Tanita Saenkhum and Paul Kei Matsuda

Second Language Writing and Writing Program Administration
(WPA-CompPile Research Bibliographies, No. 4)

May 2010*

As stated in the CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers, second language writers, including international and U.S. resident students, have become integral to writing courses and programs in U.S. higher education. While they are similar in many ways to native English users, some of them also have unique and distinct characteristics and needs that require special attention from writing teachers and program administrators. Second language writers speak English as an additional language. Some of them are fluent in spoken English but may transfer features of spoken language to written language. Others may be highly literate in their first language, but their rhetorical assumptions and practices may be quite different from those that are familiar to users of dominant varieties of English in the United States.

The purpose of this annotated bibliography is to provide the background information and resources for WPAs who seek to respond to the presence and needs of second language writers in their programs. Some of the issues covered in this bibliography include: the administration of ESL composition courses/programs; the placement of second language writers; ethical issues surrounding exit examinations; placement options for second language writers in first-year composition; second language students' placement preferences; and the implication of identity labels used by institutions.

We hope this annotated bibliography proves to be a useful resource for WPAs as they develop situated responses to the presence and needs of second language writers in their writing programs.

Braine, George

ESL Students in First-Year Writing Courses: ESL versus Mainstream Classes

Journal of Second Language Writing 05.2 (1996), 91-107

> This study examines university ESL students' preferences for first-year mainstream and ESL writing courses over a period of one academic year. Results demonstrated that a majority of ESL students preferred to enroll in ESL writing classes and that they performed better on a holistically scored exit examination in these classes. Students reported that they felt comfortable in ESL writing classes, mainly because they did not have to worry about their accents when participating in discussions. Having teachers who were aware of their special problems and needs was another

reason for students' preferences. For the benefit of ESL students, Braine suggests that students should have a choice of enrolling in ESL or mainstream sections.

KEYWORDS: ESL, program, mainstreaming, FYC, self-placement, self-evaluation, student-preference, self-placement, native-nonnative

Costino, Kimberly A.; Sunny Hyon

'A Class for Students Like Me': Reconsidering Relationships among Identity Labels, Residency Status, and Students' Preferences for Mainstream or Multilingual Composition

Journal of Second Language Writing 16.2 (2007), 63-81

This study of nine students with various residency statuses—U.S.-born, U.S.-resident immigrant, and international—examines the relationships between students' identity labels, residency statuses, and their preferences for mainstream or multilingual composition courses. Findings indicated that the students' residency statuses did not correspond with their course preferences. Both international and U.S.-resident immigrant students preferred the multilingual section of first-year composition. Two major reasons were that they felt comfortable working with non-native English speaking friends who were like them and teachers who were trained to teach them. The students had negative feelings toward the ESL label, particularly associating it with weak language skills. Implications for placement include the limitations of identity labels for identifying and placing students into writing courses.

KEYWORDS: ESL, mainstreaming, identity, residency, student-preference, native-nonnative, ESL-nonESL, self-placement, labeling

Crusan, Deborah

An Assessment of ESL Writing Placement Assessment

Assessing Writing 8.1 (2002), 17-30

This essay reviews related literature on writing placement and reports on a preliminary study of modes of ESL writing placement from various U.S. universities and their relationships with students' performance in composition classes. Drawing on the review of literature and the study's results, the author recommends that writing programs employ multiple instruments (e.g., direct/indirect test combination) to place ESL students into first-year composition courses. She also argues that ESL specialists should be involved in the placement decision.

KEYWORDS: ESL, international, placement, mode, grades, survey, institutional, multiple-measures, multiple-choice, instructional-validity, FYC, assessment, reconciliation, review-of-research, data

Harklau, Linda

From the 'Good Kids' to the 'Worst': Representations of English Language Learners across Educational Settings

TESOL Quarterly 34.1 (2000), 35-67

> The author argues that the institutional label of 'ESOL student' (*i.e.*, English for Speakers of Other Languages), affects students' identity construction, especially when students transition from one educational setting to another. The author illustrates her argument with results of ethnographic case studies of three immigrant students who transitioned from a U.S. high school to a community college ESOL program. As ESOL students in high school, the students were successful writers. At college, on the other hand, the students struggled with the label given by the institution. As a consequence, these long-term U.S. residents did not do well in writing classes where a majority of students were just-arrived immigrants. The ESOL student label affects the students' behavior and motivation in the classrooms.
>
> KEYWORDS: ESL, ELL [English language learning], 'ESOL' [English for Speakers of Other Languages], immigrant, high-school, sheltered, two-year, identity construction, constructivist

Haswell, Richard H.

Searching for Kiyoko: Bettering Mandatory ESL Writing Placement

Journal of Second Language Writing 07.2 (1998), 133-174

> The author argues that current methods of ESL writing placement (e.g., indirect and standardized testing) have some problems, such as audience bias and the instructional validity of the tests. He then proposes a new model, which involves two groups of readers in evaluating student writing. Readers in the first group quickly evaluate essays and decide if students fit into the course in which they originally chose to enroll. Readers in the second group, who are more specialized and experienced, take longer time in evaluating essays; they decide placement for all courses. While the former reads with students' names and other background information hidden, the latter reads with foreknowledge of students' names and other related backgrounds. This method of ESL placement was implemented at one university, and results suggest that students' language background and their ethnicity affect writing placement evaluation.
>
> KEYWORDS: ESL, placement, testing, change, holistic, diagnosis, idiographic, response, individual, anonymity, ESL-status, evaluation, data, contrast-group, case-study, Japanese, contrastive, native-nonnative, evaluation, reader-response, implied-author

Johns, Ann M.

Interpreting an English Competency Examination: The Frustrations of an ESL Science Student

Written Communication 8.3 (1991), 370-401

This article documents a case study of an ESL science major who repeatedly failed his English competency examination but excelled in his disciplinary writing. Through the discussion of various topics, such as prompt type, essay content, rhetorical organization, student' preparation for writing and audience, the author explores the reasons for this student's failure to pass the required English competency examination. At the end, the author raises various questions related to the appropriateness of exit exams for ESL students, including what essay topics should be assigned, what evaluation criteria should be used, and who should grade the exams (English faculty members or disciplinary professors).

KEYWORDS: competency, assessment, ESL, prompt, arrangement, vocabulary, interpretation, content, case-study, Vietnamese, student-frustration, skill-level, rater-training, proficiency, exit-exam, international

Matsuda, Paul Kei; Tony Silva

Cross-cultural Composition: Mediated Integration of US and International Students

Composition Studies, 27.1 (1999), 15-30

The authors discuss an alternative placement option called cross-cultural composition, in which more or less equal numbers of native English students (NES) and ESL students are systematically integrated into the same writing classroom. This type of class provides ESL students with a friendly environment while providing both ESL and NES students with opportunities to learn from one another about cultural and linguistic differences. In terms of staffing, it is important that instructors teaching this class be prepared to work with different groups of students and be able to address students' language issues. In order to have a balanced enrollment, a placement procedure needs to be taken into consideration.

KEYWORDS: cross-cultural, international, ESL, integration, mainstreaming, international, native-nonnative, staffing, placement, intercultural

Ortmeier-Hooper, Christina

"English May Be My Second Language, But I'm Not 'ESL'"

College Composition and Communication 59.3 (2008), 389-419

The author argues that institutionalized labels, such as ESL, ELL, and Generation 1.5 are problematic for students when they negotiate their identities as second language writers in mainstream composition classrooms. Three case studies of immigrant first-year students in a mainstream composition courses are presented to illustrate the

impact of students' identity positioning on their writing. The students rejected their ESL label since they no longer saw themselves as ESL students; as a result, they preferred to be in mainstream composition courses where they could associate themselves with English nativeness. This study suggests that institutions of U.S. higher educational need to be cautious when using those terms to label students.

KEYWORDS: ELL, ESL, ESOL, case-study, deficit-model, generational, identity, inquiry, performance, roots, TOEFL, heritage, labeling, Generation 1.5, mainstreaming, native-nonnative, self-perception

Silva, Tony

An Examination of Writing Program Administrators' Options of the Placement of ESL Students in First Year Writing Classes

Writing Program Administration 18.1/2 (1994), 37-43

Silva describes and evaluates four placement options—mainstreaming, basic writing, ESL writing, and cross-cultural composition—for ESL writers in first-year composition. The first option is to mainstream second language (L2) students with native English speaking students. The second option is to place L2 students in basic writing classes with native English speakers of English who are basic writers. The third option is to specially design L2 writing classes for non-native speakers of English. The final option is to have an alternative called cross-cultural composition, in which the equal numbers of NES and L2 students learn about writing, focusing on cultural and linguistic differences in the same class. Silva also discusses   strengths and weaknesses of each option. He also suggests that, in order to better serve L2 students' different needs, writing programs should offer as many placement options as possible for those students.

KEYWORDS: ESL, placement, WPA, FYC, curriculum-design, self-placement, mainstreaming, basic, cross-cultural

Williams, Jessica

ESL Composition Program Administration in the United States

Journal of Second Language Writing 4.2 (1995), 157-179

Williams presents results of a survey of writing program administrators and instructors from 78 colleges and universities across the United States. The survey, which focuses on the placement and instruction of Non-Native Speaking (NNS) students in composition courses, reveals that at most institutions, NNS composition courses were separated from NS composition sections and were seen as remedial. The results also indicated that instructors were part-time faculty members with limited ESL teaching experience and training.

KEYWORDS: ESL, program, administration, USA, survey, data, native-nonnative, teacher-opinion, WPA, placement, part-time, teacher-knowledge, novice