

**PREPARING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS
FOR WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES**

Presenters: Sheila Botein & Jennifer Peters

Learning Assistance Center, San Francisco State University
sbotein@sfsu.edu & jmpeters@sfsu.edu

Background

This handout reflects our experience working with students and with faculty at SF State during the first semesters of the implementation of Writing Across the Curriculum /Writing Within the Disciplines (WAC/WID). We've been excited to see faculty and students in the disciplines experimenting and testing new ways to make students' writing stronger and clearer. We know that many strategies that upper division faculty are using have been first introduced to English language learners by their ESL teachers. We want to acknowledge how much work is currently underway and encourage faculty and students in beginning composition courses and in upper-division writing intensive courses to continue to develop ways of teaching writing and talking about teaching writing so that the voices of second language writers will be heard across the curriculum.

Approach

- ☑ Teaches transferable skills that students use both in composition classes and in the disciplines
- ☑ Targets needs highlighted by faculty from the disciplines
- ☑ Focuses on strategies that can be taught in classrooms and used independently by students, outside classroom
- ☑ Increases students' awareness of writing conventions so they can think analytically about diverse writing tasks

Teaching students about different writing tasks

To help prepare English language learners for writing in the disciplines, introduce them to the idea that the conventions of writing (organization, register, format, etc.) may change depending on the writing task. Below are common assignment types, or tasks, and examples of what might be the purpose, audience and mode of discourse for each task.

TASK	PURPOSE(S)	AUDIENCE(S)	MODE(S) OF DISCOURSE
Argumentative Essay	•to persuade •to convince	•“non-believers” •committees	•expository •persuasive
Personal Experience Essay	•to tell a story •to make a point	•peers •“outsiders”	•narrative
Journal Writing	•to record •to reflect	•the writer •teachers	•descriptive •expository

Helping English language learners develop strategies for writing-to-learn and learning-to-write

PARAGRAPH FOCUS

Learning Objectives

- Students recognize well-organized paragraphs.
- Students develop more focused paragraphs.
- Students learn strategies for checking the organization and focus of their paragraphs.

Teaching Points

- Predict the subject of the paragraph from the topic sentence.
- Show students how to incorporate quotes in paragraphs.
- Teach students narrative and expository paragraphs and use models from reading.
- Have students write expository paragraphs in groups and comparing results.

Learner Strategies

- Complete reverse outlines and linking topic sentences to thesis.
- Use highlighters to identify P-I-E in their own paragraphs, in their peer's paragraphs.
- Sequence cut-up sentences into a coherent paragraph.
- Identify and evaluate transition words.

REVISION

Learning Objectives

- Students recognize that meaning gets clearer through revision and that writing is a process.
- Students learn how to give and how to use effective peer feedback.
- Students develop strategies for revision at different stages.

Teaching Points

- Talk about the writing process (writing IS rewriting).
- Create low-stakes writing assignments to encourage writing as a process.
- Show students messy, marked up drafts.
- Collect all drafts and pre-writing in a portfolio with final draft.

Learner Strategies

- Write reflections on the revision process or keeping track of change in revision logs.
- Create assignment checklists.
- Participate in graded peer review.
- Develop action plans for revision.

EDITING

Learning Objectives

- Students recognize their own errors and error patterns.
- Students learn strategies for self-editing.
- Students develop an editing plan to complete before turning in an assignment.

Teaching Points

- Use examples of students' errors to teach editing steps.
- Discuss different proofreading strategies.
- Help students see which types of errors are most distracting to the reader.
- Give students time in class to proofread final drafts and make changes before turning in.

Learner Strategies

- Compile editing checklists.
- Practice focused proofreading to target certain types of errors.
- Create grammar reference cards to explain different grammar trouble spots.
- Keep error logs.

References

- Baldwin, P., Gillotte-Tropp, H., Goen-Salter, S., & Wong, J.M., (2007). *Composing for Success: A Student's Guide to Integrated Reading and Writing*. Boston: Pearson.
- Hall, J. (2009). WAC/WID in the next America: Redefining professional identity in the age of the multilingual majority. *The WAC journal*, 20, 33-49. Retrieved from <http://wac.colostate.edu/journal/>
- Hyon, S. (1996). Genre in three traditions: Implications for ESL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30 (4) 693-722.
- Kam, A., & Meinema Y. (2005). Teaching academic writing to international students in an interdisciplinary writing context: A pedagogical rough guide. *Across the Disciplines, Interdisciplinary perspectives on language, learning, and academic writing*, Special issue: The Linguistically-Diverse Student: Challenges and Possibilities Across the Curriculum. Retrieved from <http://wac.colostate.edu/atd/lds/index.cfm>
- Kutz, E., Groden, S., & Zamel, V. (1993). *The Discovery of Competence: Teaching and Learning with Diverse Student Writers*, Boston: Heinemann.
- National Council of Teachers of English. (2009). *CCCC statement on second language writing and writers*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/secondlangwriting>
- Reid, J. M. (2000). *The process of composition*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Writing across the curriculum and in the disciplines at SFSU*. (<http://dus.sfsu.edu/wac/>)

This handout and the PowerPoint slides that were used during this presentation will be available at:
<http://www.sfsu.edu/~lac/lacfacstaff.html>