedback is “changing” what learners are trying to do. I can also see that learners are experimenting a lot with framing and referring to references. I think providing sentence stems for the topic sentence, the supporting points, and the concluding statement has made a huge difference in allowing learners to be able to practice the information integration and cohesion piece of illustrations. I also think it’s helped them to “organize” their thoughts and coherence. (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 28)

I asked at the beginning of class for questions or comments related to assignments or feedback. In both classes, learners are showing awareness of their own difficulties with framing. I explained to both classes the “cultural” aspect of how many or how few gaps to leave. Notably in private questions or my walking around observations, I’m hearing/seeing the following: Ahmed—should he use a citation in the topic sentence; Min A—not understanding why the team’s topic sentence didn’t match the question (the topic sentence responded to how, but the question was what); Soyoung and Min A—inadequate framing (I explained to them again how to frame by referring to what they had written); Frida & Carolina—establishing supporting points (they weren’t able to select a second one from the text); (Teacher Reflexive Journal, September 29)



Ahmed wanted to know what he could read to improve linking (they always want a magic answer). We went over how reading in general could improve linking. (Field Notes, September 30)

From my comments, it becomes clear that learners struggled with things like framing, which referred to introducing and explaining citations from outside sources. This is an academic writing skill that is directly related to the concept of writer responsibility. For most of them, the problem was that they did not explain enough, and the challenge was to discover all the steps required to explain enough and maintain cohesion between all of the sentences.

Another challenge for them was the choice of supporting points, which I think is also related to writer responsibility. The selection of supporting points in Anglo-American writing is generally constrained by the topic and the controlling idea of the topic sentence. When there are two supporting points, they are generally different (i.e., not part of the same causal chain). These limitations on supporting points appeared to be a challenge for them in their decision-making as I think they were operating from a perspective that anything that was related to the topic could possibly be included. I also think that distinguishing that ideas were not part of the same causal chain was a challenge for them conceptually and in terms of vocabulary knowledge. These features of academic writing are related to writer responsibility because the burden of creating a logical argument depends on the writer selecting points that are logical according to the reader.

In my comments, there is also some mention of citation, choices of quotations and proper placement in the text. Ironically, their challenges were not so much with actually plagiarizing as with again the writer responsibility aspect of academic writing. Choosing relevant passages to cite is a question of writer-reader relationships and understanding where citations might be normal or expected is also a question of writer-reader relationships. Thus, even though, I considered

plagiarism to be a key point that I needed to address in my teaching, in my reflections and field notes, I was not noticing many problems in this area.

## **6.2 *Learners' Academic Writing Development over Time: Research Question 5***

Learners' academic writing development throughout the course will be evaluated in the written texts of three learners—Ahmed, Min A, and Frida. These learners were chosen because they all stated that they did not like writing in English at the beginning of the course, so I consider it likely that they potentially began the course with feelings of stress or anxiety. All of them mentioned legacies of negative writing experiences in the general information form they filled out at the beginning of the course. For example, Ahmed mentioned his intense fear of making mistakes, Min A mentioned how much she disliked being told to write but only receiving editing feedback, and Frida mentioned fears about timed writing along with feeling that she had not had good teachers. However, all of them mentioned feeling good or more confident about writing at the end of the course, and they mentioned specific ways that they felt they had improved. Thus, I consider it possible that the orientation to interactions that focused on building healthy relationships assisted in creating more positive feelings, thereby by decreasing their resistance or fight-or-flight response with regard to writing which may facilitated their academic writing development. I also chose these learners because they represent three different L1 groups. Ahmed's L1 was Arabic, Min A's was Korean, and Frida's was Spanish.

I did not choose Soyoung, Rebeca, or Carolina because they already liked writing in English at the beginning of the course. I considered this a sign that they were more willing to take risks and engage in academic writing from the beginning than the other learners. I also think that in the case of Rebeca and Carolina, their ideas about academic writing aligned with mine somewhat more closely from the beginning than the ideas of the other learners. Although Jieun also

did not like writing in English, I did not choose her for this analysis because from the beginning her goals for the course were not aligned with mine. She wanted to learn about business writing not academic writing. Therefore, although both she and I thought she improved, she was perhaps engaging in the process in a different way than the other learners who wanted to learn academic writing.

The analysis will include four academic research paragraphs written by the learners at different points in the course. The first academic research paragraph assignment was the diagnostic task. During the first week of the course, learners were given 4-5 page excerpts from two different texts, an undergraduate textbook and a popular culture type of text, on the topic of non-verbal communication. They were asked to read these excerpts as homework. They were told that they would be writing about them the next day in class for a timed writing assignment. On the day of the diagnostic, I spent approximately 15 minutes in a pre-writing discussion with learners. Then, they received the assignment, and they had 30-40 minutes to write the “best” academic paragraph they knew how to write at that point. They were allowed to refer to their sources during the task, and they were asked to refer to both sources in the paragraph. They were told not to plagiarize, but they were not told what that term meant in any detail because I truly wanted to know what *they* thought an academic paragraph was including what they thought plagiarism was. The exact wording of the assignment was as follows:

#### **Diagnostic Task**

1. Open a blank Microsoft Word document. Immediately save the document and name it as YourName\_Diagnostic (e.g., Ahmed\_Diagnostic).
2. Set the font as Times New Roman font, size 12.
3. Set the spacing as double-spaced.
4. Write ONE academic paragraph (not an essay—just ONE paragraph) that answers the following question. Write the best academic paragraph that you know how to write. In

your answer, refer specifically to information that is in each text (Text 1 & Text 2). Do not plagiarize! You have the remainder of this class to complete this task.

Don't forget to indent the first sentence of your paragraph. (Use tab to indent that sentence.)

I will show you how to upload your paragraph to LMS using the assignments tool.

You must turn this paragraph in at the end of class whether you are finished or not. You will not have extra time to complete this task.

**Writing Question:**

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying nonverbal communication is just as important as studying verbal communication skills like speaking or writing. Explain using specific reasons and examples.*

*In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in each text (Text 1 & Text 2). Do not plagiarize! You have 30 minutes to complete this task.*

Figure 1. Instructions for Diagnostic Task

The second academic research paragraph that will be analyzed was written after learners had spent approximately one month focused on learning about each move of an academic research paragraph and practicing just the moves rather than writing entire paragraphs. Prior to this assignment, the learners had begun working on a group paragraph together in class, but this was their first individual attempt. Learners were asked to use the same sources they had used for the diagnostic to ensure familiarity with the content, but they were only required to use one source. In addition, I provided scaffolding for the basic structure of the paragraph by providing sentence stems for the topic sentence, supporting points' sentences, and the concluding state-

ment. My plan was to provide limited scaffolding in the beginning and gradually remove the scaffolding in future assignments. Learners were asked to write this paragraph over night at home. Plagiarism had been defined for learners as copying word-for-word or closely copying others' ideas with direct citation or borrowing information from sources that was not common knowledge without giving credit to the authors' of the source. I had explained to learners that common knowledge were either ideas that most educated adults knew from simply living in a given culture and being exposed to the media or ideas that most people who worked in a specific content area knew because they were part of the basic knowledge-base for that content area. I had explained that textbooks were often repositories of common knowledge for different topics and that everyone's common knowledge was different by virtue of their life experience. Again, I did not make fine distinctions between patchwriting (Howard, 2001) and plagiarism because I felt that in the real-world CoP, learners might not be granted such latitude. The assignment was as follows:

### **Paragraph 3**

*Write ONE academic research paragraph INDIVIDUALLY that answers the following question.*

*Use at least one of your sources on nonverbal communication. It's also okay to use both sources.*

*-Your paragraph must have TWO supporting points.*

*-First, complete the topic sentence, supporting points, and concluding statement with common knowledge ideas that you believe are logically connected to one another. You may need to look at your sources to review the common knowledge ideas. You can change the structure of the sentences if you need to do so.*

*-Then, find illustrations in the handouts you have on nonverbal communication. Please don't plagiarize and remember to "frame" your illustrations.*

*-Your paragraph should be written in Times New Roman font, size 12. They should be double-spaced. Remember to indent (tab) the first sentence of the paragraph.*

Question:

What are some categories of nonverbal communication? Explain and provide specific examples.

**Topic Sentence** Nonverbal communication.... **Supporting Point 1** ..... is one category of nonverbal communication. **Supporting Point 2** ... is also a category of nonverbal communication.

**Concluding Statement** Understanding the categories of nonverbal communication is important for .... because...

Figure 2. Instructions for Paragraph 3

The third text that will be analyzed was the final academic research paragraph that learners wrote before moving on to the task of writing a research paper. Learners had written three paragraphs in groups and three paragraphs individually by the time that they wrote this paragraph. They had received my written feedback on some of those paragraphs before writing this paragraph. In addition, we had discussed common challenges in the paragraphs in our daily campfire discussion circles. For this assignment, learners were asked to write a whole paragraph over night without scaffolding using the textbook they were reading for the course, *They Say I Say* (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010). Learners had already read the chapter, so I assumed that familiarity with the topic would facilitate writing the paragraph. They were only required to use one source. The assignment was as follows:

### Paragraph 7

*Write ONE academic research paragraph INDIVIDUALLY that answers the following question.*

*For this paragraph, use your textbook, especially Chapter 8, as your expert source.*

*-Your paragraph must have TWO supporting points.*

*-You will need to create your own topic sentence, supporting points, and concluding statement.*

*-Then, find illustrations in the suggested web sites or other credible web sites. Please don't plagiarize and remember to "frame" your illustrations.*

*-Your paragraph should be written in Times New Roman font, size 12. They should be double-spaced. Remember to indent (tab) the first sentence of the paragraph.*

*-Name your paragraph with YourName\_Paragraph\_7 (e.g., Jieun\_Paragraph\_7).*

Question:

Chapter 8 discusses how to create smoother connections in academic writing. What are some ways to create smoother connections in academic writing? Explain and provide specific examples.

Figure 3. Instructions for Paragraph 7

The final academic research paragraph that will be analyzed is the final exam for the course. This paragraph was a timed, in-class paragraph like the diagnostic. As with the diagnostic, learners were given excerpts from two texts, both undergraduate textbooks, on the topic of relational orientations. They were told to read these texts for an in-class writing assignment the

next day. On the day of the exam, we spent 10-15 minutes in a pre-writing discussion of the topic. Then, learners spent 30-40 minutes writing their texts. They were instructed to use both sources in their paragraphs, and they were allowed to refer to the texts during the exam. The exact instructions were as follows:

### **Final Exam Task**

1. Open a blank Microsoft Word document. Immediately save the document and name it as YourName\_Final (e.g., Soyoung\_Final).
2. Set the font as Times New Roman font, size 12.
3. Set the spacing as double-spaced.
4. Write ONE academic paragraph (not an essay—just ONE paragraph) that answers the following question. Write the best academic paragraph that you know how to write. In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in two different texts. You have four texts. Do not plagiarize! You have the remainder of this class to complete this task. Don't forget to indent the first sentence of your paragraph. (Use tab to indent that sentence.)

Upload your paragraph to LMS using the assignments tool.

You must turn this paragraph in at the end of class whether you are finished or not. You will not have extra time to complete this task.

#### **Writing Question:**

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying relational orientations like the ones described in Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2007) are just as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing. Explain using specific reasons and examples.*

*In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in two different texts. Do not plagiarize! You have 30 minutes to complete this task.*

Figure 4. Instructions for Final Exam Task



In the analysis that follows, I have made the following changes to make discussing learners' text easier. I have included the question to which they were responding with their paragraph. I have formatted their paragraph as a double-spaced paragraph if for some reason they had unusual formatting. I have added superscript numbers before each sentence to make it easier to discuss what the learners did or did not do.

*6.2.1 Ahmed.* Ahmed was a conscientious, hardworking learner who saw a meaningful use for academic writing instruction because he was planning to attend graduate school in the U.S soon after he finished the course. Although he began the course saying that he did not like to write in English, I found him to be a highly engaged learner, who truly manifested a desire to learn. He was a frequent contributor in campfire discussion circles. During the third interview, he described his primary progress in academic writing in the following way:

EI: Umkay, well, um, can you tell me then what was the most helpful thing about Lauren's class? Or about her teaching approach?

Ahmed: Actually, for the class uh as I say before the structure the deeply structure for each step in the writing beginning from the introduction and the body paragraph how can we select the topic sentences to be whether general or specific and how can we put it the controlling idea how can we select the supporting ideas like general or specific and how can make illustration how can we know that illustration fit with the introduction with the topic sentences with the other body paragraph... (Interview 3, Ahmed)

In his comments, he remarked extensively on the body paragraph by which he meant the academic research paragraph that we had practiced repeatedly during the course. Ahmed ap-

peared to feel that his improvement had been primarily in the structure or the “deeply structure,” which I took to mean the thinking process that was behind the actual writing of a paragraph.

6.2.1.1 Ahmed’s diagnostic. The diagnostic was written by most learners before I provided any instruction on the moves of academic research paragraphs or any models of those paragraphs. However, Ahmed wrote his diagnostic a week after everyone else, so he had participated in some discussions of academic writing and seen models of academic research paragraphs. Because he did not write the diagnostic in class as other learners had, it is possible that he also had more time although I did try to limit time when learners made up the diagnostic to 40 minutes or less.

I found Ahmed’s diagnostic to exhibit some sophisticated awareness of structure and some awareness of plagiarism. However, it did reflect some areas that needed development like knowledge of how to cite a source, choice of relevant citations, and framing of citations. The question and his answer are as follows:

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying nonverbal communication is just as important as studying verbal communication skills like speaking or writing. Explain using specific reasons and examples.*

*In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in each text (Text 1 & Text 2). Do not plagiarize! You have 30 minutes to complete this task.*

<sup>1</sup>Although many students think that studying nonverbal communication is not important, there are some evidences illustrate that is fundamental. <sup>2</sup>First significant evident is not understanding verbal communication will lead to misunderstanding. <sup>3</sup>According to what I read in the assaiments texts, some gestures meaning in some countries are differ-

ent from other country. <sup>4</sup>For example, the ring gesture means “OK” to a Westerner, while means “money” to a Japanese and a “Zero” to the French. <sup>5</sup>Moreover, the posture offers between some countries are different. <sup>6</sup>In Japan culture, people use low posture in bowing as more respect in greeting. <sup>7</sup>While in Thailand, people who make a low posture is from lower status. <sup>8</sup>In addition, there are different clothes a person should be aware about them when he visit another country. <sup>9</sup>For example, Arab men don't wear shorts or degenerate in public. <sup>10</sup>Also, Arab Women cover their hairs and faces. <sup>11</sup>For all of these evidences, people should studying nonverbal communication to avoid problems and understanding other ....

Figure 5. Ahmed's Diagnostic

To begin, Ahmed did appear to know that he should include a topic sentence (sentence 1), a supporting point sentence (sentence 2), illustrations (sentences 3-10), and a concluding statement (sentence 11). Thus, even in a timed situation, he did produce all of the basic components. His topic sentence (1) reflected appropriate uptake of the question. His supporting point sentence (2) had a contextually but not linguistically clear relationship to the topic sentence. He did not repeat key topic and controlling idea words in his supporting point sentence (2), he merely gave the signal word “first” to indicate that he was making a point. He did reference his citations in sentence 3 by saying, “According to what I read in the assignments texts.” In addition, his use of information from the texts was not copied. He had tried to summarize or paraphrase. His concluding statement (11) was logical if somewhat superficial.

In my opinion, Ahmed's areas that needed improvement were the selection of relevant citations, the framing of citations, the creation of cohesion through linguistic devices other than signal words, and knowledge of appropriate citation style. In sentence 2, Ahmed identified

“misunderstandings” as the reason for his position. In sentence 3, he identified “gestures” as a category for misunderstandings. In sentences 4-7, he did give examples of gestures that could lead to misunderstandings between different cultures. He even made a sophisticated transition move between examples with sentence 5 when he changed from the “ring” gesture to “posture.” However, in sentences 8-10, he provided examples related to clothing, which did not fit the category of gestures. Thus, he had selected some citations that were not relevant to his argument.

In addition, besides sentence 3 in which he proposed the category “gestures” and the transition sentence 5 in which he switched from “ring” gesture to “posture,” Ahmed had no framing. He never explained what types of misunderstandings any of these gestures could cause or why these misunderstandings would matter. He relied on the reader to understand the logic of his connections rather than explaining his logic.

In sentence 3, he did try to cite his source, but clearly he did not have knowledge of how to do this in a research-from-sources way. Rather, he used a style of citation that might be acceptable for speaking or exam writing. In addition, Ahmed’s repetition of key words from one sentence to another was minimal. For example, the topic expression “nonverbal communication” was not repeated until the final sentence (11).

During my second interview with Ahmed, I showed him his diagnostic paragraph again. He had not seen it since he did it, and when he saw it during the second interview, he had completed the parts-before-whole approach I took to teaching the academic research paragraph. I asked Ahmed to read his diagnostic paragraph and tell me what he thought. His comments were the following:

Ahmed: Yes, of course, actually when I starting to read this I realize that is no topic sentence no supporting idea no concluding statement all what I should

to put it in body paragraph I didn't see it at all and also I think plagiarism is a lot of plagiarism here [Me: Okay] all of example is plagiarism because I didn't mention only I mention it in the first and then without article or years or the author of the article I think it will change a lot (Interview 2, Ahmed)

It is interesting to note that Ahmed saw many mistakes in his review of the diagnostic that I did not actually see in my analysis. However, I do think what he was noticing was that he did lack certain linguistic devices like key word repetition that made it hard to identify the components of his paragraph. I think it was a sign of positive change with regard to plagiarism that in his review of the paragraph, he was concerned with both his style of citation and whether or not he gave credit to the expert in the correct way. He realized that he had borrowed information that extended over several sentences, and he was concerned that the lack of obvious voice markers would hide the fact that he was borrowing these examples rather than offering them as original examples from his own personal knowledge base.

6.2.2.2 Ahmed's paragraph 3. Before completing this assignment, Ahmed had spent approximately one month learning about and practicing the moves of an academic research paragraph. In this case, his paragraph was scaffolded, so he did have some pre-determined structure. In particular, the structure of his topic sentence, supporting points, and concluding statement were prompted with sentence stems. He also wrote this paragraph at home, so there were no teacher-imposed time limitations. His question and paragraph are as follows:

Question:

What are some categories of nonverbal communication? Explain and provide specific examples.

<sup>1</sup>Nonverbal communication has two categories. <sup>2</sup>Appearance is one category of nonverbal communication. <sup>3</sup>People are always concerned about how they appear to others. <sup>4</sup>They make judgment on others based on their external appearance. <sup>5</sup>According to Samovar, Porter and M'Paniel, 2007, from the past to the present, many people are attentive on their bodies. <sup>6</sup>For example, in African, South America and Native America people are still painting their faces to be a beauty. <sup>7</sup>They mention that people in the past were wearing necklaces by using bones to be beauty. <sup>8</sup>The facial expressions are also another category of nonverbal communication. <sup>9</sup>Using these expressions have become more common among people when they deal with each other. <sup>10</sup>For instance Pease, 2004, states that Japanese smile and nod when they listen carefully to another person.

<sup>11</sup>Understanding the categories of nonverbal communication is important for people who want to leave to another culture.

Figure 6. Ahmed's Paragraph 3

As I mentioned the basic structure of the paragraph (i.e., the topic sentence, supporting points, and concluding statement) were prompted for Ahmed using sentence stems. However, his topic sentence did reflect the question. His choice of supporting points did reflect attention to choosing points that were different and linguistically in the same category of general or specific (i.e., appearance and facial expressions are approximately equally specific). His concluding statement is logical and still somewhat superficial. He did refer to his sources without copying, and he did show an attempt to use a citation style associated with research-from-sources.

In this paragraph, it is noteworthy that Ahmed did select relevant citations for both of his supporting points. His first supporting point was appearance, and his example in sentences 5-7 was related to appearance. His second supporting point was facial expressions, and his example

in sentence 10 was related to facial expressions. However, his framing was still problematic. He did show evidence of trying to frame his citations. For example, sentence 4 appeared to be his way of trying to introduce the quotation, but it actually introduced a new idea to the paragraph (i.e., he switched from people's concern for their own appearance to people's judgment of others based on others' appearance). Sentence 7 seemed like it was an explanation of the citation, but it read more like a continuation of the citation. Sentence 9 was also another attempt to introduce a citation that managed only to say something off-topic in terms of the paragraph. His supporting point was identified as "facial expressions," but the sentence that followed it said something illogical about "these expression" becoming "more common." He did not include any attempt to explain his citation in sentence 10. Thus, Ahmed showed awareness and experimentation with framing and he improved his choice of citations as well as his citation style, but he still really did not establish effective, clear frames for his citations.

In terms of his overall cohesion, the only places that he appeared to be using key word repetition were sentences 3 ("appearance" – "appear") and 9 ("expressions" – "these expressions") when he was trying to introduce the citation. He only repeated the expression non-verbal communication in the sentence stems that I had given him. Thus, he was still relying on his reader to intuitively understand how his ideas were connected by means of logical association or signal words.

6.2.2.3 Ahmed's paragraph 7. Before completing this assignment, Ahmed had written three academic research paragraphs in team writing situations and three paragraphs individually. He had received written and oral feedback from me with regard to many of those paragraphs. He wrote this paragraph at home without teacher-imposed time restrictions. He did not receive any scaffolding for this assignment. His question and paragraph are as follows:

Question:

Chapter 8 discusses how to create smoother connections in academic writing. What are some ways to create smoother connections in academic writing? Explain and provide specific examples.

<sup>1</sup>Creating smoother connections in academic writing has a variety of types. <sup>2</sup>Using transition term such as “however” and “consequently” is one type of creating smoother connections in academic writing. <sup>3</sup>Without using these terms, the text will be so difficult for readers to understand. <sup>4</sup>According to Graff and Birkenstein (2010), they mention that when a writer begin to write, he should imagin that each sentence has arm which reach backward and forward. <sup>5</sup>This method will help writers to cross from one point to another smoothly by using the appropriate transition term. <sup>6</sup>Adding pointing words like “such” or “that” is another type of creating smoother connections in academic writing. <sup>7</sup>In order to make sure that the reader understand the meaning of the text, the writer should use proper pointing words. <sup>8</sup>Graff and Birkenstein (2010) report that when the writing lacks of connections, readers will go back to the text and attempt to figure out the connections on their own. <sup>9</sup>Using this method will help writers to connect their sentences easily and effectively. <sup>10</sup>For people who want to be a good writers, understanding the ways to create smoother connections in academic writing is essential to help readers understand the text smoothly.

Figure 7. Ahmed's Paragraph 7

Ahmed included all of the required components of the academic research paragraph. His topic sentence (1) provided an accurate but grammatically awkward uptake of the question. He



indicated that he would be discussing “types” of connections. His first supporting point sentence (2) identified “transition term” as a “type of creating smoother connections in academic writing.” His second supporting point sentence (6) identified “pointing words” as “another type of creating smoother connections in academic writing.” His second supporting point sentence was also written in parallel structure with his first supporting point sentence. His concluding statement (10) identified a target group of people who might care about his topic, “people who want to be good writers,” and a reason they might care, “help readers understand the text smoothly.” In addition, in this concluding statement, he repeated the key topic idea “ways to create smoother connection in academic writing.”

His development showed that he understood level 1 cohesion between the topic sentence, supporting points sentences, and the concluding statement. He used the repetition of key topic words, parallel structure, and signal words like “one type” and “another type” to draw his reader’s attention to the primary information of his argument. His selection of supporting points was questionable because transition words and pointing words could reasonably be considered the same idea.

With regard to his illustrations, he displayed some awareness of level 2 cohesion (linking of first sentence of illustration to supporting point sentence), but limited awareness of level 3 cohesion (linking each sentence within an illustration to the sentence before it.). His first supporting point was identified in sentence 2 as “transition term.” Sentence 3 elaborated on the importance of “these terms” by saying that without them “the text will be so difficult for readers to understand.” Thus, linguistically he has created a connection that led the reader to expect an example or more explanation of how transition terms create or resolve reader difficulty.

However, Ahmed's level 3 cohesion broke down at this point because he did not offer any linguistic repetition of "difficulty" or "transition term." He simply offered a citation in sentence 4 that referred to the concept of sentences having arms that reach forward and backward. In sentence 5, he explained that "this method" would be helpful to writers "to cross from one point to another smoothly by using the appropriate transition term," but the word "method" was not used in any of the previous sentences.

In addition to the absence of level 3 cohesion, Ahmed's choice of citation as he used it did not truly reflect information that was relevant to this point. However, he did not plagiarize, and he did use an acceptable in-text citation style. Ahmed followed basically the same procedure for the second supporting point and its accompanying illustration, and he displayed the same development of lack thereof. He had level 2 cohesion between sentences 6 and 7 ("pointing words"), but sentence 7 did not necessarily move his argument forward in any way. Rather, it seemed to basically repeat the supporting point as advice for the writer. He did not have level 3 cohesion. Sentences 8 and 9 did not repeat any key words, and they are not logically related to each other. His citation was done correctly, but his choice of citation was not helpful.

6.2.2.4 Ahmed's final exam. Before completing this assignment, Ahmed had written seven academic research paragraphs and a research paper that included three body paragraphs. Thus, he had completed ten academic research paragraphs. He had received written and oral feedback from me with regard to most if not all of those paragraphs. He wrote this paragraph in class after reading two source texts on the topic of relational orientations at home. He was allowed to consult the source texts in class. The class began with a brief 10-15 warm-up discussion of the topic. He had 35-40 minutes to complete this assignment. His question and paragraph are as follows:

Question:

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying relational orientations like the ones described in Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2007) are just as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing. Explain using specific reasons and examples. In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in two different texts. Do not plagiarize! You have 30 minutes to complete this task.*

<sup>1</sup>It is important for students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying relational orientations just as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing for several reasons. <sup>2</sup>Avoiding misunderstanding is the primary reason that studying relational orientations just as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing. <sup>3</sup>Students who want to another culture should know that they will face different behaviors. <sup>4</sup>They may think why these people behave like this? <sup>5</sup>Or why the another culture behave as a rude way toward them, but these behaviors are natural in another culture. <sup>6</sup>According to Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2007), there are many different orientation between culture. <sup>7</sup>For example, he mentions that some people from collective orientation, which people like to do their work as a group. <sup>8</sup>They like to help each other. <sup>9</sup>While in individualism orientation they called people from collective orientation as passive because people from individualism orientation like to do their job by own. <sup>10</sup>Also, he states people who is high context use a lot body language. <sup>11</sup>For example, Korean and Arab people most of their behaviors are nonverbal communication. <sup>12</sup>But in another country like U.S, they say what they want by word clearly. <sup>13</sup>For example, if a student from Arab culture went to US, and behave with nonverbal communication, American people won't understand what he means, and may be they will consider it as a strange

way.<sup>14</sup> It is important for students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country to study relational orientations to avoid misunderstanding between people.

Figure 8. Ahmed's Final Exam

Ahmed's paragraph in this case had a topic sentence (1), one identifiable supporting point (2), and a concluding statement (14). These three sentences had level 1 cohesion because in each sentence Ahmed makes some type of reference to studying "relational orientations." The topic sentence was grammatically awkward, but it did reflect the question. The supporting point sentence clearly identified itself by the use of "a primary reason." The concluding statement offered a target group of people who care about this topic, "students who wish to pursue a degree in another country," which he borrowed from the question. Ahmed offered that these "students" reason for caring related to avoiding misunderstanding, which was the same thing he had already said in the supporting point sentence. Thus, I found his concluding statement superficial.

Ahmed's developing knowledge of framing led him to include longer illustrations, so the illustration for supporting point 2 began with sentence 3 and did not end until sentence 9. Ahmed's supporting point sentence (2) identified "avoiding misunderstanding" as the reason for studying relational orientations. In accordance, with level 2 cohesion, his next sentence should provide some related explanation of the relationship between "avoiding misunderstanding" and "relational orientations." However, Ahmed did not repeat any of these key ideas. Instead, he introduced the idea of "different behaviors" in sentence 3 and continued to discuss behavior in sentences 4 and 5. In sentence 6, Ahmed offered a citation that was not about behavior but about orientations, and he continued the citation in sentences 7, 8, and 9.

An interesting feature of this illustration is that Ahmed created cohesion in certain parts of the illustration but not within the illustration as a whole. For example, sentences 3-5 had co-

hesion with one another, and sentences 6-9 had cohesion with one another. Arguably, sentences 6-9 could be linked to the supporting point sentence (2). Ahmed did select relevant information from his source in this case, and he did not plagiarize.

In sentence 10, Ahmed abruptly shifted to the topic of “high context.” However, the lack of repetition of key words made it impossible for me to know if this was a continuation of the illustration from his perspective or a new supporting point. I suspected that he intended for it to be a supporting point but did not mark it with key word repetition and parallel structure as he should have. If it were indeed a supporting point, then Ahmed displayed a similar developmental pattern to supporting point 1. He offered the point in sentence 10 of “high context.” He did not repeat this expression in any sentence thereafter. Instead, in sentence 11, he introduced “nonverbal communication” and began a sequence on differences between cultures with regard to preference for words or nonverbal behaviors. His sequence continued from sentence 11 to 13. The sequence does have some cohesive features like the repetition of “nonverbal” and “U.S.” He did not refer to a source, and it is likely that sentences 12-13 are plagiarized or patchworked (Howard, 2001) in the sense that these ideas were not part of his common knowledge base. He had probably learned them for the first time while reading the source texts.

6.2.2.5 Ahmed’s development as an academic writer. I believe Ahmed’s inconsistencies from one assignment to another were indicative of his growth or change process. He was experimenting with different ways to achieve the expectations that I had established. He struggled most with the selection of relevant citations, the framing of citations, cohesion at all levels, and the purpose of the concluding statement. His ability or awareness of the need to linguistically connect the topic sentence, the supporting points’ sentences, and the concluding statement did appear to improve. He certainly gained an awareness that framing was a necessary component of

academic writing even though his own framing was not always successful. He also demonstrated an ability to use in-text citation style appropriately. He did seem to become aware that repetition of key words from sentence to sentence was a useful cohesion device. Ahmed did not plagiarize until the final exam, so I suspect that the incidence of possible plagiarism in that case was due to the time constraints. On the contrary, his comments indicate a high level of concern for avoiding plagiarism.

Ahmed indicated in the third interview that he believed that the “deeply structure” of his academic writing had improved. I would tend to agree that Ahmed’s challenges and successes indicated a novice writer who was struggling with some of the deeper complexities of academic writing like selecting appropriate citations and integrating them smoothly into one’s text. In particular, I would say that Ahmed’s idea of what he as a writer needed to do seemed to have shifted toward an understanding of the amount of writer responsibility that is required of Anglo-American academic writing. He was assuming responsibility for guiding his reader rather than simply offering “hit-and-run” citations (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010).

*6.2.3 Min A.* Min A was an entertaining, friendly learner who did not like writing but wanted to improve her writing for tests. Min A was a very social person, and everyone in the classroom CoP seemed to enjoy her personality. She was not as dedicated of a learner as Ahmed. She often left me with the impression that she had much more important things to do outside of class, but she did do most of her assignments. Ironically, as I discussed earlier, Min A requested for me to give more writing assignments, but she did not do all of the assignments I gave, and she did a few of them late. Nonetheless, Min A was a charming learner in the sense that she was always smiling and happy.

Min A described frustrating experiences in other writing courses of having to write essays but not learning to write essays. She really wanted someone to explain the process in detail. At the end of the course, she described her progress in the following way:

...So, in this session, first she taught a lot of information examples and then, so I think organization is helpful, the most helpful to me. (Interview 3, Min A)

In other parts of the interview, Min A continues to refer to organization. Her other comments suggest that for her, understanding the different parts of the paragraph, the purpose of the parts, and the process for creating those parts was important.

6.2.3.1 Min A's diagnostic. Min A wrote the diagnostic on the third day of class with the other learners. We had not discussed my ideas about an academic research paragraph in any formal way at that point nor had I provided any instruction of the moves required in an academic research paragraph. Learners read two texts at home on non-verbal communication, they participated in a 10-15 minute warm-up discussion on that topic, and they had 30-40 minutes to write the "best" academic paragraph that they could.

I found Min A's diagnostic to exhibit some awareness of structure but no awareness of how to use sources. In fact, despite the explicit request of the assignment to refer to sources, Min A did not refer to them in any way. In fact, she is the only learner who after reading the directions asked me what plagiarism meant. Her paragraph reflected some awareness of how to begin an essay, but her ideas of how to proceed beyond that point seemed to be somewhat undefined. The question and her answer are as follows:

Question

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying nonverbal communication is just as important as studying verbal communication skills like speaking or writing. Explain using*

*specific reasons and examples.*

*In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in each text (Text 1 & Text 2). Do not plagiarize! You have 30 minutes to complete this task.*

<sup>1</sup>Some people say studying nonverbal communication is not important as studying verbal communication skills. <sup>2</sup>They say if students are good at expressing their opinions exactly, people who are from another country can understand it although nonverbal communication is weird, so it's important for students to study verbal communications. <sup>3</sup>However, nonverbal communication is as important as verbal communications. <sup>4</sup>Although students from another country know there are many cultural differences between their own country and another country, they can feel embarrassed when it happens, and they also can think a person who is talking with them doesn't respect them. <sup>5</sup>Although they can communicate with same language, they have own their values, thoughts based on their own culture, so they can't understand whole things that people from another country talk and behave. <sup>6</sup>For example, in restaurant, American people separate their food and eat only their own food, but Asian people share their foods and eat together. <sup>7</sup>If American people and Asian people eat together, American people can think Asian's eating habit is not polite etiquette, and Asian people also can think American people don't respect Asian people because Asian people feel American people don't like their eating culture.

Figure 9. Min A's Diagnostic

Min A's paragraph did include a topic sentence, sentence 3, and an illustration, sentences 6 and 7. Her topic sentence did reflect the question. It did not include clearly identifiable sup-



porting points or a concluding statement. It also included a kind of introduction, sentences 1 and 2, which suggested that Min A was operating from an essay model style of writing rather than a paragraph style of writing. This was probably due to the fact that in the previous level, learners practiced writing timed TOEFL-like essays regularly.

Although Min A oriented to the question correctly with her topic sentence and the reader has every reason to suppose that she will address why “nonverbal communication is as important as verbal communications,” in fact, Min A never addressed the topic of nonverbal communication directly. She also never used the key words “nonverbal communication” or “verbal communication” again. Rather, in sentence 4, she introduced “cultural differences” leading to “feel embarrassed.” In sentence 5, she introduced “values” and “can’t understand whole things that people from another country talk and behave.” In sentence 7, she introduced an example of how Americans and Asians eat. In sentence 8, she explained the example by describing how ideas of politeness, “Asian’s eating habit is not polite etiquette,” and respect, “American people don’t respect,” led to negative feelings, “Asian people feel American people don’t like their eating culture.”

Sentences 4 and 5 did not appear to have any relationship to the topic sentence, and their only relationship to each other is that they were written in more or less parallel structure. The example and the explanation did have a logical relationship as well as a linguistic relationship. The example focused on “food” and eating practices, and the explanation focused on “eating.” However, from my point of view as a reader, I did not understand how any of Mina’s sentences beyond the topic sentence related to nonverbal communication. Thus, it appeared to me that Min A had a very limited understanding of academic structure and did not know how to use citations in her writing.

In the second interview, I had Min A revisit this paragraph, which she had not seen since the beginning of the course, and I asked her to evaluate it. Min A's impressions after being exposed to the moves of the academic research paragraph were as follows:

Me: Okay, alright, uhm now this is the first thing you ever wrote for me.

Okay, so I want you to read it to yourself [Min A: mhm] Okay, so what do you think?

Min A: Uh, actually, we you teach about that in the body paragraph there are topic sentence and support- two supporting points, and illustration, and concluding statements but it's not that organized just kind of introduction and there is no body here. There is a thesis statement but just just talking something like just illustration and just example and that's it (Interview 2, Min A).

6.2.3.2 Min A's paragraph 3. Before completing this assignment, Min A had spent approximately one month learning about and practicing the moves of an academic research paragraph. In this case, her paragraph was scaffolded, so she did have some pre-determined structure. In particular, the structure of her topic sentence, supporting points, and concluding statement were prompted with sentence stems. She wrote this paragraph at home, so there were no teacher-imposed time limitations. Her question and paragraph are as follows:

Question:

What are some categories of nonverbal communication? Explain and provide specific examples.

<sup>1</sup>Nonverbal communication has some categories. <sup>2</sup>Attire is one category of nonverbal communication. <sup>3</sup>Attire suggests signs of status, also contain a culture's view of

the world.<sup>4</sup> Gesture is also a category of nonverbal communication.<sup>5</sup> It has many different meanings in different cultures.<sup>6</sup> Some gestures that are good meaning in some cultures can contain the opposite meaning in other cultures.<sup>7</sup> Understanding the categories of non-verbal communication is important for people who are from different cultures.

Figure 10. Min A's Paragraph 3

Min A was prompted in this case to follow a specific structure which she does. Her topic sentence reflected an accurate interpretation of the question. Her supporting point choices, “attire” and “gesture” were logical and equally general. Her concluding statement included a target group who might care about the topic, but it did not explain why they would care. She did not refer explicitly to any sources as requested, and it is likely that sentence 3 is an idea that is new to her that she should have cited. In other words, she probably did not give attribution when she should have.

Min A did show evidence of some awareness of level 2 and level 3 cohesion. As a reminder, in this study, the following levels of cohesion were considered: level 1 cohesion refers to the cohesion between the topic sentence, the supporting points sentences, and the concluding statement; level 2 cohesion refers to the cohesion between the supporting point sentence and the first sentence of the illustration; and level 3 cohesion refers to the cohesion between each sentence of the illustration. For example, she introduced “attire” in sentence 2 as her supporting point, and she elaborated on the purpose of “attire” in sentence 3. Again, sentence 3 was likely patchworked. She introduced “gesture” as her second supporting point in sentence 4. In sentence 5, she linked “it” (gesture) to culture. In sentence 6, she explained the cultural problem that “gestures” can have. Thus, she appeared to have developed an idea that illustrations should

repeat key words and that each sentence of an illustration should elaborate a bit more on the idea expressed in the previous sentence.

6.2.3.4 Min A's paragraph 7. Min A did not submit paragraph 7.

6.2.3.5 Min A's final exam. Before completing this assignment, Min A had written five academic research paragraphs and a research paper that included three body paragraphs. Thus, she had completed eight academic research paragraphs. She had received written and oral feedback from me with regard to most if not all of those paragraphs. She wrote this paragraph in class after reading two source texts on the topic of relational orientations at home. She was allowed to consult the source texts in class. The class began with a brief 10-15 warm-up discussion of the topic. She had 35-40 minutes to complete this assignment. His question and paragraph are as follows:

Question:

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying relational orientations like the ones described in Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2007) are just as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing. Explain using specific reasons and examples. In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in two different texts. Do not plagiarize! You have 30 minutes to complete this task.*

<sup>1</sup>Some people think studying relational orientations for foreign students is not as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing because they can learn other countries' cultures and values naturally and can understand each other by communication after learning language skills. <sup>2</sup>However, studying relational orientations is as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing for several reasons. <sup>3</sup>First, according to Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2007), many countries have different orienta-

tion on their values. <sup>4</sup>Especially, collective orientation and individualism orientation have many differences. <sup>5</sup>People in individualistic countries think that they have the equal rights and privacy and think them first. <sup>6</sup>However, people having values based on collective cultures think the group is the most important thing in their society. <sup>7</sup>People who are in individualistic countries and collective countries can't understand why students or professionals think that individual or group is the most important to them. <sup>8</sup>Also, the way to express their opinions is so different. <sup>9</sup>In high context cultures, they express their opinion through nonverbal communication not direct expression, but in low context cultures, they tell their opinion directly and they think written and formalized information is important to them (Globalizen, 2010). <sup>10</sup>If they don't know others' way to express their opinion based on their cultures, they don't understand what others' purpose to say and why they express in different way. <sup>11</sup>No matter what their language skills are same and developed to communicate each other, they can't understand every difference based on their own cultures. <sup>12</sup>That's why it's important for students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country to study relational orientations as same as studying language skills like speaking or writing.

Figure 11. Min A's Final Exam

Min A's paragraph included a topic sentence (2). The topic sentence reflected an accurate understanding of the question. Min A's paragraph also included one somewhat marked supporting point sentence (3), and a concluding statement (12). Min A did repeat the key word "orientation" in all three of these sentences, but she only repeated the key ideas "important" and "study" in the concluding statement. Her choice of supporting point, "countries have different orientation" was logical for the topic sentence. Her concluding statement was vague, "that's why

it's important," and superficial because it basically just repeated the topic sentence. Min A did use citations from two different sources in this paragraph, and she used an appropriate citation style. She did not appear to have plagiarized her citations. Her choice of citations was also relevant to her argument.

Min A established her supporting point "countries have different orientation" in sentence 3. In sentence 4, she specified two types of orientations, "individual orientation" and "collective orientation." In sentence 5, she explained how "people in individualistic countries think," and in sentence 6, she provided a contrast "however" for how "collective cultures think." In sentence 7, she explained that people from "individualistic countries and collective countries" do not understand each other. Thus, Min A maintained logical coherence and cohesion throughout this part of her illustration. However, she never mentioned the concept that any of this was related to reasons people should study relational orientations.

In sentence 8, Min A offered an ambiguous sentence that could be read as a continuation of the illustration or it could be read as an unsuccessful attempt to introduce a new supporting point. It did not include the linguistic repetition of key words necessary to make it stand out as a supporting point, but Min A's treatment of it led me to believe that she intended for it to be a supporting point. In sentence 9, she introduced the concept of "high context" in relation to the expression of "opinions." In sentence 10, she offered some explanation of why understanding "others' ways to express opinion" mattered. In sentence 11, she introduced the idea that "language skills" were insufficient to guarantee communication because of cultural differences. The logic and coherence of sentences 8-11 were less clear to me than that of sentences 3-7, but it was clear that she was following the same pattern she had used in sentences 3-7.

Min A appeared to have acquired the new strategy of using a citation of general information as her supporting point (sentence 3), or using a citation of general information immediately after her supporting point that explained the point. Then, she proceeded to explain the citation in a more specific way. In my experience, this strategy is often the result of learners not having a complete understanding of how research-from-sources operates. Because referring to citations appeared to be a new skill for Min A, I think she had the same problem many novice writers have which is distinguishing common knowledge from citable knowledge. Her use of a citation as a supporting point was not entirely inappropriate. It can and is done. However, usually, when a citation is a supporting point, the point is something less general than what Min A chose for sentence 3.

6.2.3.6 Min A's development as an academic writer. Unlike Ahmed's path which showed inconsistencies from one assignment to the next, Min A's path showed improvement from one assignment to the next. She moved from a paragraph that had very little structure to one that was quite structured in terms of both coherence and cohesion. She also moved from an absolute refusal to use citations to an acceptable use of citations in terms of both their relevance and the style of her use. Like Ahmed, Min A seemed to understand how to create cohesion in the context of illustrations, but she did not understand how to keep her reader focused on the topic and controlling idea of the paragraph. She did not have a sophisticated understanding of how to conclude a paragraph and simply relied on stating the obvious or repeating the topic sentence.

Min A indicated in the third interview that she believed that the organization of her academic writing had improved. I would tend to agree that Min A's fundamental concept of paragraph organization had changed. Despite lapses in attention to keeping the reader focused on the topic and the controlling idea, Min A's ability to present information in an order that would

make sense to an Anglo-American academic reader did improve. In addition, she did begin to experiment with including citations, and she did seem to have some understanding of how to frame citations. Her writing like Ahmed's became more writer-responsible.

*6.2.4 Frida.* Frida was a responsible, outgoing, collaborative learner. She had been a student in the institute longer than the other learners. She reported that she began her tenure as a student in level 100, the lowest level. Frida was very conscientious. She always did her assignments, and she was very involved in the campfire discussion circle. She was serious about her assignments. She wanted to attend an undergraduate program in the U.S. She did not like timed writing. In fact, she considered it "horrible for foreign students" (Interview 2, Frida). She did not like writing in English, and she had a less than favorable opinion of the writing instruction she had received at the institute.

Toward the end of the course, I asked Frida to reflect on the difference between her original answers of what she thought was easy and difficult when writing in English to see if her ideas had changed. Her answer is as follows:

Me: You said the most difficult aspects are, "How to develop all the information on the paper, and the structure" [Frida: structure] what aspects of academic writing are easiest for you, you didn't answer [Frida: laugh], okay so my question is if I asked you these today, would you're answers be the same, would you still say the same thing for 17 and would you still not give an answer for 18?

Frida: No, not related to the structure. I think today the problem is when I have to eh in research papers like framing the information and how to take the information from sources is I think is the most difficult for me. But not



the structure, because when I have to write the topic and supportings and it's easy. (Interview 2, Frida)

It is noteworthy that Frida found nothing easy at the beginning of the course but had developed the idea that structure was easy by the end of the course. She had shifted her concern to the complexities of writing that also concerned Ahmed, framing and citation use.

6.2.4.1 Frida's diagnostic. Frida wrote the diagnostic one week later than the rest of the class. She was absent on the day that the other learners wrote it. Thus, like Ahmed, she had been privy to some discussions of academic writing and analysis of academic research paragraph models before she actually did this task. However, she had not received any instruction in the moves required in an academic research paragraph. It is likely that she had slightly more time than learners had in class to do this task. Frida had significant anxiety about timed writing, so I gave her a time limit, but I was less exacting than I was with learners in the classroom.

Frida's diagnostic was written in a personal, narrative style. She did not exhibit any awareness of how to use sources despite the explicit request of the assignment to refer to sources. Her paragraph reflected little awareness of how to accomplish research-from-sources writing. The question and her answer are as follows:

**Question**

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying nonverbal communication is just as important as studying verbal communication skills like speaking or writing. Explain using specific reasons and examples.*

*In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in each text (Text 1 & Text 2). Do not plagiarize! You have 30 minutes to complete this task.*

<sup>1</sup>Nonverbal communication is one of the ways of communication that people expressed feelings too. <sup>2</sup>This way is directly related to culture, but it is omnipresent. <sup>3</sup>I agree with students have to study is the culture that they are going to introduce in. <sup>4</sup>As a foreign student, I remember one time in U.S. I was studying at the Language Institute of Georgia Tech, which is a place where many people from different countries go to study English. <sup>5</sup>You can see at this place a variety of cultures at the same time. <sup>6</sup>I used to study there with a classmate from Saudi Arabia. <sup>7</sup>She was so friendly and we even had good conversations about our country and personal things. Saudi Arabian women use scarves all around their faces. <sup>8</sup>It is related to their religion and culture rules. <sup>9</sup>For me it was so strange and even I could not believe that women have to use it and men not. <sup>10</sup>It was awful. <sup>11</sup>One day, I decide to tell her if she would like to take off the scarf and show me her hair. <sup>12</sup>She rapidly answered me No and she told me that it could be offensive to people from her culture. <sup>13</sup>I left from the Language Institute so bad. I felt really bad when I heard that from her, but I had to understand that there are different cultures from my country. <sup>14</sup>People can interpret other cultures as they use to be in their countries. <sup>15</sup>Is that the reason because people have to study those cultures which are going to be introduced.

Figure 12. Frida's Diagnostic

One of the most salient features of Frida's paragraph was the fact that she used the personal pronoun "I." Frida interpreted the question "do you agree" as a personal rather than an impersonal request and produced a text type that was not similar to the academic research paragraph text type I had in mind. Frida did include a personalized topic sentence (3) that indicates her position in relation to the question, but her sentence did not truly reflect the question. It only

reflected the request to take a position. Her paragraph did not include supporting points, but it did include sentences 4-13, an extended personal illustration. She appeared to be concluding in sentences 15-16. However, sentence 16 appeared to be a repetition of the topic sentence. Like Min A, Frida included introductory statements, sentences 1-2, related to the topic of the question prior to her topic sentence. Again, I think learners were very accustomed to writing timed TOEFL essays and operated under the assumption that a paragraph was a small essay that required an introduction.

Frida mentioned the topic “nonverbal communication” in sentence 1, and she never returned to that topic even in the concluding sentences. She selected an extended personal illustration of her interaction with a Saudi Arabian woman who wore the hijab to explain her position of agreement that nonverbal communication was an important topic, but she never made any direct links between nonverbal communication and clothing. Her extended illustration did have a sense of narrative cohesion. In sentence 4, she introduced a time and place. In sentence 5, she explained what that place had that made it relevant for her story. In sentence 6, she introduced a personal experience related to the place. In sentence 7, she elaborated on that experience. In sentences 8-9, she provided background knowledge related to that experience. In sentences 10-11, she described her reaction to the experience. In sentences 12-13, she introduced a specific encounter she had related to this experience. In sentence 14, she described her reaction to the event and her realization (lesson learned). In sentence 15, provided a general moral of her story related to her personal realization. In sentence 16, she repeated her topic sentence.

Frida’s paragraph demonstrated significant ability to tell an interesting story. Her selection of a personalized example indicated a great deal of sincerity in terms of her thoughts about the topic. However, Frida’s diagnostic was not closely aligned with the text type or the ways of

writing that would be taught in the course. Nonetheless, I did think Frida's sense of narrative indicated a sophisticated understanding of the kinds of background information that readers need to know in order to make sense of events.

In the second interview, which occurred after the moves of the academic research paragraph had been taught, I had Frida revisit this paragraph, which she had not seen since the beginning of the course, and I asked her to evaluate it. After much commentary on how "horrible" timed writing was for her and all foreign students and how "horrible" it made them feel, Frida offered the following impressions of her diagnostic:

Frida: ...but I think eh this paper of course doesn't match with nothing that we have learned during 700 because for example, the question was like something like if I agree or disagree, so I think the topic sentence that is the first part is not answering the question and the topic and also the information eh like doesn't follow the in order the order of the structure that we we have learned. And, I think okay I put an example related with my experience, so I think I used "I decide" maybe I didn't have to do it like put "I" my person. Uhm, and I wrote the conclusion I think people mmm in the conclusion maybe the mistake was that I put "people have to study" and I don't have to do it. Maybe I have to put focus in why people is interested in my opinion or why disagree or agree. I mean it's totally different the paragraphs that I will write now. [Me: okay, alright] But, I think as I told you it's awful when you have to write under pression because we feel every class is that when we work with a partner it's horrible because we are thinking how to the structure is is difficult for us. (Interview 2, Frida)

In general, Frida seemed to notice the same things about her diagnostic paragraph that I have detailed. As with Min A, I think the fact that what Frida noticed matches what I noticed so closely indicated a shift in perceptions that indicated that Frida was moving toward the view I had of academic writing.

6.2.4.2 Frida's paragraph 3. Before completing this assignment, Frida had spent approximately one month learning about and practicing the moves of an academic research paragraph. In this case, her paragraph was scaffolded, so she did have some pre-determined structure. In particular, the structure of his topic sentence, supporting points, and concluding statement were prompted with sentence stems. She wrote this paragraph at home, so there were no teacher-imposed time limitations, which of course was preferable to Frida. Her question and paragraph are as follows:

Question:

What are some categories of nonverbal communication? Explain and provide specific examples.

<sup>1</sup>Nonverbal communication is divided in some important categories. <sup>2</sup>Body behavior is one category of nonverbal communication. <sup>3</sup>Messages are transmitted through an important part of the body. <sup>4</sup>For example, body appearance reflects how people are dressed and what they bring around their bodies as judgments of who they are.

<sup>5</sup>According to the article titled "Nonverbal Communication and Culture" (Samovar, Porter, Mc Daniel, 2004), one study has showed that people have made decisions about the result of blind dates based entirely on corporal appearance. <sup>6</sup>People have a tendency to describe person's charisma, dress, to make inferences about individual's intelligence, values and cultural background. <sup>7</sup>Facial expressions are also a category of nonverbal

communication. <sup>8</sup>To take a case in point, smiling in America is a sign of happiness uses frequently. <sup>9</sup>In contrast, in the Japanese culture smiling can cover an emotion or be used to shun answering a question. <sup>10</sup>According to the article titled “Nonverbal Communication and Culture” (Samovar, Porter, Mc Daniel, 2004), although, facial expressions play an important role in intercultural communication, they are difficult to evaluate. <sup>11</sup>Similar expressions can occur in everyone, but the interpretations are different by people from diverse cultures. <sup>12</sup>Understanding the categories of nonverbal communication is important for people from different cultures who want to communicate better because it would develop their communication.

Figure 13. Frida's Paragraph 3

Frida was prompted in this case to follow a specific structure which she does. Her topic sentence reflected an accurate interpretation of the question. Her supporting point choices, “body behavior” and “facial expression” were logical and equally general. Her concluding statement included a target group who might care about the topic “people from different cultures” and explained why they would care “communicate better.” She did refer explicitly to sources as requested, and she did attempt to use an appropriate citation style. She did include illustrations, but in my opinion, sentences 6, 8, 9, and 11 were likely patchworked.

Frida did show evidence of awareness of level 2 and level 3 cohesion. For example, she introduced “body behavior” in sentence 2 as her supporting point, and she explained how the “body” transmits “messages in sentence 3. In sentence 4, she defined “body appearance,” and in sentence 5, she used her source to refer to a study that was focused on the importance of “corporal appearance.” In sentence 6, she lost her cohesiveness and inserted a sentence that is likely plagiarized to some extent that does not have any direct link to the “body” issue that she had

been describing. The logic of Frida's illustration in sentences 2-5 was very clear, and I think that perhaps her ability as a narrative story-teller served her well in creating that unit of illustration.

In sentence 7, Frida introduced her second supporting point "facial expressions." She made excellent use of transition phrases "to take a case in point" and "in contrast" to provide contrasting examples of cultural facial expressions. She used her source to introduce the idea that "facial expressions" "are difficult to evaluate" in sentence 10, and in sentence 11, she explained that the "expressions" are similar but the "interpretations" depend on culture. Her illustration was cohesive and well-constructed, but based on my knowledge of the original texts, I believe that this was a case of cleverly stringing sentences borrowed from a source together, which according to both Howard (2001) and Pecorari (2003) would be a normal stage for a novice writers such as Frida. However, Frida did demonstrate that her knowledge of cohesion even if the content is patchworked was significantly more advanced than Ahmed or Min A.

6.2.4.3 Frida's paragraph 7. Before completing this assignment, Frida had written three academic research paragraphs in team writing situations and three paragraphs individually. She had received written and oral feedback from me with regard to many of those paragraphs. She wrote this paragraph at home without teacher-imposed time restrictions. She did not receive any scaffolding for this assignment. Her question and paragraph are as follows:

Question:

Chapter 8 discusses how to create smoother connections in academic writing. What are some ways to create smoother connections in academic writing? Explain and provide specific examples.

<sup>1</sup>Smoother connections can be created in several ways. <sup>2</sup>One of the ways to create smoother connections is using transitions words. <sup>3</sup>These are very important to give read-

ers a kind of signal to build a thought about what is going to follow combining more than two sentences. <sup>4</sup>Consequently, it is going to make a good argument. Graff and Birkenstein (2010), <sup>5</sup>For example, “therefore,” is a transition word used to introduce a conclusion. <sup>6</sup>Readers have this signal to understand that the next thing is going to be a conclusion. <sup>7</sup>The authors agree that writers have to be sure before they select transitions words learning the whole argument to connect ideas correctly. <sup>8</sup>Another way to create smoother connections is repeating yourself. <sup>9</sup>According to Graff and Birkenstein (2010), while writers are keeping forward, they have to repeat the same they said, but in a different way without introducing new ideas. <sup>10</sup>Using “in other words” is a good example to bring in this case. <sup>11</sup>In order to give readers another way to explain about that they have written before in the last sentence, writers use this transitions phrase. <sup>12</sup>It is also important to put emphasis in an important idea. <sup>13</sup>Understanding some ways to create smoother connections, it is important to writers use these to make clear arguments and easiest to understand by readers.

Figure 14. Frida's Paragraph 7

Frida’s paragraph included a topic sentence (1) that accurately reflected the question. In sentence 2, she identified her first supporting point “transition words,” and in sentence 8, she identified her second supporting point “repeating yourself.” Her supporting point sentences repeated the key idea “create smoother connections,” they were written using parallel structure, and they used signal words, “one” and “another” respectively. Her paragraph included a concluding statement (13) that indicated a group who might care about the topic “writers” and a reason they might care “make clear arguments and easiest to understand by readers.” She referred to her source in each illustration and used appropriate in-text citation style.



Her illustrations still demonstrated evidence of cohesive devices as in paragraph 3. In sentence 2, Frida gave her supporting point “transition words.” In sentence 3, she explained why “these” (transition words) are “important.” In sentence 4, she appeared to be giving a result of sentence 3, but her use of the pronoun “it” created some confusion. Then, she gave a citation. In terms of her placement of the citation, I was not sure if what she had just said was borrowed or if what she was going to say was borrowed, so the style of the citation is correct, but she did not really know where to put the citation information. Also, the fact that she used pronouns instead of repeating key words in sentence 3 and 4 indicated some misunderstandings of academic cohesion. (Of course, pronouns are used in academic writing, but the use of pronouns in back-to-back sentences is perhaps less common.) In sentence 5, she introduced an example of a transition word and its meaning. In sentence 6, she explained the example by basically repeating it. In sentence 7, she appeared to introduce a new idea related to using transition words “correctly.”

If Frida had used more repetition of key words and done her citation correctly for sentences 2-6, the illustration would likely have been more cohesive. The problem was that Frida was still patchwriting (Howard, 2001). She was basically reorganizing ideas from the source and inserting a citation marker, but in fact, most of the ideas were taken from the source. In other words, she was selecting very relevant information from the source and using that information as both frame and citation rather than selecting a citation and framing it herself. I would guess that this indicated a lack of clarity about the purpose of citations and the strategies for framing.

Frida did the same thing in the illustration for the second supporting point. She gave a citation and framed it with other borrowed information. Interestingly, the final sentence of both illustrations, sentences 7 and 12, introduced slightly new topics. It seemed as if Frida was not quite sure of how to end an illustration.

6.2.4.5 Frida's final exam. Before completing this assignment, Frida had written seven academic research paragraphs and a research paper that included three body paragraphs. Thus, she had completed ten academic research paragraphs. She had received written and oral feedback from me with regard to most if not all of those paragraphs. She wrote this paragraph in class after reading two source texts on the topic of relational orientations at home. She was allowed to consult the source texts in class. The class began with a brief 10-15 warm-up discussion of the topic. She had 35-40 minutes to complete this assignment. As a reminder, Frida strongly disliked timed writing. Her question and paragraph are as follows:

Question:

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who wish to pursue a university degree in another country, studying relational orientations like the ones described in Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2007) are just as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing. Explain using specific reasons and examples.*

*In your answer, refer specifically to information that is in two different texts. Do not plagiarize! You have 30 minutes to complete this task.*

<sup>1</sup>Studying relation orientations such as authoritarian, collective and individualism are just as important as studying language skills like speaking or writing for students who wish to pursue a degree in another country. <sup>2</sup>According to Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2007, the way that people communicate in different cultures is fundamental. <sup>3</sup>The context is directly related to communication. <sup>4</sup>This represents the information that is around people and contain different characteristics. <sup>5</sup>One of the relation orientations important to study is authorities, people who is in this context are represented leaders and they are individualist. <sup>6</sup>They believe that it is way to establish relationship. <sup>7</sup>For example, the family is a way to establish authortarim (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, 2007)

<sup>8</sup>Relationships are closer than in cultures that people are more open. <sup>9</sup>Students should understand that things are followed by a main figure. <sup>10</sup>Another orientation important to study for students who wish a degree in another is collective orientations. <sup>11</sup>In cultures where people is oriented to be collective, they are represented as groups like in schools, the group goals are more considered than individual goals. <sup>12</sup>For example, In India.

<sup>13</sup>Understanding some orientations such us authoris [she did not finish]

Figure 15. Frida's Final Exam

Frida's final definitely reflected her distaste for timed writing. Frida's paragraph included a topic sentence (1) that accurately reflected the question. Her paragraph included two supporting point sentences (5, 10). These sentences repeated the key topic words, "study relational orientations," they were written in parallel structure, and they used signal words, "one" and "another" respectively. Her choice of supporting points, "authorities" and "collective" were logical and appropriate. She did begin a concluding statement (13) and her beginning indicated that she was going to repeat key terms (i.e., "orientations). Frida only referred to one source rather than two as the assignment requested. Her citation style contained minor errors.

In this paragraph, Frida included three extra sentences (2-4) between her topic sentence and the supporting point sentence. She appeared to be trying to create some type of introduction to the supporting point. Even though sentence 2 was cited, sentences 3-4 are also borrowed ideas but contain no indication that they are borrowed, so she was still patchworking. Learners struggled all session from TOEFL-essay-transfer. That is, some learners simply could not accept that a paragraph was not a TOEFL essay that required an introduction. These learners appeared to over-generalize the similarities between paragraphs and essays to mean that they were in fact one in the same.

Frida's illustrations in this paragraph were much less cohesive than her former paragraphs, which suggested that time played a role in her abilities. For example, sentence 5 established "authorities" as one of the orientations that was important to study. She used a comma splice to begin explaining the point, and her explanation is not clear to me. In sentence 6, she used a pronoun "they" to link to the "leaders" of the previous sentence, but again I did not really understand what she was trying to say. Then, in sentence 7, she introduced a citation with an example that somehow linked back to sentence 5 "authoritarim." In sentence 8, she again used

the word “relationships” suggesting a link to sentence 6. In sentence 9, she introduced a new idea about “students.” Overall, I could not follow the logic of her illustration due to a lack of cohesion.

The illustration of her second supporting point was incomplete but even so appeared to be more cohesive simply through the repetition of “collective” than her first illustration. Overall, Frida appeared to be able to manage level 1 cohesion under time pressure, but she was not comfortable or effective with illustrating in a timed situation.

6.2.4.6 Frida’s development as an academic writer. Once she made the big shift from personal, narrative style writing to academic writing, Frida’s challenges were fairly consistent. She was fairly good at selecting ideas for supporting points and illustrations, and she had a better than average understanding of cohesion when she was not in a timed situation. However, she did plagiarize albeit in clever ways. Her plagiarism was not intentional, and it was more akin to patchwriting (Pecorari, 2003; Howard, 2001). I did not think she fully understood the purpose of citation or even exactly where to put the in-text citation. However, writing under any type of time constraints dramatically affected her illustration abilities, which suggested that these abilities were the ones that were the most transitional for her.

In her self-assessment in the second interview, Frida claimed that structure was “easy” for her now but framing and citation were hard. I would agree with her assessment. She did make a major shift with regard to structure from a persona narrative model to a research-from-sources model. However, she clearly did not understand how sources were used and not used in writing. This led her to overuse them and plagiarize in the process, which again could be considered patchwriting due to its unintentional nature. It was obvious that her understanding of cohesion in illustrations was more advanced than Ahmed and Min A in many ways. When she was

not doing timed writing, her ability to predict what readers would need to know at each point in an illustration was fairly accurate, and she understood how to use linguistic devices to achieve cohesion although she did overuse pronouns for this purpose.

In sum, all of the learners demonstrated development with regard to the academic research paragraph in some way. Importantly, each of them understood their progress and felt pleased and confident as a result of their progress. I was particularly encouraged that all of them had a fairly accurate idea of how their writing had improved because this realistic view was something that they could use to set future goals or even to seek assistance. It did appear that the underlying cultural values associated with plagiarism and writer responsibility were challenges for these learners. They struggled with knowing what had to be acknowledged when it was borrowed and what could be said without acknowledgement. They also struggled with understanding and predicting what readers must know in order to follow their arguments. However, their development indicated to me that there was a great likelihood that they were on the path to working these matters out if they continued the practice of academic writing. For many of them, their exposure to academically written texts in which they saw research-from-sources writing in English had been quite limited. I feel confident that in a content rich environment with textbooks, research articles, and other models, they had the basic skills that would allow them to notice how things get done in other people's writing and work out their own challenges.

### **6.3** *Limitations*

The primary limitation in a study such as this is that the abstract concept I have of what constitutes good research-from-sources writing is potentially very subjective. I gave the learners models that I had written, I taught them a process that I believed myself and others to follow, I obligated them to use phrasing and features of writing that I think are important, and I caused

them to notice and pay attention to aspects of writing that might be unique to my own personal taste. Basically, my personal concept of academic writing was their benchmark. The inherent limitation in this is that my way of writing, my process for writing, my thoughts about what matters when writing are just one perspective. Perhaps, those did not match my learners in some way. This, of course, is the inherent limitation in any classroom CoP. In most classroom CoPs, the teacher is the only reader and the sole evaluator of learners' written texts, and it is likely that their evaluations are reflections of the degree of alignment that they perceive learners to have with their own very personal and unique abstract ideal of a written text.

Another limitation is related to my analysis of their writing. For the diagnostic task, I did have evidence of their own self-evaluation as a point of comparison, and I did have their overall impressions of their progress. However, interviewing the learners about their specific written texts in more detail could have helped me to better understand their challenges and potentially allowed me to facilitate their development even more. In addition, I would have perhaps come to know reasons other than the ones that I imagined for their challenges.

#### **6.4 *Implications***

In this study, I focused on developing an orientation to interactions that would build healthy growth-fostering relationships. The presence of healthy relationships seemed to leave all learners and me with positive feelings about ourselves and our experiences. In particular, learners felt better about their writing abilities. They believed that their knowledge and skills with regard to academic writing had changed, and they were proud of this change and perhaps empowered by it.

When I analyzed their writing, I could see that their belief that they had changed was a reality. For better or for worse (and I hope for better), they had moved into greater alignment

with my views about academic writing, and they were producing academic research paragraphs that were qualitatively better from an academic standpoint than what they had produced in the beginning. They also were finding it easier to produce these paragraphs, which was an important sign of growth for them. Importantly, learners could accurately tell me how they had improved and what their challenges still were, and their self-reports matched my own analysis.

The learners in my classroom CoP did not become more confident or develop their writing by editing, focusing on grammar, writing massive amounts of essays, or receiving highly individualized detailed feedback from me on a regular basis. They made their changes by focusing on specific moves of academic writing, the know-how it takes to make those moves, and practicing just those moves. They made their changes by talking with me in a group setting, by looking at one another's writing and discussing it publicly, by having access to one another's writing as models, by writing together, and by sharing their stories with me.

One implication of this study is that academic writing instruction does not have to be all about grading complete written texts. Writing has moves, and some moves may be harder than others. Therefore, dividing a writing task into moves and working through it in this manner could be quite beneficial for both teachers and learners. Teachers can likely give feedback more easily and regularly in this case. Learners can gain a realistic understanding of what is easy and hard for them in order to self-manage their learning.

A related implication of this study is that less might be more. Less writing and more talking might be advantageous in writing instruction (that is, learners talking). My learners had homework each night Monday through Thursday, and each day we talked about what came up for them. Even if I did not grade or plan to grade what they did, they knew there would be a time when they could ask anything they wanted about it. I never pushed the learners to rush through



our campfire discussion circles. We stayed there until everyone's questions were answered even if it meant that we "got behind" in some other way. The learners' questions were incredibly valuable and very timely in terms of their readiness to learn something new.

A final implication of this study is the amount of attention and practice given to the thinking aspect of academic writing. The thinking process of research-from-sources writing is a unique process. Learners are not automatically born with this thinking process. They need the thinking process to be articulated in very simple terms, and they need to practice the thinking process not just the writing process. For example, selecting relevant citations is a thinking aspect of writing. The factors that affect a writer's selection need to be explained simply, and learners need guided practice in selecting relevant citations. They need to discuss their selections, and they need feedback on that process. Asking writers to continue writing any type of research without helping them to actually gain the necessary thought processes will only result in them producing the same kinds of texts.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Anglo-American academic writing is a social practice that happens in a large general CoP and small discipline specific CoPs. ESL academic writing instruction and instructors must stay connected to the real-world social practice of academic writing as well as the needs of their learner population. ESL academic writing instructors need to be especially mindful of the mediating role they play in facilitating learners' legitimacy in the real-world CoP. However, they must also be mindful that facilitating legitimacy does not transform into enforcing acculturation. Although I focused primarily on one metagenre throughout the course and selected a personally defined abstract text type to represent that metagenre, I was careful to tell learners that what we were doing was *one* way of accomplishing research-from-source writing. Learners astutely no-

ticed differences in the written texts they read in their reading class, which I also taught and the texts I asked them to write, and when they brought these differences up during discussions, I supported their emerging awareness of academic writing as more than simply what we did in my course. The analysis of learners' written texts led me to believe that ESL academic writing instructors can support learners' academic writing development *affectively*.

## 7 CONCLUSION

*"The most important thing to remember is this: To be ready at any moment to give up what you are for what you might become." (Du Bois, n.d.).*

*"To me the classroom continues to be a place where paradise can be realized, a place of passion and possibility, a place where spirit matters, where all that we learn and know leads us into greater connection, into greater understanding of life lived in community" (hooks, 2003. p. 183).*

I began this study by explaining that these quotations represented the philosophical core of what I believed education and educators could be and should be. I also began this study believing that I as an educator could and should do more to embrace the message of these quotations in my own teaching practices. I believed that I needed to reconsider my thoughts, beliefs, and practices in order to reinvent myself as an educator, specifically as an ESL academic writing teacher. I believed that viewing the classroom as a community and focusing on practices that build community would not only be a way of reinventing myself but also reinventing the experience of academic writing and academic writing instruction for the learners in my community. I believed that critical and feminist pedagogy were possible in an everyday sustained practice, and I believed that the personal effort that it took to achieve personal change would have impacts beyond my personal sphere of awareness. I believed all of this because I am a learner, and I am a teacher. I have experienced the profound impact that teachers, knowingly and unknowingly, have had on my life, and I have experienced the profound impact that learners, usually unknowingly, have had on my life.

However, this study did not entirely originate from my own personal beliefs and desires. This study also originated from my personal experiences of the contradictory tensions that characterize ESL instruction and instructors. One of these tensions was the theory-practice tension. In fact, the fundamental idea for this study originated in a class that I attended on critical pedagogy. In this class, I was exposed to ideas and teaching practices that were energizing, inspiring, and liberating. However, my experience was not the experience of all members, and the tension that became evident in that class is one of the reasons for this study. In the class, I witnessed experienced teachers pursuing their Ph.D. degrees arguing against critical and feminist pedagogy on the grounds that it could not truly be done in *real* classrooms. I also witnessed experienced teachers pursuing their Ph.D. degrees accepting the premises and acknowledging the value of critical and feminist pedagogy but blatantly deciding that they were not willing to change the way they taught because it was not worth it. (Of course, I also witnessed members of the course responding positively to critical and feminist pedagogy.) I was truly puzzled by the naysayers, and I found their lack of willingness to consider critical and feminist pedagogy as a possibility depressing and frustrating.

However, setting aside the Ph.D. student perspective and adopting only the teacher perspective, I could partially understand why the members who rejected critical and feminist pedagogy did so. Their complaints were primarily related to their perspective as language teachers that the teacher is a more or less powerless cog-in-a-wheel in relation to the system of education. They complained about prescribed curriculums that obligated them to cover more material than was necessary, required textbooks that did not reflect their own thoughts about teaching, and assessment practices that interfered with their creativity. They complained about learners who only cared about doing the least amount of work possible for the highest grade possible, and they

complained about learners who resisted their attempts to make the classroom more learner-centered. And, I agreed that these are all true contextual realities of many language teachers' experience.

I engaged in this study because I did not agree that teachers are powerless cogs-in-a-wheel. I believed that the one thing teachers can control and can change no matter what other aspects of the classroom are pre-determined was their own thoughts and actions with regard to the classroom experience. I did this study because I believed that both teachers and learners need a hopeful view of themselves and their interactions with one another. I did this study because I believed that even though my journey would not and could not be the journey of every teacher, my *story* could speak to those teachers who might also be interested in seeing the classroom as “a place of passion and possibility” (hooks, 2003, p. 183).

### ***7.1 Revisiting My Research Questions***

The research questions I developed for this study are a reflection of my desire to document my real, lived experience of emphasizing a relational perspective in my teaching. I selected my research questions because I wanted to consider the experience from the point of view of teachers, learners, and course topic. The research questions were as follows:

1. How can an ESL teacher develop an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of Relational Cultural Theory (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths)?
2. What internal and external obstacles will the teacher encounter as she develops and implements an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths)?

3. How will the use of an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths) affect ESL learners' feelings about Anglo-American academic writing in general?
4. How will the use of an orientation to interactions in an academic writing course using tenets of RCT (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths) affect ESL learners' feelings about their own abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing successfully?
5. In an ESL academic writing course in which the teacher uses the tenets of RCT (mutual empathy) and Positive Psychology (focus on strengths) to develop an orientation to interactions, how will the learners' abilities to accomplish Anglo-American academic writing change over the duration of the course?

Questions 1 and 2 were designed to focus on teacher perspectives, question 3 and 4 were designed to focus on learner perspectives, and question 5 was designed to focus on learning perspectives. I hope that by providing data and analysis related to all of these questions, I have provided a thick, rich description of my classroom CoP that might speak to the real, lived experiences of other teachers in other classroom CoPs.

In Chapter 4, I discussed my complete experience of transforming theory to practice. I described how I selected two theories from counseling psychology, RCT and Positive Psychology, and used tenets from those theories to develop classroom practices that would establish an orientation to interactions that focused on building healthy relationships. I described each of the three classroom practices - the campfire discussion circle, the public writing forum, and the parts-before-whole instruction approach - that I developed and utilized in my attempt to reflect

and promote selected tenets of RCT and Positive Psychology. In general, participants (including me) did seem to notice and appreciate the external (i.e., teacher-learner, learners-teacher, learners-learners) and internal (i.e., teacher-self, learners-self, learners-artifacts) relationship building they had vis-à-vis the classroom practices. In addition, the practices seemed to have played a role in creating an information flow in the classroom CoP that enhanced clarity. Learners' comments during interviews often emphasized a sense that they felt like the exchange of information was done in a way that eliminated previous confusion as the following comment illustrates:

Jieun: Yeah, I think I improved very much, uh before I attended this class, I I always confused how to write article uhm, if teacher said to me, uhm write some article, I just write write something without organization or beams without structure, so it was fake, yeah for me, but I, I think I have improved through Lauren's class, mhm (Interview 3, Jieun)

In Chapter 4, I also discussed the internal and external obstacles I encountered in developing and establishing an orientation to interactions that focused on building healthy relationships. My primary internal obstacles were uncertainty about my grasp of RCT and Positive Psychology and my cultural beliefs about what teachers are supposed to do (e.g., my excessive concerns with pacing). My primary external obstacles were lack of alignment between the goals I had for the course (e.g., research-from-source writing) and learners' goals (e.g., TOEFL writing or business writing). Although these obstacles were present and they undoubtedly affected the orientation to interactions that I was attempting to establish, it did not appear that they prevented any participant, even Jieun, who wanted to learn business writing and was the most misaligned with my goals for the course, from having a positive experience.

In Chapter 5, I discussed how learners' experience of an orientation to interactions focused on building healthy relationships in a classroom CoP affected their perceptions and feelings with regard to Anglo-American academic writing and their own abilities as academic writers. Learners' perceptions of academic writing seemed to shift toward more alignment with my own views as the course progressed, and these shifts were accompanied by shifts toward more positive feelings about academic writing. Learners also perceived themselves as improving, and this perception was generally accompanied by feelings of competence and confidence. Learners seemed to feel that they were qualitatively different writers at the end of the course than they were at the beginning, and this seemed to please them. They also appeared to have found the experience of learning about academic writing in my classroom CoP rewarding and pleasant in comparison to their expectations based on previous experiences and beliefs as the following comment illustrates:

Carolina: I told her a few days ago that it's very nice for me to know that I can write five pages of an essay. I I never thought that I could do that, so yeah it's it's a good feeling that I okay I can write in English. And, I feel pretty secure about or confident about what I can do when I write. I know maybe I can't speak or write like an American, but my ideas are clear and people who read my essay, I feel like they will understand what I want to say, so yeah, I feel good about that. (Interview 3, Carolina)

In Chapter 6, I described learners' development as academic writers with regard to their actual written artifacts. Specifically, I considered their development in light of two noticeable cultural aspects of Anglo-American academic writing—plagiarism and writer-responsible prose. A main focus of the course was research-from-source writing in the form of an academic re-



search paragraph. The three learners I featured in Chapter 6—Ahmed, Min A, and Frida—all described themselves as having made progress and feeling more confident or comfortable. Their written texts did, in fact, reflect progress. All learners showed significantly more awareness of and attention to the appropriate use of sources than they did at the beginning of the course. They also showed on-going concern and experimentation with various levels of cohesion. In most cases they appeared to develop an understanding of how to create cohesion between the topic sentence, the supporting points, and the concluding statement. They demonstrated awareness of and attention to cohesion within illustrations (i.e., framing citations), but they were still in the process of experimenting with developing their sense of how much cohesion is required for Anglo-American writing. In all cases, the learners' descriptions of what they had learned and what they needed to continue working on matched my own thoughts. Thus, learners' good feelings about themselves were matched by real improvements in their written artifacts.

## **7.2 *Implications and Future Research***

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I offered implications with respect to the research questions addressed in those chapters. In this section, I will address the major implications that I think this study as a whole has for ESL academic writing teachers and writing instruction.

*7.2.1 ESL academic writing teachers.* In this study, I focused on establishing an orientation to interactions that would nurture healthy growth-fostering external and internal relationships in an ESL academic writing classroom. I found that the relationships that were established led to positive knowledge and skill transformations as well as positive feelings. In the learners' comments, these transformations appeared to be linked in some way. Perhaps, they could have experienced one type of transformation without the other, but in this study, they were inseparable. To me, this suggests that ESL academic writing teachers might find it useful to consider the

role that they could play in creating the conditions for better *feeling* experiences in their classrooms. Regardless of whether or not better feelings actually lead to better knowledge and skills, they do lead to greater willingness to communicate because learners do feel more confident and competent. North (1984) sums up the job of writing centers in this way, "...Our job is to produce better writers, not better writing" (p. 438). Perhaps, this job description could also become part of ESL academic writing teachers' mission as well.

The practices I developed for this study generated a great deal of interaction between all participants. The campfire discussion circle in particular generated dialogue about academic writing as an everyday feature of each class. The following illustrates how one learner described the class to the external interviewer:

EI:                So the first question is I've never been in your academic writing class, so I would like you to describe your academic writing class to me

Rebeca:        Well uhm in each class, we at the fir- at the beginning of the class, usually log in into the computer and then we go to the front and we have a brief conversation about the homework from the last day or about our thoughts about the class or the homework or every anything we want to share with the class. And then, we go back to the computers, and we do the assignment for the day or yeah that's basically what we do. (Interview 3, Rebeca)

As Rebeca indicated, our conversations ranged from last night's homework to "thoughts about the class" to "anything we want to share." In other words, every day we talked, and every day the learners knew that they would have a time and space to say whatever they wanted to say. I believe that the talking was vital for the development of the orientation to interactions and for

the learners' development as academic writers. The talking allowed them to hear each other's personal stories of writing as well as create their own story. Literature related to interactions in writing centers or writing consultations also suggests that talk is a primary way to change behavior. In his description of what writing centers do, North (1984) asserts that "...the best breaker of old rhythms, the best creator of new ones, is our style of live intervention, our talk in all its forms" (p. 443). Murray, Thow, Moore, and Murphy (2008) discuss how writing consultations, one-on-one talk, even between expert academic writers, improves behaviors and confidence. Thus, ESL academic writing teachers may want to consider how to create more opportunities for talk in their classrooms as a way to increase positive transformations in both feelings and behavior.

Learners, in this study, were an invaluable resource for their own learning but also other learners' learning. The idea that learners can learn from each other is certainly not new. However, I was surprised when the learners commented on others' learning and/or using their new understandings to teach others. To be clear, I did not ask any questions about these topics, yet learners still mentioned them as the following examples illustrate:

Rebeca: ...and yeah I think that the class has been going really well. And, I mean I have noticed how my classmates are improving so that's good I I feel that I'm not the only one who uhm feel better about writing. (Interview 2, Rebeca)

Ahmed: ... now I feel confident that I explain to my friends and to my wife how can they uh be better in the writing academic how can they use for example use the hook very nicely and how can we conclude their body paragraph or something. It's so good actually. (Interview 3, Ahmed)

I think Rebeca's comment suggests that learners may enjoy feeling a sense of growth as a community in addition to feeling a sense of growth as an individual, and I think Ahmed's comment suggests that learners may enjoy sharing their knowledge and skill transformations with others that they perceive as less advanced. I think for ESL academic writing teachers this suggests that peer interactions and relationships are very important for learners, but I do not necessarily think that these comments suggest that peer feedback is important (or unimportant). Rather, I think these comments are more along the lines of peer consultations (i.e., peers who talk about a writing challenge that one or both of them may be having). As Devet (2011) who interviewed 33 peer consultants in a writing center discovered, peer consultants have an in-depth understanding of what their peers' obstacles are as well as how teachers might assist them in overcoming those obstacles. Thus, ESL academic writing teachers may want to consider how to bring peer consultation into the classroom or into the practices of the class to allow learners to experience shared ownership of academic writing challenges and successes.

*7.2.2 ESL academic writing instruction.* Throughout this study, I have tried to be very clear that in a classroom CoP, the learners have access to only one full member representative of the real-world CoP. I have also tried to be clear that the presence of only one full member is problematic and creates potential obstacles for learners in terms of the LPP process. The primary problem I wish to discuss is the problem of full member credibility.

An academic writing classroom CoP should theoretically be a stepping-stone to a real-world CoP of academic writers. However, this theoretical relationship ceases to exist if the teacher is not actually a practicing member of the real-world CoP. In this study, I taught the writers a metagenre of writing that I knew and that I did regularly in my practices outside the classroom. I also practiced the specific abstract metagenre I requested of my learners (i.e., aca-

demic research paragraph) by writing the models and all of the examples that they were given using the types of questions that they were given. Because I was a practicing academic writer in the real-world CoP, I was able to field questions about the exceptions to the metagenre I was teaching in ways that demonstrated that the metagenre was not a rigid formula for the real-world CoP. Because I was a practicing academic writer in the classroom CoP, I was able to understand why learners had some of the questions they did and what they might need to know in order to feel like what I was asking them to do had a meaningful purpose. The following exchange during a campfire discussion circle illustrates how my status as a practicing academic writer facilitated me in addressing learners' concerns:

Carolina: If I'm writing an essay, do I need concluding statement in each paragraph of the essay?

Me: In this class, we will practice doing concluding statements in each paragraph of an essay because it is useful. Okay, the good thing about a concluding statement in a long essay is that you take time at the end of every paragraph to remind your reader of where you're leading them, okay. And so that's very useful. Now, in the TOEFL, you probably don't have time to do that, and truthfully, expert writers can get away without doing that, okay. As a student writer, right now, do it because if your reader's getting confused for some other reason, that concluding statement will help them to stay caught up with you, okay. As you become more expert, you'll kind of develop a sense of, "I don't really need it now. I really need it now. I don't really need it now." But we will practice doing it in here, okay.

Okay, so is everybody pretty clear on this situation, okay, Soyoung?

(Campfire Discussion Circle, September 7)

In the preceding excerpt, I used my real-world CoP academic writing knowledge of what “expert writers” can do in comparison to a “student writer” to acknowledge that the writing they might have seen (e.g., textbooks, academic research articles they were reading in their reading course) did not necessarily match the text type I was asking them to write. I used my classroom CoP academic writing knowledge of learners’ preoccupations and previous experiences to help them understand why writing a concluding statement was especially useful to them (e.g., “if your reader’s getting confused for some other reason, that concluding statement will help them to stay caught up with you”). I also used it to help them understand how the information I was teaching them fit into their schema of a text type that mattered a great deal to them (e.g., “in the TOEFL, you probably don’t have time to do that”). I think my ability to talk about academic writing from the real-world CoP perspective, the teacher or reader’s perspective, and the learners’ perspective enhanced my credibility to learners, which may have encouraged them to trust me.

The key to establishing my credibility and possibly winning the learners’ trust was my own practice of academic writing. Teachers who are not academic writers, even if the writing is just to do the same assignments they give learners, may be forfeiting their credibility. Winer (1992) discussed the results of a TESL writing practicum that included 100 graduate students who planned to become ESL or EFL teachers. The students’ journals revealed that they had negative attitudes toward writing and teaching writing. Two of their negative attitudes were their own dread of writing and insecurity about their own writing skills. In the study, one of the strategies that students identified as helping them to reverse their negative attitudes was to design actual writing tasks that they might give to other learners and actually do those tasks themselves.

Winer (1992) explains that, “By recognizing their own struggles and ways of succeeding in their students, teachers lessen the distance between themselves and students and remove much of the unfair burden of unrealistic models of the writing process and of writing competence;...” (p. 76).

Therefore, I think one of the implications of this study for academic writing is related to pre-service teacher training in ESL and in-service professional development of ESL teachers. The issue of teacher credibility in the skill areas of ESL may not intrinsically be the focus of a native speaker M.A. TESOL student. In fact, Winer (1992) found that native speakers did not want to develop their writing skills. Rather, they had confidence in their own linguistic intuitions. However, I believe that my study suggests that my ability to establish an orientation to interactions focused on building healthy relationships was likely facilitated by the credibility I earned from demonstrating that I was a practicing academic writer. Perhaps, pre-service ESL teachers would benefit from an approach like Winer’s (1992) that simultaneously develops their own academic writing skills and impresses upon them the importance of being a practitioner of the skills they might teach. In addition, this study suggests that in-service academic writing teachers might benefit from informal or formal professional development programs that develop their academic writing and encourage them to stay in practice with the skill they are teaching.

With regard to academic writing instruction, I think my study also suggests that perhaps ESL programs or even the field at large should consider the question of the ethos of academic writing instruction. Ethos is one of Aristotle’s concepts of argumentation. When a speaker or writer uses an appeal that is based in ethos, they depend on the audience’s perception of them as trustworthy or credible to serve as their persuasive force. Academic discourse has an ethos - as Bizzell (1978) discussed - that often confuses learners because it is so distinct from the “honest face” ethos of television discourse with which learners are more familiar. Teachers also have an

ethos as Haskins (2000) discussed that they express through their pedagogical communication. Perhaps, ESL academic writing instruction, particularly on a programmatic level, would benefit from conversations about what ESL academic writing teachers imagine the ethos of non-ESL academic writing to be. It may be that the ESL academic writing teachers within a program have very different understandings of the ethos of non-ESL academic discourse. If their understandings are extremely different, ESL learners may fail to develop any sort of stable idea of what the ethos of non-ESL academic discourse is because they have received so many different views of it. At the programmatic level, conversation about what the ethos of academic writing instruction is for a given program could also be beneficial for teachers and learners. In the academic writing curriculum of any ESL program, the presence of a consistent ethos that is enacted across the various levels would seem to allow both teachers and learners to operate with a greater shared understanding of goals and progress.

### **7.3 *Teacher Coda***

I have taught the 700 academic writing course to five different groups since I collected the data for this study. Each time I have noticed how the fact that I had done this study changed the experiences in my classroom CoP. Even as I write these words this study continues to change those experiences. I would like to share a few of the meaningful changes this study has brought to my academic writing classroom CoPs.

To begin, I have continued to use all three of the classroom practices that I described in Chapter 4 in my teaching, and I have even expanded the ways that I use them. For example, I now understand that the campfire discussion circle is a place where learners ask questions about things that they are ready to know. Therefore, rather than waiting to discuss those topics when it fits my idea of the appropriate progression, I rely less on any kind of pre-prepared power point



aided presentations on writing and more on in-the-moment teachable opportunities. Because I have used the campfire discussion circle several times now, I know that my opportunities for certain topics will inevitably come, and I take them when they arrive.

I have also expanded the role of the public writing forum. I use it much more often than I did in this study. In fact, in my current class, almost every written text is submitted and discussed publicly. I openly use the texts in the public writing forum as models, and I hold the learners' accountable for correcting their work by telling them to look at other learners' models who did not receive the same comments to see how they might be able to change their writing.

The parts-before-whole approach has also been expanded. I have developed additional steps like creating brainstorming questions to focus learners' production of ideas due to discoveries that I have made while working through the steps with learners in this study. I have also revised my explanations and examples for steps to make them easier for learners to follow. One of the biggest changes is that now I connect the reading course to the writing course by developing academic writing questions that focus on a textbook chapter that we read in the reading course. The steps of the parts-before-whole approach are practiced by using the same five questions as we go through each step, and each question is something that can be answered through research-from-source writing using the textbook chapter. Thus, the parts-before-whole approach is much more contextualized now, and I have eliminated the issues of content comprehension that may have been a factor in the writing of these learners. (The learners in this study were given texts to read that were unique only to the writing course. Now, learners have read and discussed their source texts in another course, so they are better prepared in terms of vocabulary and overall understanding of the content.)

Another important change that I made to my practices of teaching academic writing is the way that I approach the research aspect of research-from-source writing. In this study, for the academic research paragraphs, I provided learners with sources, and I still do this, using sources from the reading class. In this study, the learners also wrote a research paper at the end of the course. Because they had practiced the academic research paragraph (i.e., body paragraph) in great detail, I expected that learners would be able to write the paper with less difficulty than in previous sessions, and I believe their writing was easier. However, I did not accurately anticipate the difficulty that learners might have with locating sources and deciding how to use them. In particular, learners did not seem to understand that writers often look for sources before they determine the sub-topics of their papers. Instead, learners wanted to create a research question, propose sub-topics from their minds, and then look for sources. This, of course, led to frustration if they did not truly know the topic well enough to make these determinations ahead of time. Because we discussed their process daily, I realized that part of the problem for them was that their full member representative (me) was far more experienced at research than they were, and I usually do know more about my topics before I begin research, so I probably do have a better idea of what sub-topics I am seeking. Therefore, I had failed to really see the task from the perspective of a novice research writer. In all likelihood, the better strategic move for a novice research writer would be to survey the research available and determine sub-topics based on availability.

Even though I demonstrated how to use the library databases, learners still struggled with actually finding sources and knowing how to use sources once they found them. They managed to do it, but their struggles impressed upon me the fact that I needed to do more training in the research aspect of research-from-source writing. Thus, now, I have the learners do a research

project using library databases in the reading class. For this project, learners develop a research question, select three sub-topics they will focus on with regard to that topic based on what they see in terms of research available in the databases, and create an annotated bibliography in which they summarize articles and explain to me how they will use them to discuss their sub-topics. They now complete this research project in reading class *before* we discuss the research paper in writing class. Thus, now, I feel that learners are better trained in both research and research-from-source writing.

Overall, learners in this study felt good about themselves and their progress in academic writing. However, there was one common complaint, which was that learners wanted to practice writing long texts like the research paper more. Several learners mentioned this as the only thing they would change as the following comment illustrates:

EI: Is there anything else you would like to add? I have no more questions, so

Ahmed: Actually, I would add that I hope I wish actually this this structure what we actually learned in this class I hope that we learn it before that really in 600. We need to uh to made a lot of practice in this structure before we leave to this Institute and starting our graduate because if we really if we know the this structure before and if we know uh how can we I mean what how can we write uh body paragraph and how can use the illustration very well we can write a lot of research for example two or three with much time in the all in 700. That I feel badly because I learned this structure on-ly before I leave this Institute really because I need more practice in this. That what I hope anyway. (Interview 3, Ahmed)

Ahmed indicated that he would have liked to write “a lot of research for example two or three.” By this, I felt certain he meant two or three research papers. However, as he also indicated, prior to this course, he did not know the basic structure and moves of an academic research paragraph “body paragraph” before this course. He wished that he had learned the structure earlier so that we could have focused on longer texts. I wished the same thing.

Based on what the learners in this study said about their desire to learn the structure of research-from-source writing sooner, I proposed to my director that we change the curriculum of our upper level writing courses so that reading and writing were paired in levels 500, 600, and 700. I proposed that the academic writing instruction of each course focus on writing from sources, specifically the sources from the reading course. I also proposed that learners begin learning how to cite from sources in level 500 rather than discovering it for the first time in level 700. As of this session, our curriculum has been reconfigured so that by the time learners reach level 700, they will already have been exposed to research-writing-from sources in a consistent manner. I imagine that in my future versions of this 700 course, I will either be able to eliminate teaching the academic research paragraph as a text type in favor of a focus on other longer texts or be able to go through the steps more quickly due to the learners’ experience and have more time for other longer texts.

Finally, the most important change to my personal pedagogy of academic writing is that I continue to improve and expand my use of RCT and Positive Psychology, and as I do so, I continue to feel the benefits for my learners and myself. For example, now, I realize that when I am stressed about pacing, I lose my ability to listen to learners and respond to them empathetically, a dilemma Benesch (2008, p. 108) labeled “coverage as control.” Therefore, I now make a conscious effort to allow explanations, questions, and activities in class the time that they need so

that learners' development rather than curriculum is in control. If a step or a topic appears to need to be revisited, I revisit it even if to do so may change the pacing. I also acknowledge and discuss the feelings of writing much more with learners. For example, now when learners bring up personal stories of how complicated writer-responsible framing of citations is for them due to what they think is normal in their first language, I do a better job of acknowledging their stories and making them part of the community's knowledge-base. I have also become much better at seeing learners' strengths. Now, when I look at their writing or hear their questions, I do a much better job of attending to and acknowledging what they do know rather than what they do not know.

In addition to these personal changes, I have also been able to share the way that I taught the 700 academic writing course featured in this study with a colleague. She is currently teaching one section of the reading-writing pair while I teach the other section. She is following my lesson plans and using my materials, and she has consistently reported that she enjoys teaching the course and feels very positive about the learners' gains. She is using two of the three practices that I use—the public writing forum and the parts-before-whole instructional approach—and she has commented that she believes these are useful practices that she might use in other courses. She does not use the campfire discussion circle (she did the first two or three classes) because she said that she “lost confidence” in the activity and felt that the learners did not want to do it. Thus, I would never suggest that the way that I approached this course could or should be replicated in its entirety by anyone, but I do find it encouraging that another person besides me is able to use some of these practices successfully and feels positive about the impact these practices have.

In addition to the aforementioned revisions to my personal pedagogy, I became aware as I finished writing this dissertation that Sarah Benesch (2012), a fellow feminist and critical pedagogue, had recently published a book titled *Considering Emotions in Critical English Language Teaching*. I was relieved to see that she and I arrived at some of the same conclusions after reviewing literature on emotions and ESL pedagogy. We both believe that emotions have been marginalized in ESL research, and we both believe that as Benesch (2012) aptly states it, “Intuitively and anecdotally emotions seem to factor into teaching and learning so it would be useful to understand them better” (p. 133). Some interesting features of emotions that she adds that I had not considered and will find useful for future research include the ideas that emotions are embodied and that dichotomizing emotions as good or bad may interfere with achieving a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between emotions and learning.

In Chapter 2, I suggested that radical visionary feminism and womanism operate according to a call and response style rather than a problem-solution style. I sincerely hope that even though I was not aware of Benesch’s (2012) call when I began, this study is a response to her call for more attention to emotions in critical English language teaching and learning. I also hope that this is but one response among many that will emerge as emotions are legitimized in ESL classroom contexts. I feel strongly that this process of legitimization will occur as a result of the everyday actions of everyday teachers in their everyday classroom settings, and I believe even more as a result of conducting and participating in this study that feminist pedagogy, at least in part, requires practitioners to simply “get started on whatever plan we envision” (Marpayan, 2012, p. 322) in our local contexts and settings.

#### **7.4 *Final Thoughts***

In this study, I have distinguished between the academic writing classroom CoP and the real world CoP of Anglo-American academic writers for the purpose of explaining how LPP may operate in formal educational settings. However, as I conclude, I want to be very clear that I consider classroom CoPs to be part of the real world because classroom CoPs have very real-world consequences and implications. I agree with Lave (1997) that we need to do away with the “inaccurate” and “pejorative” idea that school is not “real life.” Neither classroom experiences nor the emotions that accompany them should be marginalized to an unreal status. ESL academic writing CoPs are real life for the teachers who teach in them and the learners who populate them. The patterns of interaction that are established in those CoPs and the things that are consciously attended to (e.g., learners’ feelings) have implications not only inside those CoPs but also in the participants’ other concurrent and future CoPs. Thus, all positive changes that occur in ESL academic writing CoPs, whether they are academic or personal transformations, are steps toward “paradise realized” (hooks, 2003, p. 183).

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## APPENDICES

### *Appendix A*

#### Participant Self-Report General Information Form

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Academic Writing II:**

#### **Background Information & Needs Analysis**

The purpose of this form is to help me understand more about your previous experiences with academic writing in English and to allow you to share with me any specific needs or goals you have for improving your academic writing skills in English. I use your answers to these questions to help me plan the topics of the course and prepare course materials.

*Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.*

#### ***Background Information: Experiences & Feelings***

1. What do you consider to be your home country?

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2. What language(s) do you speak with your family?

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3. What is the highest level of education that you completed in your home country?

---

4. In your home country, what language is used by teachers in their classrooms?

---

5. Did you receive education in any other country?    Yes            No

If yes, what is the highest level of education that you completed in that country  
what language was used by teachers in their classrooms in that country?

---

6. At what age did you begin studying English formally?

---

7. Before coming to the Language Institute at Georgia Tech, had you ever studied  
English outside of your home country?    Yes            No

If yes, where and for how long?

---

8. What levels of writing courses have you taken at the Language Institute of Georgia Tech?

---

9. What is the most difficult thing that you have ever written in English?

---

10. Do you like writing in your own language?            Yes    No

If yes, what kinds of things do you like to write? If no, why not?

---

11. Do you like writing in English?      Yes      No

If yes, what kinds of things do you like to write? If no, why not?

---

12. In general, how do you feel about writing in English? Explain why you feel this way.
- 
- 
- 

13. Have you always felt this way about writing in English or have your feelings about writing in English changed at times? Explain.
- 
- 
- 

14. Think about all of the English writing teachers you have ever had. What advice would you give them? Complete the following sentence.

I wish my English writing teachers would...

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---

---

***Needs Analysis: Knowledge & Skills***

15. What do you think academic writing is?

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16. How is academic writing different from other types of writing?

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17. What aspects of academic writing are most difficult for you?

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18. What aspects of academic writing are easiest for you?

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19. In your personal experience, what has helped you to improve your academic writing the most?

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20. In your opinion, what are some noticeable differences between formal writing in your native language and formal writing in English?

---

---

21. What is the one thing that you would most like to improve about your academic writing in English?

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**Appendix B****Semi-Structured Interview Protocols**

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**Semi-Structured Interview Protocol: Interview #1**

**Interview #1** (Conducted by the instructor, Lauren Lukkarila)

SCRIPT:

Hi *Name*. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. I appreciate your participation in this study. I want to remind you that you participating in this study is voluntary, so if you ever feel uncomfortable or want to stop participating, just let me know.

I will be asking you questions in English, of course. Please tell me if you have any problems understanding a question, and I will be glad to explain it. I can also show you the questions while I ask them if you find reading the questions helpful. I will check in with you by asking you, “Do you understand the question?” Please say, “No,” if you don’t understand so that I can explain it more clearly to you.

Do you understand what I’ve said so far? (If participant says yes, continue. If participant says no, explain again.)

Can I begin recording our interview now?

Let me begin by reminding you that what you say in this interview does not affect your grade in any way. Anything you tell me in this interview is useful for me because it will help me to become a better teacher.

I'm going to begin by asking you some questions related to the answers that you gave on the General Information Form that you filled out at the beginning of the course. Do you remember this form (*show the participant their form*)?

*Ask the following questions while referring to the form. The form will be visible to both the interviewer and the participant.*

1. Let's begin by looking at question 12. In this question, you said you felt *feelings from the form* about writing. Can you tell me more about those feelings?
2. Now, let's look at question 13. In this question, you said your feelings *had changed or had not changed*. *If changed*: Can you tell me more about why your feelings changed. *If not changed*: Can you tell me more about why you think your feelings haven't changed?
3. Okay, now let's look at question 14. In this question, I asked you to give advice to English writing instructors, and you said, "I wish my English writing instructors would *read what the participant wrote*." Can you tell me more about why you gave this advice?
4. Can you think of who your favorite English teacher was? You don't have to tell me his/her name just think about their teaching. Can you describe for me exactly what this teacher did that made him/her your favorite? How did you feel when you were in this teacher's class? What did he/she do that you made you feel *whatever feeling the participant mentions*?
5. Okay, now let's do the opposite. Can you think of who your least favorite English teacher was? You don't have to tell me his/her name just think about their teaching. Can you describe for me exactly what this teacher did that made him/her your least favorite? How did you feel when you were in this teacher's class? What did he/she do that you made you feel *whatever feeling the participant mentions*?

6. Alright, let's talk about the writing course that you're taking now. If a friend asked you what you have learned in your current writing course, what would you say?
7. How are you feeling about your academic writing right now? Can you tell me more about *feeling the participant identifies*.
8. Are there any suggestions that you would like to make about your writing class? Do you have any questions about your writing class?
9. Okay, the final question I have for you is related to this research study. In this study, you will have a pseudonym—that's a false name. I will use this name so that no one will know who you are. What pseudonym would you like for me to use? Pick something that doesn't resemble your real name.

**SCRIPT:**

Thank you again for talking to me. If you have any questions about the study or think of anything else that you would like to tell me related to this interview, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone.

Also, remember that what you said in this interview is for research—it does not affect your grade in this course.

**Semi-Structured Interview Protocol: Interview #2**

**Interview #2** (Conducted by the instructor, Lauren Lukkarila)

SCRIPT:

Hi *Name*. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. I appreciate your participation in this study. I want to remind you that you participating in this study is voluntary, so if you ever feel uncomfortable or want to stop participating, just let me know.

I will be asking you questions in English, of course. Please tell me if you have any problems understanding a question, and I will be glad to explain it. I can also show you the questions while I ask them if you find reading the questions helpful. I will check in with you by asking you, “Do you understand the question?” Please say, “No,” if you don’t understand so that I can explain it more clearly to you.

Do you understand what I’ve said so far? (If participant says yes, continue. If participant says no, explain again.)

Can I begin recording our interview now?

Let me begin by reminding you that what you say in this interview does not affect your grade in any way. Anything you tell me in this interview is useful for me because it will help me to become a better teacher.



I'm going to begin by asking you some questions related to the answers that you gave on the General Information Form that you filled out at the beginning of the course. Do you remember this form (*show the participant their form*)?

*Ask the following questions while referring to the form. The form will be visible to both the interviewer and the participant.*

1. Let's begin by looking at questions 17 and 18. In these questions, you said *XYZ whatever the participant wrote on the form* were the most difficult things for you with regard to academic writing, and you said *XYZ whatever the participant wrote on the form* were the easiest things for you with regard to academic writing. If you were answering these questions now, would your answers be the same? Please explain.
2. Okay, now let's look at question 19. In this question, you said that *XYZ whatever the participant wrote on the form* had helped you improve your academic writing the most. If you were answering this question now, would your answer be the same? Please explain.
3. In question 21, you said that you would most like to improve *XYZ whatever the participant wrote on the form*. If you were answering this question now, would your answer be the same? Please explain.
4. Have your ideas about what academic writing is changed since this course began? If yes, what ideas have changed? If no, continue.
5. Have your feelings about academic writing changed since this course began? If yes, how have they changed? If no, tell me more about your feelings and why you think they haven't changed.
6. Let's take a look at the first paragraph that you wrote in this course. *Show the participant a copy of their first paragraph*. Go ahead and take a few minutes to read it. Tell me what you think about this paragraph. What do you think has really changed about your writing from the time that you wrote this paragraph until now?
7. Are there any suggestions that you would like to make about your writing class? Do you have any questions about your writing class?

#### SCRIPT:

Thank you again for talking to me. If you have any questions about the study or think of anything else that you would like to tell me related to this interview, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone.

Also, remember that what you said in this interview is for research—it does not affect your grade in this course.

### Semi-Structured Interview Protocol: Interview #3

**Interview #3** (Conducted by another trained interviewer)

*(The instructor, Lauren Lukkarila, will not have access to recordings or transcripts of this interview until after the final grades of the course had been submitted.)*

SCRIPT:

Hi *Name*. I'm *Interviewer's Name*. I'll be interviewing you today for Lauren. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. I know that Lauren appreciates your participation in this study. I want to remind you that you participating in this study is voluntary, so if you ever feel uncomfortable or want to stop participating, just let Lauren or me know. Also, I just want you to know that Lauren will not listen to this interview until after she turns in your grades. I will actually keep the recordings until she turns in your grades.

I will be asking you questions in English, of course. Please tell me if you have any problems understanding a question, and I will be glad to explain it. I can also show you the questions while I ask them if you find reading the questions helpful. I will check in with you by asking you, "Do you understand the question?" Please say, "No," if you don't understand so that I can explain it more clearly to you.

Do you understand what I've said so far? (If participant says yes, continue. If participant says no, explain again.)

Can I begin recording our interview now?

1. I've never been in your academic writing class. Can you describe your academic writing class for me?

2. How would you describe Lauren's teaching approach?
3. What did you find most helpful about Lauren's teaching approach?
4. What did you find least helpful about Lauren's teaching approach?
5. In general, how did you feel as a student in Lauren's class?
6. How do you feel about yourself as an academic writer?
7. How did Lauren's class affect your feelings about yourself as an academic writer?
8. What could Lauren have done differently that would have improved your experience in the writing course?
9. At the beginning of this course, you discussed your personal goals with Lauren and the other students in the class. Do you think what you have done in this course will help you to reach those goals? Please explain.
10. During this course, in addition to being a student, you also did two private interviews with Lauren? Did you find these interviews helpful for you or your writing in any way? Please explain.
11. Is there anything else you would like to share with Lauren?

SCRIPT:

Thank you again for talking to me. If you have any questions about the study or think of anything else that you would like to tell me related to this interview, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone. Here's my business card.

Also, remember that what you said in this interview is for research—it does not affect your grade in this course.

*Appendix C*

## Participant Informed Consent Form

**Georgia State University: Department of Applied Linguistics & ESL**  
**Georgia Institute of Technology: Language Institute**  
**Informed Consent**

Title: Benevolent Gate-keeping: Exploring a Strength-based Teaching Approach in English as a Second Language (ESL) Academic Writing Instruction

Principal Investigators: Dr. Diane Belcher, Lauren Lukkarila

I. Purpose:

You are invited to take part in a research study. The purpose of the study is to examine my (Lauren's) approach to teaching academic writing to international students. Specifically, I am interested in investigating how my approach affects you and your academic writing in English. You are invited to participate because you are a student in an Intensive English Program (IEP), and you are a student in both my Academic Writing II and Academic Reading & Discussion II courses. A total of 15 participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will simply require you to complete normal class assignments and meet with Lauren or another trained researcher for approximately 4 hours of your time outside of class during the Fall I session (August 22-October 14).

II. Procedures:

If you decide to take part in this study, I will be collecting various types of information from you. Most of the things I collect will simply be part of your normal course work in both the reading and writing courses. I will collect the following written items: a general information form, all exams, all daily and project writing assignments, and written self-reflections.

In addition to the normal course work, I will be making digital audio recordings of each class meeting for myself. The recorder may collect recordings of questions or comments that you offered publicly during class. I will request that you allow me to use any recordings or notes that I made of your public questions or comments during class.

I will also ask you to participate in 2-3 interviews outside of class. These interviews may be with me or with another trained interviewer (Dr. Diane Belcher). You will be interviewed about your experiences in my class and your ideas about academic writing. You may be asked to review your own written work or plan new written work. Each interview will last approximately one hour and will take place at a time and location that is convenient for you.

The general interview schedule will be as follows for Fall 1: the first interview will occur during the third week of classes; the second interview will occur during the sixth week of classes; and the third interview will occur during the eighth week of classes (the third interview will be conducted by Dr. Diane Belcher. Interviews will be recorded using a digital recorder.

### III. Risks:

There is the possibility that participation in this study may cause you anxiety related to the following: discussing the course in the presence of the teacher of the course, discussing course experiences in English rather than your native language, discussing your own academic writing, or discussing your teacher with another interviewer and feeling concerned about her reactions to what you might say. To increase your comfort level with discussions, you will be given the option to skip any question that you do not wish to answer. Your interviewer will either be your teacher, Lauren, or her advisor, Dr. Diane Belcher. Both Lauren and Dr. Belcher are trained ESL teachers who will gladly repeat and explain any questions until you feel that you have understood the question. In addition, either interviewer will be willing to show you a written version of a question if you feel more comfortable reading the question before you answer. In the third and final interview, you will be interviewed only by Dr. Belcher-- not Lauren. In this interview, you will be asked to specifically discuss Lauren's teaching. Lauren will not hear your comments until after she has submitted your final grades. Your comments, positive or negative, will not affect Lauren's treatment of you or her employment status at the Language Institute. Your comments are information that Lauren will use to evaluate her own effectiveness as a teacher. Thus, your comments of any kind are beneficial to Lauren. If you experience anxiety or discomfort, let Lauren know and she will make arrangements for you to discuss your feeling with someone at the Georgia Tech Counseling Center where treatment is free of charge.

### IV. Benefits:

Participation in this study may benefit you personally. Studies suggest that when students think and talk about their experiences, they may actually benefit by doing better in their classes. Overall, we hope to gain information that would help international students in the following ways: a) improve the materials and instructional methods used in academic writing courses; b) improve students' feelings of self-confidence with regard to academic writing; and c) provide language programs like the IEP with ideas for program revision and design.

### V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in this research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your grade in this course in any way. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

## VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. All paper copies of written work will be transferred to an electronic format, and the paper copies will be destroyed. All electronic copies of written work will be transferred to CDs. All digital recordings of classes and interviews will be transferred to DVDs. All discs will be stored in a locked cabinet in the home of Lauren Lukkarila. The data will be kept after the study for future research purposes only. We will continue to protect the confidentiality of the data. We will use pseudonym (a false name that you select) rather than your real name on study records. The code sheet identifying the research participants will be stored separately from the data in a locked cabinet in the office of Diane Belcher. The code sheet will be destroyed as soon as all of the data has been collected and recorded. Only the researchers will have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board and the Office for Human Research Protection, OHRP). Your name and other facts that might identify you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results.

## VII. Contact Persons:

Call or contact any of the following investigators if you have questions about this study: Lauren Lukkarila, 404-274-6521, [lauren.lukkarila@esl.gatech.edu](mailto:lauren.lukkarila@esl.gatech.edu) or Diane Belcher, 404-413-5194, [eslddb@langate.gsu.edu](mailto:eslddb@langate.gsu.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or [svogtner1@gsu.edu](mailto:svogtner1@gsu.edu).

## VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are **willing** to allow us to collect your written data from the writing and reading courses, please sign below.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

If you are **willing** to allow us to use recordings or notes of your public comments and questions from the writing and reading courses, please sign below.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

If you are **willing** to allow us to record your comments during private interviews, please sign below.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

---

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

---

Date

If you are **not willing** to allow us to use your written data or recordings/notes of your public comments and questions from the writing and reading courses, please understand the following:

Your public comments and questions from the writing and reading courses may be accidentally recorded in class by the digital recorder. If your comments are accidentally recorded, they will **not** be included in the researchers' written transcript of the recordings. In addition, neither your written work nor any of your comments will be used in this research study in any way.