students in the generation of ideas and strategies for identifying the purpose(s) of their written text, (b) to help students in developing strategies for the identification of audience expectations, and (c) to provide materials and activities for the consequent preparation and polishing of students’ written texts to meet academic expectations. For example, Ronald White’s textbook, Writing: Advanced, is based on authentic materials, individual composing processes, group work, and purposeful writing. He provides students with authentic advertising techniques for selling products, then asks students to write advertisements about themselves. He then gives the students the opportunity for authentic audience feedback and sharing:

Bring your advertisement to class and put it together in a mixed collection with the advertisements written by other students. Select at random one of the other advertisements. Read it out to the rest of the class. Try to identify the person who wrote the advertisement. . . . When you have identified the subject of the advertisement, discuss whether the image you had as a reader was the same as the image the writer intended to promote. (1987, p. 33)

Ilona Leki’s textbook Academic Writing: Techniques and Tasks (1989) also employs communicative approaches through the use of authentic professional and student essays. Each chapter is topic oriented and begins with “warm-up” journal exercises about the writer’s thoughts and feelings concerning the topic. Following readings on each topic, students are asked to analyze the readings and apply that information to the writing assignment, which is purpose-based, not modality-based, and is directed toward an authentic audience:

WRITING ASSIGNMENT: EDUCATION

Your purpose in this assignment is to inform by examining an issue objectively, analyzing both its strengths and weaknesses or its advantages and disadvantages. You may choose to write on the pros and cons of the school system in your home country or some aspect of the school you are attending now, or you may write on any subject with two clearly opposing sets of features.

Invention

To prepare for this assignment, you may want to make two lists side by side. On one side, list the positive features of your topic; on the other side list negative features. . . . Or you might write an internal dialog in which one voice presents the virtues of your topic and the other voice insists on its vices.

After you have examined your subject through one of these invention activities, share the results with your classmates . . .

When you write your draft, keep in mind the needs of your audience:
Who will your audience be for this discussion?
Will these people already know something about the subject or not?
Will these people be more interested in the strengths or weaknesses of your subject? Why?
Does your audience have any responsibility for the subject as it is?
Or has your audience perhaps had first-hand experience with the subject?
What information will your audience need in order to understand and even agree with your analysis?

The preface to Leki’s textbook summarizes the communicative approach in ESL writing classes that strives to achieve a balance between process and product:

[Students are taken through the writing process and given the opportunity to discover for themselves what kinds of approaches to writing are most useful to them. Students explore their ideas through journal writing, practice a variety of techniques for generating text, and learn how to elicit feedback on their writing from their classmates and how to respond to such feedback. Students are introduced to the rhetorical expectations of English-speaking readers on organization and development of written ideas, and they learn how to accommodate these expectations. Finally, students turn their attention to form, learning how to focus on technical and grammatical accuracy for writing situations that require such attention. (1989, p. vii)]

Collaborative Learning

Closely related to the process movement and to communicative competence is the focus on collaborative teaching and learning. The movement toward individualization of instruction, the student-centered classroom, and the use of cooperative learning strategies in ESL classrooms parallels NES research and teaching. “Current approaches to writing instruction in a second language advocate the negotiation of meaning between student writers and their audiences, sequential processes of drafting and revising compositions, and the development of learners’ abilities to diversify their capacities for written expression” (Cumming, 1989, pp. 82-83).

Collaborative learning and teaching strategies have been studied in order to determine how best to harness diverse strengths, energies, and personalities in the shared responsibility for education (Clark, 1987). The opportunities for collaborative learning in the ESL writing classroom include small group work for idea generation, cooperative

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work on gathering and organizing material, peer review and advice, and the presence of an authentic audience (other than the teacher) for the writer. The objectives of student independence in learning and student responsibility for learning are also met through such group interaction.* George Jacobs (1989) reviewed the NES research that validated the use of thoughtfully organized group activities as a means of enhancing both academic achievement and affective variables, and found that applications for ESL classrooms were viable. Roberta Vann and Roberta Abraham (1990), for example, studied two language learners to determine why their active use of strategies was unsuccessful; they found that often the strategies were inappropriately applied, resulting in limited learning. Classroom reports and research on collaborative and cooperative learning (Bassano and Christison, 1988; Christison, 1990; Nunan, 1989a; Scarcella and Oxford, 1992; C. Shoemaker and F. Shoemaker, 1991) indicate that the use of cooperative curricula and activities stimulate student participation and lead to language learning.

Although there is some resistance among teachers to implementing these theories, many teachers and researchers are investigating ESL collaborative classroom strategies (Bassano, 1986; Bialystok, 1985; Kral, 1992; O’Malley et al., 1985; Prapphal, 1987; Skehan, 1989; Wenden, 1985; Wenden and Rubin, 1987). Theresa Pica and her colleagues conclude that “To be effective, group interaction must be carefully planned by the classroom teacher to include a requirement for a two-way multi-way exchange of information. Thus the teacher’s role is critical not only in providing students with access to grammatical input, but also in setting up the conditions for successful second language acquisition in the classroom” (1987, p. 323). In Learner Strategies in Language Learning (Wenden and Rubin, 1987), Language Learning Strategies (Oxford, 1990), and The Tapestry of Language Learning (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992), the authors help teachers translate insights from research on learner strategies into planning tools they can use to promote learner autonomy in their classrooms.

**Computer-Assisted Language Learning (C.A.L.L.)**

Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), or CALL, in ESL teaching has grown substantially since it was first introduced a decade ago. Although the use of CALL has stirred some controversy concerning cost effectiveness, the quality of existing software programs, and student and teacher resistance (Gueye, 1989; Hirvela, 1988), many teachers and

*See the activities chapters (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7) for collaborative and peer review activities.

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researchers are firm proponents of the value of computer use with well-designed software in the ESL language classroom (Bickes and Scott, 1989; Clutterbuck, 1988; Cook, 1988; Cunningham, 1987; Higgins, 1988; Higgins and Johns, 1984; Rivers, 1990). CALL in current ESL writing classes involves much more than word processing programs and language drills; software programs, which are often designed or adapted for use by ESL writers, prompt students to improve their composing and revision skills. Gerald Dalgish (1984, 1985) and Hsien-Chin Liou (1991), for example, have designed software specifically for use in ESL writing classes, some of which track errors by student language background and help students monitor their own errors. Networking programs allow students to view each other’s texts on their own screens and to communicate about those texts through their computers (Esling, 1991; Rinkerman and Moody, 1992). There are also computer text-analysis programs that can quantify text features such as word frequency and sentence length, and then offer writers suggestions for improvement of their prose (Hull, 1987; Kiefer and Smith, 1984; J. Reid, 1987). The advent of “user-friendly” course-authoring systems, coupled with continued teacher-training in the use of CALL, will make computers an active part of the learning process in future ESL classes.

Research in the use of computers in ESL composition is limited, but the results have paralleled NES research. Students react positively to CALL use; they find revision easier, they enjoy working with the computers, and they believe that the use of word processors, invention programs, and revision aids helps to improve their writing (Brownfield, 1984; Hanson-Smith, 1990; Kaufman, 1987; Neu and Scarcella, 1991; Parkhurst, 1984; J. Reid, Lindstrom, McCaffrey, and Larsen, 1983; Stall, 1988). Studies of student use of learning strategies in CALL indicate that ESL writing students use specific coping strategies in computer-assisted instruction, but that the strategies are in many ways inadequate (Chapelle and Jamieson, 1986; Chapelle and Mizuno, 1989; Jamieson and Chapelle, 1987, 1988). One solution to this problem is, of course, teaching appropriate strategies for using computers in an ESL class. Another, demonstrated by Doug Brent, indicates that teachers must not leave intervention solely to the computer programs; teacher feedback remains the most important part of the ESL writing class (1991).

Computer use in ESL writing classes will no doubt burgeon during the next decade “as teachers develop computer skills and greater understanding of the machine, and as they discover uses of the medium they could not have envisioned in their early encounters with the computer” (Dunkel, 1991, p. 26). Networked computer classrooms currently offer the most promise for enhancing collaborative and student-centered classroom learning. Continued research that
examines the social and intellectual effects of CALL on language learning and, in particular, in the ESL writing classroom, as well as the development of better and more “user friendly” programs and intensive training of both teachers and students for computer use will be essential.

**Proficiency Testing**

The testing of ESL writing has undergone a radical change in the last decade. Previously, most student writing was evaluated on the basis of “indirect” discrete point grammar tests; however, the development of **direct tests** of writing in which students write in response to essay “prompts” (topics) has proved to be a more effective means of testing. Essay prompts, scoring guides, and holistic scoring for NES writing tests have gradually begun to replace multiple choice tests for ESL students (Peyton et al., 1990). In particular, the development of the Test of Written English (TWE) by the Educational Testing Service has influenced the teaching as well as the testing of ESL writing. The TWE began experimentally in 1986 (Kroll, 1990b; Stansfield, 1986), following rigorous reliability testing (Bridgeman and Carlson, 1984). It is now past the experimental stage, and is offered as an integral part of the TOEFL examination several times a year at TOEFL test centers throughout the world. The TWE is a separately scored and reported direct test of writing; students write 30-minute essays on a single given topic, and the resulting essays are scored holistically. That is, readers who have been trained to a carefully developed scoring guide read and then rate each essay as a “whole,” without marking errors or counting essay traits. Each TWE essay is scored twice; each is assigned a score on a 1 to 6 scale, with 6 being the highest score.

Like many large-scale writing tests, the TOEFL Test of Written English has prompted some criticism directly related to the environmental conditions of the test: a 30-minute time constraint, a single topic, and an “unauthentic” testing situation. Other perceived problems are commonly associated with most large-scale direct testing: the use of generalized prompts, the lack of comparability of prompts, and the reliability of holistic scoring (Greenberg, 1986; Hamp-Lyons, 1990; Raimes, 1990). Research continues in the areas of rater training and scoring (G. Cooper and Hamp-Lyons, 1988; Janopoulos, 1986; G. Robinson, 1985b; Vaughn, 1992) and topic development (Hamp-Lyons, 1992; Hirokawa and Swales, 1986; Horowitz, 1986b; Tedick, 1990).

Alternative large-scale writing tests to the TOEFL have been and are being developed. Other large-scale direct tests of ESL writing include:

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1. **Michigan English Language Assessment Battery** (MELAB)

A 30-minute impromptu essay, given as part of the English for academic purposes (EAP) battery of language proficiency tests, that is designed to measure proficiency at advanced levels. Students choose between two assigned topics. Two trained readers at the University of Michigan holistically score each essay on a 10-point categorical scale (English Language Institute, 1989).

2. **English Language Testing Service** (ELTS)

A test designed and administered by the British Council, primarily for post-graduate students applying for scholarships to British universities. The writing test section, introduced in 1980, consists of “two [discipline-specific] compulsory questions, each based on an input text which the candidate has previously read in another part of the test” (Hamp-Lyons, 1990, p. 79). The essays are scored on a 9-point scale by one reader only; there are five separate scoring traits, and the grading is carried out by large groups of well-trained readers without discussion.

3. **Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings** (ASLPR)

Designed for overseas students entering postgraduate and vocational training courses and used by the English Preparatory Centre in Sydney, “The essay and report components require a response in terms of focus and style from generalized stimulus questions typical of university and technical course exams” (Williams, 1990, p. 61). Essays are scored on a 9-point scale by two readers who have been trained to a carefully developed scoring guide that characterizes performance at each level.

In an ESL writing class or program, testing can have various functions:

- **Admission** (or proficiency): These tests measure the test-taker’s overall writing proficiency in English along a wide continuum. Proficiency tests like the TOEFL Test of Written English are generally independent of any instructional program and are highly standardized; universities usually set “cut-off” scores on the TWE as an admission criterion.

- **Placement**: The results of such tests determine the level of instruction for which a student is ready. The writing test, often developed and standardized “in house,” should test the same types of knowledge or skills that are taught in the class in which the student is placed (such as use of verb tense or ability to develop ideas).
• **Diagnosis**: These tests are designed to measure specific aspects of writing ability (such as sentence structure, use of cohesion devices, or levels of specific support) (J. D. Brown, 1990). An effective diagnostic test enables the evaluator to identify strengths and weaknesses in writing and, most important, to be able to give students feedback about those findings.

• **Achievement** (or progress): These writing tests measure a student’s success in learning some specific instructional content after teaching has taken place (Alderson et al., 1987). An effective test covers what has been taught (for instance, organization of material, overall coherence in a piece of writing) and can serve to evaluate teaching as well as learning.

**Conclusion**

The field of teaching writing to ESL students has changed dramatically in the last decade, and change continues to be the most predictable aspect of the research and teaching in this field. Perhaps the greatest change has been the relatively sudden interest in teaching ESL writing, particularly for advanced ESL courses. In their review article “Research in Applied Linguistics Relevant to Language Teaching,” Rosamond Mitchell and Christopher Brumfit state: “The development of advanced writing skills in ESL is the predominant theme in the extensive current literature of L2 [second language] writing” (1989, p. 147). As a result, current classroom approaches appear to be following the trend in NES composition classes: a more balanced approach toward process and product.

In many educational areas, however, the results of research are often only gradually implemented in the classroom, and ESL is no exception. Perhaps because the field of teaching English as a Second Language is relatively new, theoretical approaches and methodologies abound (see Krashen, 1982; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Long and Richards, 1987; Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983; Stevick, 1980). Many of them prove popular for a short period, then pass out of the literature without having made substantial effects on classroom teaching. Others, of course, remain, and some of those eventually make their way into second language classrooms. The focus on the expectations of **academic discourse communities** and the **writing process approach** appear to be lasting additions to the ESL writing classroom. At present, the research and teaching experience from the field of NES composition continue to influence the field of ESL composition, mostly in positive ways. In the near future, the information flow may become more reciprocal, particularly since research in such areas as

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collaborative techniques and discourse analysis can provide insights into the teaching of all composition students.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you studied a second language? If so, can you identify which method(s) your teacher(s) used? Were you, for example, taught using the ALM? In retrospect, which methods did you find most/least effective? Why?

2. If you have studied a second language, what memories do you have of learning to write in that language? What did you consider most difficult about writing in a second language? Why? In retrospect, what might have helped? With a small group of classmates, share your second language learning experiences.

3. Look at the statements from inexperienced ESL writing teachers about writing near the beginning of this chapter. Which do you agree, in part, with? Which seem to be least correct? Why?

4. In your opinion, why was writing the “forgotten” ESL skill for so long? Give reasons for your answer.

5. Based on your previous learning or teaching experiences, do you think that there are cultural differences in the organization and presentation of ideas? Why?

6. What specific information or ideas from Chapter 1 (“Overview of Native English Speaker Composition”) might be useful for writing teachers of ESL students? Which have already been incorporated? Why? Which might be less helpful? Why?

7. Some citations in the reference list at the end of the book are not formally published, so they are not readily available. If you wanted to obtain copies of the references listed below, what process(es) would you use?


Writing

1. Select one of the composition textbooks discussed in this chapter or choose another composition textbook. Read the Introduction and peruse the Table of Contents. Then look through the textbook, at the exercises, the assignments, and the materials presented. Write an analysis of the textbook for other prospective ESL writing teachers: identify the language proficiency level, the focus, and the philosophy presented. Determine whether you think the textbook would be successful with an ESL writing class and, most important, why or why not.

2. Choose one of the authors referenced in this chapter (such as Patricia Carrell, Daniel Horowitz, Ann Raimes, Vivian Zamel). Read his or her articles on the reference list at the end of this book, and locate and read other current articles by that author. Make an annotated bibliography of the articles to share with your classmates.

3. Choose one article from the reference list. Read it carefully. Then write a two-page response to the article, summarizing and analyzing its main ideas for your classmates.

4. Many ESL language classes, and many ESL writing classes in particular, emphasize the teaching of culture along with language. Examine your attitudes about the teaching of language in a cultural context and write your reactions about the advantages and the disadvantages of doing so.

5. As you consider your philosophy of teaching ESL writing, brainstorm or make notes about your attitudes toward the following:
   a. collaborative learning in the ESL writing class
   b. CALL for ESL writers
   c. using reading in the ESL classroom