When English as a Second Language students meet text-responsible writing

Miso Jung

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WHEN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS MEET
TEXT-RESPONSIBLE WRITING

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Miso Jung
September 2005
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September 2005

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ABSTRACT

Although research on L2 writing has substantially increased in the last two decades, it is only recently that researchers have turned their attention to L2 writers’ experiences with academic writing. This study attempts to listen to ESL writers’ voices on their experiences with "text-responsible" academic writing, that is, writing requires students to demonstrate understanding of texts outside of their personal experiences (Leki & Carson, 1997). Specifically, this research follows ESL students through the process of writing an assignment, attending to students’ understanding of the assignment, their experience with integrating sources, instructional influence, and reactions to the instructor’s feedback and thoughts about how they will implement it in their writing. Data for this study was collected from interviews with two international ESL freshman students in an English composition class at California State University San Bernardino. The results indicate that students generally experienced feeling challenged and overwhelmed about the unfamiliar topic, but detailed assignment guidelines played a key role for students to make progress in understanding of the assignment. Although students found obtaining and
integrating sources difficult, they created strategies to cope with them. Also students were concerned about transforming source texts in ways that might not preserve the original meanings of the texts due to students' lack of English language proficiency. In terms of instructor's feedback, the study shows that the students were positive about instructor's feedback, but they experienced difficulty in implementing it.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As research on L2 writing has increased substantially since 1990 (Leki, 2001; Reid, 2001), the focus in L2 writing research has shifted from “the application of L1 composition theory to the examination of the distinct characteristics of L2 writing and writers” (Matsuda & Silva, 2001, p.xviii). A number of significant differences between L1 writers and L2 writers have been recognized as a separate field of inquiry and practice, and “L2 writing has gradually established itself as a field in its own right” (Belcher & Hirvela, 2001).

This growth in research on L2 writing has been prompted at least in part by the increased enrollment of ESL students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in U.S. universities and colleges (Harklau et al, 1999; Matsuda & Silva, 2001; Matsuda, 2003). In response to the emergent need to learn about L2 writing and ESL students, researchers have studied a wide range of aspects of L2 writing, including students’ writing processes, their responses to feedback, assessment of ESL writing, and differences between L1 and L2 writing, and L2

One area of inquiry in L2 writing has been the types of writing assignments L2 writers are expected to produce. It is thought that by gaining understanding of such assignments L2 writing instructors can tailor their curriculum to help students learn these academic contexts and genres (Horowitz, 1986; Reid, 2001). Another recent focus in L2 writing studies has been on students’ experiences writing these different genres in certain academic contexts (Ostler, 1980; John, 1981; Braine, 1989, 1996; Canesco & Byrd, 1989; Leki, 1995; Spack, 1997).

The purpose of this chapter is to review the research on types of writing assignments and students’ experiences writing different genres on ESL academic writing and to highlight issues on students’ experiences that still need to be addressed. I begin by discussing research on common features of academic writing assignments across the curriculum. In the second half of this chapter, I present students’ writing experiences in certain academic settings, including their successes and difficulties with particular
writing assignments. This discussion also attends to how students cope with academic writing. The focuses of this chapter relate to my larger concerns in this thesis with how students approach academic writing assignments, particularly those that require them to integrate sources, and with my own study of L2 writers' writing experiences in a university composition class.

Research on Writing Assignments across the Curriculum

In L2 writing research, there have been a number of studies to determine the academic writing tasks that ESL students encounter at U.S. universities (Behrens, 1978; Braine, 1989, 1995; Canesco & Byrd, 1989; Horowitz, 1986; Johns, 1981; Kroll, 1979; Olster, 1980; Reid, 2001). It was Horowitz (1986) who provided one of the first discussions of the kinds of writing tasks required in U.S. colleges and universities. Unlike other previous researchers who used questionnaires as a means of gathering data (e.g., see studies cited in Braine, 1995), Horowitz collected handouts of actual writing assignments given to students in various academic disciplines, examined them, and classified them into seven categories: 1) summary of/reaction to a reading,
2) annotated bibliography, 3) report on a specified participatory experience, 4) connection of theory and data, 5) case study, 6) synthesis of multiple sources (research paper) and 7) research project. In his study, Horowitz also found that the nature of university writing tasks tended to be very guided in the specifications given to students regarding the expected context, structure and use of outside sources for the assignments. More specifically, a topic, a topicless thesis statement or full thesis statement were often given to students, and detailed instructions for content organization were provided in terms of what questions to be covered and in what order they were to be covered. In addition, in their assignments, faculty often specified appropriate sources of data (e.g., journals) and the number of sources to be required, as well as the lexis students were to use to some extent. Based on these observations, Horowitz argued that “the purpose of writing is not to create personal meaning, but to find, organize, and present data according to fairly explicit instructions” (p.455).

In a recent review of studies on the writing required in academic courses, Reid (2001), reporting somewhat similar results as Horowitz, found the most common out-of-
class writing assignments were library research papers, reports with interpretation, summaries with or without analysis, plans/proposals, and book reviews/critiques. Her review of the previous research also shows that most writing topics are assigned and grow out of class material, similar to Horowitz findings. Furthermore, most extended tasks require work external to the class.

In addition to common features of writing tasks required across the university, some studies have focused on assignments in disciplines such as business, social science and science and technology (Braine, 1995; Canesco & Byrd, 1989; Casanave, 1987; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Casanave & Rosey, 1997; Prior, 1995). Similar to Horowitz (1986), Braine (1988) collected and analyzed assignment handouts from the natural sciences and engineering courses. In this study, nearly 75% of the samples belonged to experimental reports which required paraphrase and summary as the dominant writing skills. Canesco and Byrd (1989) also conducted a study on writing assignments required in graduate business administration courses. They identified seven types of the writing assignments found in instructors’ syllabi, including examinations, problems which were written in the textbook or provided by the
instructors, projects involving small group or team work for research papers, case studies, and reports.

In another study on writing assignments of specific disciplines, Casanave and Hubbard also conducted an unusual survey of faculty members that focused on the writing of doctoral students. They divided their participants into two academic disciplinary areas (humanities and social sciences (HSS) and science and technology (ST)), and they listed nine types of writing assignments as follows: critical summaries, problem solving/analytical papers, brief research papers, long research paper, noncritical summaries, lab reports/literature review, group writing, case studies. Then, they ranked frequent types of writing assignments according to how many assignments faculty give of each type. The result showed each group ranked specific writing assignments most commonly given in a different way. HSS assignments were ranked longer research paper the most frequently given assignment as 73% of all assignments, then others such as critical summaries, problem solving/analytic, brief research paper were given evenly. In contrast, the problem solving/analytical category was the most common assignment type among ST assignments.
Text-Responsible Writing

These studies of common university writing assignments reveal that writing is nearly always linked to materials that students have read (e.g., research papers, summaries) or activities they have performed (e.g., reports, case studies), rather than to their personal experiences. Leki and Carson (1997) in fact have observed that the most common writing that students encounter in various academic disciplines were text-responsible. In their view, “a text includes not only books and articles but also various kinds of sources such as "lectures, lecture notes, films, laboratory setups, or any other meaningful external reality which the writers are held responsible in creating their own written texts” (p.42). Based on definition of text above, text-responsible writing could be writing with responsibility for displaying knowledge of the content of any of these types of sources.

Through interviews with ESL university students, Leki and Carson gained a sense of how frequently students writers experience writing under three different conditions: writing without a source text, writing from a source text without responsibility for its content, writing with responsibility for a text’s content. Their results
showed that writing without some sort of external text or information source was a relatively rare situation in academic writing, often limited to placement or proficiency exams and certain English classes. Writing from a source text without responsibility for its content was reported to be the one that students perceived they did write in the ESL classes. Although they were using a textual source, they were never expected to learn the material in it, only to make some connection between that material and their own experiences and opinions. For example, what they said about the topic did not have to be correct or accurate and students felt free to construct content. One student said, "My principal objective in my English class is my grammar, not the idea. Because sometimes idea... I made up the idea, maybe something is not true, but the idea is good, Uh? I could write about them [topics assigned] but... I know it [what I write] is not true" (p.53).

The third category, writing with responsibility for the text content, was the most common writing students experienced in their other classes. Unlike the other two kinds of writing, the most important factor was the content, not the form or language. Students needed to respond or to work with these sources to successfully
complete their academic writing assignments. For example, students often spoke of their need to use text content for their critiques, lab experiments, and journal articles. The contrast between the writing done for their ESL classes and other academic courses was best described by one student: "This was completely different worlds" (p. 55).

Students' Experiences with Academic Writing

Some researchers have attended not only to the assignments students write but also students' experiences writing them. One way researchers can better understand L2 students' potential challenges with academic tasks and their strategies for coping with these challenges is to actually listen to them. Leki (2001) argues "many of these studies talked about the students but never gave evidence that the researchers spent anytime talking to the students, never asked them one on one what all this meant to them" (p. 18). In other words, L2 students' actual voices have been largely absent in L2 writing studies. As stated by Leki (2001), both "public transcript" of what students did and how they did it and "hidden transcript" of L2 students' experiences in their writing courses are necessary for us to understand L2 writers better. Most studies done so far
seem to belong to "public transcripts" while "hidden scripts" are hard to find. There have, however, been a few studies that have attended to ESL students' experiences with academic writing assignments which I will review in this next section.

Some studies present students' individual voices talking about themselves. Silva et al (2003) present L2 writers' stories in their own words. One Japanese international student, Yoshiki in this study describes challenges he faced in his MA program. He had a very difficult time making himself understood in writing. He says, "I did not know that I was supposed to be logical or linear thinking and choose a position in writing an opinion ... I was merely presenting the flow of my thoughts" (p.95). As another challenge, he found a gap between him and his professor in their understanding of his writing. For example, the sentences he wrote seemed very explicit to him, but he got comments like "not clear" or question marks from his professor. Particularly, he pointed out struggling with writing a conclusion. Although he thought he had written a conclusion beautifully, he often got comment that he needed to write a conclusion. He reported, "To me
writing a conclusion was repeating what I had just written and it seemed redundant and unnecessary" (p.95).

In Silva et al’s study, academic writing in English did not come easily to Gloria, either. She was faced with challenges in producing her first L2 research paper in her MA program. She described the writing process to be a laborious task. She notes, “it took long and frustrating moments in front of the blank page before I was able to come up with something worthy and it involved incessant revision and heavy use of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries and thesauruses” (p.102). Especially, she expressed feeling totally overwhelmed in facing the task of a twenty-page graduate research paper and did not feel she had used pre-writing strategies that would help her with this task. She described as follows:

My only pre-writing strategies included highlighting relevant information and jotting down domain specific terminology from my sources. It did not occur to me to summarize, let alone synthesize the information I had gathered.

Another L2 English writer, Fan Shen (1989) reports that her struggle with English academic writing actually challenged her Chinese identity. For example, learning to
accept words "I" and "self" as something not to be ashamed of was her first and biggest challenge because she interpreted using "I" and "self" in the writing as the protecting and promoting individuality, values associated with the United States rather than China. In China, "I" is always subordinated to "We" like the working class, the county or some collective body. As a result of these conflicting values and rules of different societies, in America she received comments from a professor on her first paper of English composition as opposed to the Chinese way of writing: Why did you always use "we" instead of "I"? and your paper would be stronger if you eliminated some sentences the passive voice. In response to these comments, she intended to redefine herself by practicing writing. She wrote "I"s very frequently in her paper to show her individuality such as I think, I believe and I see, and intentionally cut out quotations from authorities. In addition, she had difficulty understanding and writing topic sentence. Learning how to write topic sentence, she connected this to be in a rush society. For her, it seemed that a topic sentence reflected the values of busy people in an industrialized society, rushing to get things done, hoping to attract and satisfy the busy reader very quickly.
At the back of her Chinese mind, topic or theme had to be reached gradually and systematically.

Academic writing is challenging and difficult not only for L2 writers from other countries like Yoshiki or Fan but also for L2 students educated in the United States. Leki (1999), for example, reports on Jan, a “generation 1.5” immigrant college student who went to high school in U.S. In spite of his high school education in U.S. and his excellent verbal communication skills in English, he faced difficulties with university-level studies. Like the L2 writers discussed above, he had trouble in writing papers and short essay exams, as he said he had difficulties expressing himself in English.

He comments:

and the exam... short essays now, like you got a few sentences, you gotta express something. You know what’s asked for, but you can’t express. You get it like on the end of your tongue but you can’t say it. On the essays I was spending like hours doing essays and like exams I didn’t finish even because of time... I know the stuff but people don’t understand what I mean...
He also had a negative feeling about ESL freshman composition, which he felt was boring. When asked the reason that the class being boring, he said,

I don’t know. Most people are so, like involved in discussing stupid topics, like abortion or something. Who cares?... Discuss women in military. Who cares?... They love to discuss... you know, talking, comparing the story to [their] own experiences in U.S., and blah, blah, blah ... People sit for like 45 minutes discussing how interesting it is, you know. People are kind of boring in this class.

There also have been studies specifically focused on students’ experiences with text-responsible writing. For example, Yoko in Spack’s study (1997), reported several things that made reading and writing challenging. One of them was her lack of background knowledge in subject matter. In her political science course, she could not understand even class readings and lectures, and that made her reading based writing assignment difficult. As she said, she “did not have a clue” what the reading said because she “had no background” in what the author was discussing (p.18).
Another thing that made text-responsible writing difficult was to include ideas from sources and phrase the ideas into her own words. She may have had difficulty reconciling this need to rely on sources with her view of American style writing being an original opinion provided by the writer whereas Japanese one was a repetition of the ideas contained in a reading. Thus, she was surprised to receive credit for the paper that was so dependent on sources without her opinion.

Leki and Carson (1997) also interviewed students about their experiences with text-responsible and non-text-responsible writing assignments. Some ESL students reported that the text-responsible writing they did for content courses outside of their English class were challenging. One of major challenges they experienced was how to avoid plagiarism in transforming texts for their papers. Although they felt that the text source described best what they wanted to say, they had to find ways to rewrite them on their words which required strong English proficiency. One student expressed the difficulty of paraphrasing, saying, “If you have a text in perfect English, that’s exactly you should say and this is the best way. Then you have to find
another way. This is funny. So you have to change it and then it gets worse. Kind of sad” (p.59).

Beside challenge, students also found this different, non-ESL world of writing helpful. Required source texts for their disciplinary writing assignments provided not only ideas for writing but also language support and models of appropriate rhetorical form. One student expressed how writing about text sources helped his or her writing saying, “If I know some about information, I can write it easier” (p.57).

Coping Strategies of Second Language Writers

While ESL writers experience challenges with writing in academic settings, they also bring strategies often that are very effective for coping with these challenges. Leki (1995), for example, studied L2 students across the curriculum, and she found that in approaching academic tasks students used clarifying and focusing strategies, relied on past writing experiences, took advantage of first language/culture, looked for models, used current or past ESL writing training, and accommodated teachers’ demands.
With respect to clarifying strategies, students used these to make sure they understood what was being required of them in assignments. For example, when Ling did not know the meaning of the words "short" and "essay exam," she approached her professor and clarified them. A strategy of looking for models was employed when faced with an unfamiliar genre of assignment. Jien adapted this strategy to give her an idea of what might be expected of her, and she also looked at review article from TESOL Quarterly. Casanave also reports on a Chinese student who employed the same strategy by reading the old papers written by upper-class students to find what was expected of her in an assignment that asked her to read a professional article and write two pages of summary and commentary on it. She also looked at the review articles in a TESOL Quarterly for writing samples.

The strategy found to be possibly the most useful, yet dangerous in Leki’s study was resisting teacher’s demands. In fact, this strategy contradicted the idea that meeting the requirements of the assignment is one of the most important factors in doing well in a writing task in disciplinary area (Leki, 1995). For example, Tula, a Finish international student showed the most interesting and
profound form of resistance. When asked to pretend to be a stutterer and write about it, she became very interested in it. Then instead of following directions, she made up a whole paper out of her head based on her situation of being a nonnative English speaker.

Yuko, in Spack's (1997) study, used several strategies in order to overcome her difficulties with writing assignments. One strategy was to go to speak to a professor to see if her approach was acceptable. Having a discussion with a professor helped her to understand the topic more clearly and to have a clue about what to do for the assignment. She reported that after having a conference with a professor, she felt the paper would be easy same as lecture, and she knew the answer right away and just looked for proof. Another thing she did was to start preparing early so that she could have consultations with a professor and a teaching assistant during the process to make sure she was on the right track. Yuko said if she was on the right track, even the length of 8-10 page was not daunting.

Another strategy that Yuko found effective was to use teacher comments on texts that she revised. For example, in her sociology class, when Yuko was asked to write journal entries on the reading assignments, she just summarized the
ideas of the author. Then, the professor gave her feedback to guide her in revision such as “go back to King and others and make sure you have a grip on different notions of cultures and their effects” (p.42). Yuko then followed them during the process of revision.

L2 writers in Silva et al’s study also talked positively about teachers’ feedback on their writing. Yoshiki seemed to be pleased that he received compliments about his writing skills in English from his professors in graduate school. As he put, “I think my academic writing skills got mature while I was there. I really don’t know why, but since then professors keep giving me compliments about writing” (p.95). Another L2 writer, Gloria, regarded positive feedback from instructors as confirmation that she had done a good job, and she also learned from instructor’s comments about her writing. Indeed, the study on the impact of comments on students writing is research which my review has only touched on (for a good review of this work see Goldstein, 2001).
Summary for Studies and Need for Further Research

The studies reviewed here illuminate the types of writing assignments that ESL students may encounter in their U.S. university courses, as well as skills and strategies they employ in completing these assignments. However, more work is still needed in this area. The studies I have reviewed so far, for example, have not focused fully on listening to students' experiences. In this regard, the present project of this thesis is somewhat more comprehensive than previous studies in that I look at students' experiences with various steps of writing an academic assignments, including their understanding of the assignment, their responses to integrating sources, their strategies for approaching the assignment, and the ways that the class instruction and instructor revision feedback impacted students’ experiences with this writing task.

By following through a series of interviews, how the ESL university students experience an academic writing task from the beginning to the end of their writing processes, my study sheds light on how multiple factors, internal and external to the students, impact their experiences with
text-based writing. I am hoping that this study will raise ESL instructors’ awareness of what may be new and challenging to L2 writers when they encounter text-responsible writing assignments, and what strategies they bring to it at different stages of completing it. In the next chapter, I describe the method of data collection, and analysis. Chapter three presents the results, and discusses implications of the results and L2 composition pedagogy.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to investigate ESL (English as a Second Language) writers' perceptions of their experiences completely writing assignment in an English composition class. The assignment involved text-responsible writing, which Leki and Carson (1997) define as writing in which "the writers are responsible for demonstrating an understanding of the source text; in other words, they must produce text-responsible prose based on content acquired from the text" (p.41). In this study, I was less interested in the written products students produced in response to the assignment than in their responses to writing the assignment, that is, how they understood the assignment, what kinds of challenges they experienced during the writing process, and what kinds of the resources they used to complete the assignment. Specifically, the research questions are listed below.

1. How did the students develop understanding of the assignment?
2. How did they perceive the experience of integrating sources in completing their essay assignments? What was “easy” or “challenging” about text integration?

3. To what extent were the instructions given by the teacher in the classroom related to students’ perceptions of the assignment? How did these instructions influence the students’ progress in working through the assignment?

4. How did the students react to the instructor’s feedback, and how did the students include it in their revision?

Participants

The two participants for this study were selected based on the writing class they were in, their ESL background, and their willingness to participate. The participants Sue and Ken (both pseudonyms), were international students from Korea who were in English 86b (Introductory Composition for Multilingual Students), the second quarter of a two-quarter basic writing course at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). Both spoke Korean as their first language and had been in the
U.S. less than three years. The English 86b class where my research was conducted was taught during the 2002 Winter quarter. The course was ten-weeks long.

Before coming to the U.S. to further her studies, Sue graduated high school and attended college for two years in Korea. Although she had learned English in Korea and attended school in America, she had not had much prior experience writing in English until she took Eng 86a/b. Before enrolling at CSUSB, she had studied English for eight years in Korea from middle school to college. However, her English education in Korea was limited to grammar instruction and reading comprehension and, in college, some journal writing. In the U.S., before coming to CSUSB, she attended Riverside Community College and took several mainstream courses there without taking any ESL courses in the English language program.

Similar to Sue, Ken leaned English for seven years both in Korea and the U.S. by focusing on grammar and reading comprehension from middle school to high school. Upon graduating high school Ken came to the U.S. for college. Although Ken had no experience writing in English in Korea, he had more experience and earlier exposure to writing in English than Sue did in the U.S. Instead of
entering CSUSB immediately, for one year he studied English for the purpose of college preparation at a private language school in Orange County, California. During that time he gained basic knowledge about English writing patterns and citation conventions and how they were different from those in Korean. Then, before enrolling in regular college courses at CSUSB, he took ESL courses at CSUSB’s American Culture and Language Program (ACLP), including academic writing.

Instructional Setting

In order to enter California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), all prospective first-year students are required to take the English Placement Test (EPT) for placement into composition courses. If they receive an EPT score below 142, they are placed into English 85a/b (Introductory Composition) or English 86a/b (Introductory Composition for Multilingual Students), a two-quarter basic writing course sequence that students are required to pass in order to proceed to English 101 (Freshman Composition). At the time of this study, the two participants had already completed English 86a and were taking English 86b, an
equivalent course to English 85b but designed for multilingual ESL students on campus.

Based on the English department guidelines for English 85a/b (which also apply to 86a/b), text-responsible writing seems to be important in these classes; for example, the course objectives include “integrating paraphrased and quoted materials into their writing,” “using source material to support assertions,” and “using sources effectively.” Under “Assignments,” the guidelines also emphasize integrating sources. Specifically, instructors are advised that “at least one of these essays should require students to locate and incorporate sources.” On the English 86b instructor’s course syllabus, the stated objectives reflected an emphasis on text-responsible writing. The syllabus states that students can expect to develop skills in “Analyzing ideas in class readings and outside research and incorporating these ideas in your essay.”

Participants’ Writing Assignments in English 86 a/b

Although both participants had limited experience with academic writing in English before matriculating at CSUSB,
at the time the research was conducted in the second half of Winter 2002, they had already completed three formal writing assignments (all text-responsible) in English 86a (Fall 2001) and two in English 86b (Winter 2002).

In English 86a, the variety of sources students were required to integrate in their formal papers seemed to increase as the quarter progressed. The first essay assignment asked students to write an essay in the form of letter offering a friend advice about a plan to make a change to his or her appearance. It required them to include at least two of the class readings and their own experiences. The second essay asked students to write an essay that persuaded readers that an activity or interest that they chose could be an addiction. It required them to incorporate class reading, examples from one's own experience and outside research. In third essay in which students were asked to write a proposal to sell a product to another country, students were given more options in terms of choosing the kinds of sources to integrate into their writing. They were required to include at least one or two of the class readings and one outside research source; however, unlike the other two essays, students had
the option to add information collected from interviews, surveys, and advertisements.

Three essays were given in 86b, and prior to this study, the participants had already completed two of the essays, which were focused on including observational sources and course readings. The first assignment asked students to write an essay explaining the different language varieties that they use. They were required to integrate class readings and specific examples of their words, phrases, or even whole sections of conversations to illustrate the way they use language. The second essay whose topic was “observing cultural norms” asked students to write an essay comparing and contrasting two different cultural norms for a particular activity and arguing what could be learned from their studies. Students were required to use specific examples they observed about the activity they had chosen and to integrate one of class readings to explain norms and how they might vary cross cultures.

The third assignment, the assignment in focus for this study, focused on “observing workplace or academic cultures” (see Appendix A for assignment sheet). Students were to specifically argue that the culture of a particular workplace would be a good one for them or not and to
explain why. This assignment was selected for this study because it required the greatest variety of sources of all assignments and because it connected with class activities relevant to integrating reading into writing students had worked on throughout English 86a/b. Specifically, this assignment asked students to include their own observations of the chosen workplace, interview(s) with at least one person, paraphrase and quotation from magazine or newspaper articles or books (found through library research), and, optionally, information from the internet. Moreover, in the guidelines of this assignment, the instructor emphasized the importance on integrating sources for this assignment by stating “Important: You will need to integrate the following sources of support into your essay.”

Students were expected to turn in three drafts of the essay: rough draft, first full submission, and revision. In the rough draft, students were required to brainstorm, outline and be typed at least two pages. The first full submission was expected to be a complete essay revised from the rough draft based on the teacher’s comments, and it had to be at least four pages typed. The final was a further revised essay in which students were expected to include changes based on the teacher’s comments on the first full
submission. In submitting the revision, students were required to turn in first full submission essay with professor's comment sheet.

Data Collection

The sources of data for this study consisted of interviews with the two students and class observations. One-on-one interviews were conducted with each student three times during his/her process of completing their essay assignment (see Appendix B for questions for each interview).

The first interviews took place before students wrote the rough draft of this paper and focused on students' initial impressions of the assignment. Because students had not started drafting the assignment, there was no actual writing experience to talk about. Thus, I focused on students' initial understanding of the assignment and their thought about completing it. Specifically, I asked the students what their first impression of this assignment was and what they thought it asked them to do; whether they thought integrating the sources would be easy or difficult; what kind of sources would be difficult for them to integrate; if the class discussion about the guidelines of
the assignment helped them to understand the assignment; and whether the class instruction on how to integrate sources was helpful to them for completing the assignment.

The second interviews were conducted after students had received back the rough draft with the instructor’s comments and had turned in the first full submission. Here I focused on students’ experiences with writing the first full submission including what they did in order to integrate sources and how helpful the class activities had been to them in writing the assignment.

The third interviews were conducted after students submitted their final drafts to be graded. Different from the first and second interviews, the third interview was designed to address the fourth research question as the students were asked about the teacher’s feedback, how they reacted to it, and how they used it to complete the assignment.

All three interviews for each student were conducted in two languages, English and Korean. I asked the students the questions in English, and they were allowed to answer in their native language, Korean, as they were more expressive in their native language and therefore might be able to more fully respond to the questions. The interviews
were audiotaped and then transcribed and translated into English.

I also observed seven class sessions during that quarter. My observations began from the day the third essay was assigned and continued to the last day of class before the final. Thus, my observation included the first discussion on the topic, the second discussion on the assignment, and other class activities on the assignment.

Analysis

In analyzing the interviews, themes from student comments in interviews I and II were categorized in terms of three major issues: (a) understanding of the assignment, (b) issues related to integrating sources, and (c) instructional influence. Comments from interview III were analyzed mainly in terms of students' reactions to the instructor's feedback on their drafts and their inclusion of instructor's feedback in revising. Attention was also paid to similarities and differences in the comments of the two students, and these were discussed at the end of chapter three.
CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

This chapter reports on the findings of my three interviews. This chapter is organized according to the order of the interviews. For the first and second interviews, I report first students' comments on their understanding of the assignment followed by their thoughts about integrating sources described. Finally, instructional influences are discussed. For the third interview, students' reactions to the instructor's feedback are explored, followed by their comments on implementing instructor's feedback. This chapter concludes with a discussion on important similarities and differences between two students and implications of these findings for teaching ESL writing.

Interview I

The first interviews were conducted to investigate the two student participants' understanding of a text-responsible writing assignment. These interviews were conducted before students submitted the rough draft of
outline and brainstorm of the assignment. It should be noted that because this first interview was conducted even before working on the rough draft, I hoped to find out how these students perceived this assignment during this early stage of their writing progress. The interviews were designed to investigate three areas at this stage of prewriting: the students' understanding of the assignment, issues related to integrating sources, and instructional influences on their writing.

Ken

Understanding of the Assignment

Initial Confusion and Feeling Overwhelmed about the Topic. In this first interview, Ken's comments suggested that his understanding of the assignment developed as he read the assignment carefully, but that he, at least initially, found it to be very challenging. In fact, Ken felt overwhelmed and challenged both by glancing at the topic of the assignment and by skimming through the guidelines containing all the requirements and explanations during the first in-class discussion of the assignment. When asked to express his impressions about this assignment, he reported that he thought this assignment
would be very challenging to deal with due to the unfamiliarity of the assignment topic, "Observing Workplaces or Academic Cultures". He said:

I have never written on this kind of topic; moreover, it is the first time for me to think seriously about "workplace." I have never thought about it. I am not familiar with it, either. Also, I had no idea what I was asked to write about.

**Importance of Reading the Assignment Sheet Guidelines.**

Reading the guidelines carefully was critical in developing Ken's understanding of the assignment. Although after the first class discussion he did not understand what he was expected to write about, his understanding grew as he read the assignment sheet repeatedly. When asked about what he needed to do for this assignment, he responded,

When I read the guidelines again, I thought that this assignment was about doing research or investigating a job like describing what this job does. Then I read it again, and I learned that it was something different from that. It was about an environment, employees, and other aspects of a workplace.
Finally, he arrived at a complete understanding of the requirements of the assignment. He said:

The assignment requires me to do research and investigate a future workplace. I assume it could be my future job, but at present, it seems that I have to investigate or do research about a job in an objective manner.

**Plan for Writing.** Although the requirements of this assignment still seemed to be challenging for him, he initiated the writing assignment with planning, which for him involved beginning with researching the topic.

First, I am going to do research. Second, I am going to interview someone. Third, I am going to search the internet. Fourth, I am going to draw a conclusion about the job of professor, and then, I am going to make my point about the job.

**Issues Related to Integrating Sources**

**Choosing a Topic for Easy-to-Get Sources.** Integrating sources for this essay was considered another challenge Ken believed he was confronted with. Because he was in the very first step of writing process, he devoted more attention to getting the required sources than to writing about them. The most significant difference from the previous source-
Based assignments given in this class was that this assignment required students to use a greater variety of kinds of sources into their writing: interviews, class readings, articles from magazines or newspapers, books, or electronic sources. Among the required sources, the interview data was a new type of source Ken had not used before, and he seemed to give special attention to it. In a response to the question about the use of sources for the assignment, for example, Ken seemed to be more concerned about getting an interview source than about getting any other sources, as he regarded interviewing somebody as the main requirement of this assignment. Then, he negotiated this possibly challenging requirement by choosing a topic "the job of a professor" for which he could interview someone relatively easily. He reported why he selected this job as his topic.

I picked "a professor" as a topic. It is very difficult to get information around me. But my uncle is a professor; I am planning to interview him. It is also a job I want to have in the future. Besides the fact it is my future job, the more important reason for picking this topic is that I can interview my uncle.
Thus, the accessibility to his uncle, a professor, could reduce his major concerns about gathering sources.

**Electronic Sources as Most Difficult.** Although he initially was most concerned about the interview sources, Ken thought electronic sources would be the most difficult ones to collect. For example, in rating the expected difficulty of finding the required sources, he ranked electronic sources above the others. He told me that

There is an extremely enormous amount of electronic sources offered, and it is impossible to know what they are really about until I go through all the possibly related sources exhibited on the computer. I don’t know what to choose and how to utilize them in the paper effectively. Clearly, it is very hard to find the specific sources I look for.

Ken pointed out reading was a key element in selecting relevant sources from massive number of electronic sources. That is, he anticipated that he would be required to read to understand texts accurately. After reading sources, he could make a decision about whether to use the sources. However, this heavy load of reading would be a great deal of challenge to him which may have led to his preconception
that obtaining highly pertinent and usable electronic sources was most difficult.

Instructional Influences

Instructor Explanation Lends Clarity to the Assignment. Although Ken experienced difficulties in understanding the assignment, the class instruction seemed to be a positive influence on his understanding of the assignment and how to integrate sources. In particular, there was an in-class discussion that occurred in the next class after the class where the assignment was handed out. In describing this class discussion during my observation, the instructor reviewed the guidelines sheet thoroughly by pointing out some important features to build students' understanding of the assignment. After this review, she conducted class activities for initiating the writing process such as free writing and brainstorming by asking them to think about and to respond to questions: how do workers interact with each other?, how do they interact with customers or others coming into the work place?, or how do they speak each other?

In the same class session, the instructor also showed a movie, "9 to 5," featuring a workplace and distributed handouts asking students to write their observations about
the movie focusing on people’s interaction, their language, dress code and environment. This activity gave students ideas about what they needed to look at in observing their chosen workplace and want to ask when interviewing someone. The discussion and activities in the class appeared to be designed to promote students’ creativity and their background knowledge, and to facilitate their complete understanding of the assignment. Ken said about this class discussion that he learned the assignment topic did not have to be his future job, instead, it could be any job he wanted to write about and that it required him to write about the culture of the workplace by integrating required sources to support his point. It was obvious that he understood it better and more clearly after this second class discussion. He reported,

This second class discussion really helped. Until then, I thought this assignment required me to write about my future job. After the second discussion, I understood it clearly.

Learning How to Quote and Paraphrase. Besides the class discussions and activities on the assignment, it was also significant to note that Ken was taught about how to paraphrase and quote as mechanic devices of integrating
sources. He said he learned how to paraphrase and how to quote sources from this class instruction and it was useful for him to integrate sources in his actual writing. For example, he demonstrated his knowledge by pointing out the difference between paraphrase and quotation.

As I learned in the class, paraphrasing is rewriting after reading sources, and quotation is writing as it is written originally.

**Student’s Resistance to Following Requirements.**

Although Ken’s understanding of the assignment grew as he read the guidelines and attended to the class discussions of the assignment, his comments suggested that he felt resistant to following and accommodating to all restricted requirements listed on the assignment sheet. These resistant feelings helped shape the direction of his paper. When asked if these guidelines were explained well enough for him to understand what this paper was about, he responded that they helped. Yet he expressed his resistant feeling toward following them as well, recalling how he had also resisted following the instructor’s requirements on an earlier essay. He said:

I feel like adding thought through often need instructor’s ideas or thoughts because I am a
freshman who is lack of language skill. However, when I depend on her, I feel that my topic becomes set or fixed on her side. And, when I don’t follow the guidelines, my grade is lowered. When I worked on the first assignment, I had to change my essay to meet the guidelines. But I decided not to follow the guidelines required to include class reading because I could not find the appropriate place for that source, and I thought the smooth flow of my essay would have been disrupted if I forced to put another unnecessary source into any place of the essay. I knew my grade would have been lowered, but I decided to leave the essay in the way I wanted it to be put.

Sue

Understanding of the Assignment

Feeling Challenged about the Topic. In this initial interview, Sue, like Ken, predicted that this assignment would be very difficult to deal with in terms of writing, and she seemed to feel overwhelmed.
I think it will be very difficult. I am not familiar with the topic of this assignment. And I have never thought seriously about the future job.

She further noted unfamiliarity with the topic as an important factor which affected her understanding and writing performance. She expressed her deep concern about this assignment by remarking repeatedly about its difficulty. She said, "This assignment is difficult for me because I have not thought about a job at all. But I think it is a good chance to think about it, but it is still unfamiliar to me." Her comments suggest that familiarity with the topic exceeded linguistic skills in importance.

Most of all, if I am familiar with or know about the topic, I can write with nice flow regardless of linguistic skills. On the other hand, if I am not interested in or do not know about the area of an assigned topic, I would not have any idea of what to write about because I have two disadvantages: lacking linguistic skills and insufficient background knowledge about the topic.
Thus, she suggested that topic problems could lead her to have writer’s block, which was made worse by her limited knowledge of English.

**Challenge as an Opportunity.** From the beginning of doing this assignment, although Sue felt it would be difficult, she approached it in a positive way in that she interpreted it as an opportunity and planned to connect this assignment with her future job.

Although I talk before working on this assignment, when I start working on this assignment, I may have an opportunity to think more seriously about my future. I have had a very vague idea of my future job, but I might get a feel about a job whether I could do it or not. Even only thinking about a job becomes challenging for me now.

**Other Difficult Elements.** Beside unfamiliarity with the topic, Sue described other elements that made this assignment different and difficult compared with all the previous class assignments. She reported that it differed in requiring increased numbers of sources, greater page length, and the depth of thought. She also said,
There is more number of sources required. In the case of the last assignment, only one source needed to be integrated. But I have to observe, interview, and do many others. It gives me a headache.

Among the elements addressed above, she seemed to be especially challenged by the length of the paper. She added, “It is the hardest paper I have ever worked on. It requires five pages, which are more pages than any other assignment I have done.”

**Plan for Writing.** Unlike Ken, she did not have a specific topic on the assignment, thus her plan for writing began with thinking about the kind of workplace she would write about. Another thing different from Ken’s plan was that she did not mention about interviewing someone.

First of all, I will think about what kind of workplace I write about. And I will outline for the topic of the paper. Next, I will search internet to get some sources, and then I will brainstorm it. I will go over reading sources again and integrate them into my writing. In this interview, she said that she had not decided a topic for this assignment, and she did not have
any specific plan for who and in what area she was going to interview and how she was going to get required sources at this stage.

Issues Related to Integrating Sources

As I had anticipated, some of Sue's major concerns were the same as Ken's in that she found integrating sources and gathering required sources to be difficult. In particular, like Ken, getting an interview source was a big concern she was faced with and she pointed out the internet source as the most difficult source to integrate into writing.

Interview as the Most Challenging. Sue assumed that interviewing someone would be more difficult than integrating sources.

Once I obtain data, I assume that I can integrate them into my paper. But interviewing someone seems to be more difficult. Above all, finding a person to interview will be difficult for me. Unlike Ken, she could not find a topic or person to interview to access easily. Thus, interviewing someone seemed to be on her way to do this assignment. In regard to implementing integrating sources, she also assumed that
internet sources would be the most difficult sources to integrate into her writing as Ken assumed.

**Instructional Influences**

Like Ken, Sue believed class instruction on her understanding of the assignment and how to integrate sources was a positive influence. She pointed out that the following helped her at the early stages of the assignment: the second class discussion, conferences with instructor, class activities related to the assignments. In response to the questions about the impact of the second class discussion on understanding the assignment clearly based on the guidelines, she said, briefly: “It really helped me a lot to understand it better.”

**Interview II**

The second interviews were conducted after receiving the rough draft with the instructor’s comments and turning in the first full submission. In the second interviews, students described their actual experiences writing the assignment and their strategies for coping with the challenging aspects of this essay.
Ken

Understanding of the assignment

Initially, Ken had predicted this assignment would be very difficult to deal with, but the actual writing task turned out not to be the case.

Feeling better with the work. In the second interview, Ken's understanding of the assignment was progressing. It seemed that once he began writing it, he gained confidence. Despite his extreme concerns about accomplishing this challenging assignment in the first interview, he found it to be relatively easier than he thought, as he said,

I think I did this assignment better than I expected. I thought it would have been too difficult to get this paper done.

However, Ken added that although this assignment was easier than he expected, it was still difficult, which made him work as hard as he could to complete it. He said,

I thought it would have been very difficult. So I dealt with this assignment as I anticipated it to be difficult. And I wrote it until last night.

Based on my personal evaluation on this paper after reading it, I even anticipate Dr. Hyon might
score three points for thought or organization on my paper. [Note: Three points on a four point scale meant “good”]

Plan for Writing Did Not Work. Ken’s plan on the steps required to complete the assignment was not undertaken in the actual writing. He changed his plan as he figured out a more efficient way to find and write simultaneously, sources discussed further below. He expressed:

At first, I was going to start writing a paper after getting all the required sources, but it did not went as I planned before no matter how hard I was thinking about it.

Issues Related to Integrating Sources

In dealing with the challenging task of integrating sources, Ken’s approach seemed to be very creative, active and successful. Although he encountered some road blocks, he created his own approaches as alternatives.

Difficulties of Selecting and Placing Sources. Ken eventually found integrating sources was not as difficult as he predicted.

It was not difficult because I already knew what I needed and where I wanted to put it in a paper
when borrowing somebody else's words or using sources.

Yet, he found getting the required sources and organizing them to be put into a paper the most challenging. The primary concern was selecting sources; the decision where to integrate selected sources was another challenge.

Selecting sources to use was difficult. And it was also hard for me to decide where to integrate the selected sources in the way the teacher asked to do because integrating sources is not just inserting them anywhere in the paper.

And he continued to talk about the difficulties of selecting appropriate information from the sources and putting them into the right places in his paper.

I already got sources, but they were not organized in the way they would be used for. The important information was sporadic like here and there throughout the paper. So I did not know what source should be used where. Some of them are garbage. They are about a job of "professor," but irrelevant to my topic.

Selecting and Placing Sources Strategically. When blocked in organizing obtained sources, Ken was prompted
to create his own strategy. He said he would find and place sources simultaneously to save time and effort. He explained more specifically in the comment below.

I decided to look for suitable sources while I was working on the part that needed sources and integrate those found sources right there. For example, when I was writing about professors' salaries, I looked for sources showing the average annual salary of professors because I thought I needed it on the salary information. In brief, I looked for sources, selected some of them, and used them at the same time when there was a need for the very part I was working on, instead of going over all the obtained sources repeatedly to find adequate information from sources gathered in advance and at random.

**Researching sources strategically.** Ken also described a method he created for himself for identifying useful sources quickly on the internet while using key words he was writing his paper.

When I search for information, I type a key word in a search engine such as yahoo. I already decided when I would use the source I was
searching for. So, related sources are displayed on the screen bearing bold key words. Then I skim through around key words. Next, I choose some information that seems to be relevant to my purpose of the paper. And then read carefully the relevant parts to make a decision on selecting sources worth integrating.

**Importance of Reading in Selecting Sources.** Ken suggested that his way of reading sources to screen them was an important element because he wanted to avoid spending unnecessary time on evaluating all the irrelevant sources. More specifically, once he found a possible source in his web search, he scanned it quickly for key information:

I read focusing on key words. When I decided the source is needed, I read it again around the key words. I do not read from the beginning. I don't need the main idea of whole paper. I just want pull out only information I need from it.

Reading in his strategy seemed to evolve from skimming to intensive reading in accordance with the degree of relevancy of sources. He read sources looking for a key word of information he needed. Then once he hoped in on the
relevant parts of the text he applied more intensive and careful reading skills in order to understand selected materials clearly.

More Comfortable with Quoting. In order to integrate information he selected by using his own strategies, he attempted to use paraphrase and quotation. He was so concerned about his lack of linguistic proficiency that he preferred to quote more often than to paraphrase because copying the exact words of sources by using quotation was the most convenient and safe way for him to avoid the possibility of changing meaning of the original.

I am inclined to use quotation all the time. It is convenient. Composing in English is not easy especially when I paraphrase. If I was asked to write in Korean, I would paraphrase more frequently because I can summarize sources in different words. Anyway, it is too difficult for me to paraphrase due to the lack of linguistic skill. A paraphrase is to rewrite others' words in one's own words without changing content of the original. Thus, if I paraphrase, then the meaning of the original might be changed.
Instructional Influence

In addition to Ken’s own strategies to write a paper, the class instruction continued to give a positive influence on his writing performance.

**Topic Sentence, Connection, Support Format and Comparing Examples.** Teacher’s instruction on integrating sources was really helpful for Ken to write his paper. For example, when asked about the most helpful class activities, he responded that TCS format and comparison between good examples and bad examples. He talked about how he learned how to develop paragraphs.

The professor showed somebody’s body paragraph. When she shows good examples that she recommended, I am likely to follow the pattern of her examples. So first, second, and third paragraphs had the same structure or organization. Like TSC format. She encourages us to use that form. [Note: TSC stands for topic sentence, support, connection]
Sue

Understanding of the Assignment

Feeling Unsatisfied with and Challenged by the Work.

At the second interview, Sue was not as upbeat as Ken about her progress on the assignment. Rather, she was unsatisfied with her work. She specifically expressed that her dissatisfaction derived from the fact that she had not included most of the required sources.

I am not satisfied with my work. I feel as if I got to work a lot more on it. I have to integrate internet sources and class readings; then develop my paper.

Importance of Choosing a Suitable Topic. Her discontent seemed to pervade throughout the interview, and she felt her topic choice, "a speech pathologist," which she was not familiar with, caused a false start in writing:

I think I chose a wrong topic for this assignment. Overall, it was difficult. If I had thought about a job or what I would like to do in the future, it would have been easier for me to work on this assignment. But I was in a hurry to pick a topic because I was required to do it in order to keep up with this class. If I had chosen
a common job at an office, it would have been easier to work on this assignment. But this job is not the one I am familiar with in my life. Although I have thought about it before, it was somewhat vague and unfamiliar.

**Negative Influence of Wrong Choice of the Topic.** Sue reported that her wrong choice of the topic negatively influenced her writing performance throughout the entire composing process.

I was writing a paper as an observer for this job. Thus, there was nothing easy for me so that I struggled a lot dealing with it. It seems that I got stressed out more compared with other classmates. When I was working on other assignments, in contrast, I had an idea of outline on each given topic from the beginning.

She also had a frustrating experience in getting an interview source for this topic. Because of the difficulty in contacting a speech pathologist, Sue was delayed in getting her interview, and it resulted in her being in a hurry to meet the deadline:

I tried to schedule to interview with someone who works as a speech pathologist, but there was some
problems communicating with each other by phone. So I could not get a hold of her on time. I had waited two days for her to call me back. Then she called me yesterday. Then I interviewed her and thought about how I would put this information into a paper. And then I had to wait until the next day to write because I had no computer at my place. After class, I had only two hours to write this draft. Interview source can not be replaced by anything else because interview is the one of essential requirement of this assignment.

Consequently, she had to turn in the draft incomplete only hoping for the revision.

After I wrote two paragraphs, I was running out of time. So some other sources were included very briefly. I just had to turn it in like that, but when I revise, I will have to develop more and include more sources.

Overall, her wrong choice of the topic gave her a poor start on this paper and continued influencing each step of her writing for this first full submission.
**Issues Related to Integrating Sources**

*Keeping the Flow and Placing Sources.* As she expected, integrating sources was difficult for Sue. Like Ken, putting sources in appropriate places was one of her major concerns. She said,

I am not sure that I integrated information or sources into right places they are connected.

Yet, unlike Ken, she was concerned about keeping the flow:

I can just insert them, but it is very difficult to integrate them keeping the flow by connecting sentences before and after the integrated part.

Although she experienced difficulties with integrating sources, she also developed her strategy to decide where to incorporate sources. When asked where she placed sources within a paragraph, she responded as follows:

I place sources right after topic sentence or when I bring an example, I place them as examples.

*Effort Needed to Paraphrase Sources.* As techniques for integrating sources, Sue used paraphrase and quotation. In paraphrasing sources, she took steps from understanding the content of sources to rewriting them in her own words. Yet,
understanding sources also required more work, such as reading and looking up words in the dictionary.

I have to understand well what sources are about, and then I can rewrite it in my own words. I read and look up words the dictionary.

She went on explaining about how she paraphrased:

First, I look in the dictionary for words I don’t know the meaning for and look for synonyms. After that, I try to write a different sentence. I try to change sentence structure.

Unlike Ken, therefore, Sue seemed more willing to try to make the effort to paraphrase. Similar to Ken, however, she also preferred to use quotation more often than paraphrase due to the possibility of changing original meanings because of her limited linguistic skills. Moreover, she preferred to quote whole sentences rather than to quote just parts of sentences and paraphrase the rest. This again may have been due to her concerns about her limited English skills.

I am afraid that what I paraphrase might be different from what the author means in the source article. So I did not use paraphrase often.
Getting Sources as Most Challenging. Also similar to Ken, Sue said that getting sources and integrating internet sources were the most challenging. Among the assignment requirements, she perceived obtaining sources to be the most difficult.

To obtain sources was difficult. For example, there are too many sources in the internet for me to find suitable source. Thus, it is difficult to select appropriate sources for my paper. Then she noted that internet source was the most difficult source to include because it required her to do much reading and make a lot of effort to find suitable one:

Information from internet sources was the hardest source to integrate. First of all, I could not find enough sources. In other words, it was difficult to read sources.

Unlike Ken, Sue did not yet have a set of strategies for extracting information from these web sources quickly for her paper.

Interview III
The third interview was conducted after the students submitted their final revised drafts. Unlike the first and
the second interviews, the third interviews focused on issues of instructor feedback. These interviews revealed some similarities and differences in the students’ reactions to teacher’s feedback and implementing it in their revision.

Ken

**Students’ Reactions to Instructor’s Feedback**

Positive Feeling about Teacher’s Feedback in Revision. Ken expressed an overall positive feeling about getting the instructor’s feedback. He said that his instructor’s feedback helped him a lot in revision. When asked about what he would have done if he had not gotten any feedback from an instructor, he responded he would have submitted the same unrevised paper, and he would not have even tried on his own. Thus, I asked a question to clarify his response, “Do you mean it is because you just don’t want to try or because you don’t know how to revise?”, he answered as follows:

I do my best to write a paper from the beginning. If I don’t get any feedback from a teacher, I don’t know what to do.
Coping Strategy to Get a Good Grade. Ken used teacher's comments as a strategy to get a good grade by including them in his revision as much as possible. He believed the teacher checked or marked what he did wrong, so he just followed the teacher's comments. As he said, "When she comments that I have to put more examples, I just follow it in order to get a good grade."

Students' Reaction to Implementing Instructor's Feedback

Resistance to Including Instructor's Feedback. Although he had positive feeling about getting instructor's feedback and used them often as a strategy to get a good grade, he did not always agree with teacher's comments. Ken expressed resistant feeling about implementing some of teacher's feedback. He described including teacher's feedback in his revision as an annoying work. He explained that it took too much time to think more in order to respond to teacher's feedback. Moreover, he did not want to follow somebody else's idea or thought instead of his. For example, he reported about the teacher's comments on the organization of his writing as follows:

In terms of organizing my writing, I want to be
respected. I did it because I thought it was right. If I combine phrases, then teacher would tell me to break them down. But I strongly think they should be combined for some reason. In my thought, they should be combined to keep the flow, and they are connected. If I break them down, they appear that I try to extend the length of the paper. For this reason, if I combined them as I think, then I get a feedback suggesting to break them down without any doubt. But I don’t change it, then she asks me why I don’t change it.

What Can and What Can’t. Ken’s resistance to implementing the instructor’s comments was not only due to wanting to maintain agency in his writing but also to not feeling able to make the requested revisions. He reported he read all the feedback and then selected what to include in his paper. When there was difficult feedback he was not capable of including, he thought his instructor had evaluated his writing skill too highly. He pointed out when his instructor asked him to revise more than he could do, he could not include them. For example, he said, “I can fix
errors like run-on sentences, now. But I cannot do things like paraphrase."

His comments seem to suggest that what his instructor expected of him was difficult for him to meet. This difficulty caused him to feel frustrated and discouraged about including teachers' comments like rephrase, paraphrase, condense, tighten. He expressed, "The result is always the same regardless of my effort to handle the feedback. There is no much difference."

On the whole, Ken's comments suggested he preferred to receive low sentence-level feedback on grammatical and linguistic errors;

Feedback is useful. For example, regarding the usage of verbs, I don't know much about it. I don't know what to use after the verb "want" whether to verb form or progressive form of the verb comes after. I am confused about them. For those things, I wait for her feedback for them about whether my uses of the verbs are right or not.

For these linguistic issues, Ken had positive feeling about including instructor's feedback. However, it did not mean
he agreed with his teacher on other than comments on other aspects of his paper.

Sue

Students’ Reaction to Instructor’s Feedback

In this interview, Sue, like Ken, expressed a positive feeling about the teacher’s comments. Getting the instructor’s feedback was not only a help in revising a paper, but also a positive influence on her psychologically.

Getting Feedback as an Important Learning Process.

According to her comments, Sue connected getting instructor feedback to learning and a part of important interaction with an instructor. She made a statement that if she did not get feedback from an instructor, then there was no meaning of learning. I also asked about what she would have thought of getting only low sentence-level feedback on grammar, she said, “Then, I can not improve my writing skill because I can’t learn about problem I have.” She seemed to think feedback on more than grammar was significant to improve her writing skills.

Student’s Reactions to Implementing Instructor’s Feedback

Sue had a more cooperative approach than Ken about
revising her paper based on the instructor's comments. Although she could not include all the feedback, she made an effort to respond as much as possible. For example, in responding to teacher's comment like "developing paragraph", she reacted with adding more examples.

Discussion and Implications

In this section, I summarize key findings of the interviews, discuss similarities of these findings with previous studies, and consider implications for teaching.

Understanding of the Assignment

In the first interviews, both students generally experienced feeling overwhelmed and challenged about the assignment topic. Their comments about the assignment indicated that their familiarity with the topic was one of the most important factors for students' understanding of the assignment. Similarly, Yuko in Spack's (1997) study also experienced this difficulty during her first year at college. When enrolled in International Relations, she had difficulty in proceeding with the writing assignment from the beginning. Although she was given a relatively flexible option of topic, it was still hard for her to handle because she was not familiar with any course reading,
lecture or discussion. These responses should suggest that ESL students might have difficulty in understanding the assignment because they are not familiar with the assignment topic.

Even when the topic is unfamiliar, however, students can be helped by detailed assignment guidelines. The two participants' understanding of the assignments progressed because of their careful and repeated reading of the assignment guidelines. Students heavily relied on the assignment guideline sheet, and they valued it as an important means of understanding the assignment. For this reason teachers need to prepare a detailed assignment guideline sheet explaining what students are required to do. For example, a sample formal essay assignment Ferris and Hedgecock (1998, p.116-117) presented might be a helpful guideline for instructors to follow. The guideline sheet included direction, topic and background information about the topic, and the assignment. The background information about the topic seemed specific and brief and the description of the assignment was described in detail. Then it also provided suggestions for getting started and reading sources. This guideline sheet included timeline
from brainstorming to revising paper and evaluation criteria which student can use to evaluate their papers.

In the second interview, students showed different reactions regarding the first full submission. Whereas Ken was feeling better with his work than he did in the first interview, Sue was feeling unsatisfied with the work. This negative feeling was related to the choice of topic. She chose the topic that was unfamiliar and difficult to access. Instead, Ken chose a topic based on accessibility. This made a big difference between Ken and Sue in the process of writing. Sue had to go through more difficulties in collecting sources. This result indicates that teachers' guidelines can help students approach choosing the topic. Teachers may ask students to answer questions about students' experiences, background knowledge, accessibility to the topic. This guideline of topic choice can guide students to the right choice of topic. For example, if an assignment guidelines sheet had included suggestions for choosing topic or listed some questions for students to consider in choosing a topic, Sue would have better opportunity choosing a right topic for her.

Issues Related to Integrating Sources
The second research questions asked how students perceived the experience of integrating sources in completing their assignments. The results show that both students found integrating sources and obtaining sources difficult and challenging. Their approach and performance in doing these tests, however, were different. In gathering sources as a initial step of integrating source, Ken already decided a topic which was easy for him to access interview sources for. In contrast, Sue did not have any specific topic of the job in her mind. Therefore, interviewing someone seemed to be more difficult than integrating sources itself.

In terms of integrating sources, Ken talked about selecting information from sources to use was another difficulty. He devised very helpful strategies, however, for selecting such information effectively. In selecting and placing, he looked for sources while he was working on the part in need of integrating sources. When he was researching for sources, he typed a key word and skimmed through around key words, then he selected some of information and read them intensively to understand better. For Sue, keeping the flow in the paragraph to paragraph in integrating sources was another concern. She also
emphasized that it was important to understand sources when she used paraphrase as a device of integrating sources. Ken’s experiences with integrating sources suggests that instructors could develop some tasks for giving students practice with Ken’s strategies.

Carrying the meaning of the original text was another aspect of integrating sources they were most concerned about. Both students preferred to use quotations when they integrated sources. It was because they concerned the most about the possibility of changing what they really meant by that integrated sources. This concern was related to their lack of language proficiency. Some ESL students may not be confident of their language proficiency, thus their approach to text-responsible writing could be timid. Leki and Carson’s findings show students have similar concerns. Paraphrasing text to avoid plagiarism was a major issue for students. One student talked about the difficulty of paraphrasing and summarizing: If you have a text in perfect English, that’s exactly what you should say and this is the best way. Then you have find another way. This is funny. So you have to change it and then it gets worse (p.59). It suggests that their concerns with plagiarism and paraphrasing should be considered by instructors, and
instructors may develop activities that give students practice with paraphrasing and quotation.

**Instructional Influences**

The third research question asked to what extent the instructions given by the teacher in the classroom related to students' perceptions of the assignment. The results show that class discussion, class activities, and interaction with instructor were important features to promote students' understanding and performance of the assignment. Most of all, the class discussion was noted by students as the most influential class instruction, as it was in class that the instructor reviewed the assignment guideline sheet thoroughly. This finding suggests that some ESL students may have difficulty understanding the assignments if there were no discussion or explanation on the assignment. According to findings in Zamel's (1995) study, students pointed out they needed more explicitly detailed assignments and more accessible classroom talk about the assignment. They said most teachers went over material without explaining any words that seemed so hard for them. Then they suggested college teachers describe more clearly on questions in the exams, and teachers write any important information or announcement on the board.
rather than just speaking in front of class. It suggests that instructor's explanation over the assignment might reinforce understanding of the assignment.

Another important class activity was instruction on how to quote and paraphrase. As Braine (1995) found out in his study that summary and paraphrase were the vital writing skills for students majoring in the natural sciences and engineering, the findings of this study also suggest that students need to learn academic writing techniques. As particular kind of academic writing, written critiques also involve incorporating borrowed material from one or more sources into one's critique. In their study, Dobson and Peak (2001) suggest ways of helping students incorporate borrowed materials into one's own text. For example, they suggest summary writing through which students can learn to identify the main issue of an article, the authors' perspective, and support for a claim. Students' Reaction to Instructor's Feedback

The fourth question focused on the students' reactions to the teacher's feedback. Overall, the two participants valued getting feedback as a part of learning, and expected teacher's comments and appreciated them. Students reported teacher's feedback helped them to get a good grade and
improve their writing skills. This result was similar to Ferris' (1995) study on student reaction to teacher response. In her study, the majority of students felt that their teacher’s feedback had indeed helped them to improve as writers because it helped them know what to improve or avoid in the future, find their mistakes, and clarify their ideas.

Students’ Reaction to Implementing the Instructor’s Feedback

The fourth question also asked what students did when they implemented the teacher’s comments in revision. The results show that implementing the teacher’s comments was difficult for them. Students reported paraphrasing was one of the most challenging practice in writing for them. The students also said their ability to integrate information from sources into their writing was limited, and Ken thought the teacher overestimated his writing ability. These responses suggest paraphrasing could be one of most difficult writing tasks for some ESL writers since it requires them to have certain level of language proficiency. To help students improve their text integrating skill, ESL writing teachers need to be aware of the level of their writing skills and administer some class
activities for them to be prepared before giving them difficult work.

In this interview, students also showed contrasting attitudes in implementing feedback. For example, Ken had a resistant feeling to include the teacher's feedback on organization of his writing, and insisted his way of organizing paragraphs and ignored the teacher's comment on it. He seemed to include only comments on low-sentence level errors. Instead, Sue made her best effort to include the teacher's comments in revision and responded to the teacher comment on the development of her essay content. These responses suggest that students' approach to this difficulty might vary individually. Some students may agree with the teacher's feedback, some students may disagree with it or ignore it. For this reason, the teacher and students need more interaction to understand each other. Especially, teachers need to be aware of students' feelings about teacher's feedback, and they may have student and teacher conferences over the revised paper with teacher's comments. Ferris and Hedgecock (1998) suggested the conference event saves teachers time and energy and offers immediacy and potential for interaction and negotiation. They also pointed out that writing conferences offer more
effective means to communicate with auditory learners. This teacher and student conference might help students show their feelings and thoughts more openly, and also can understand better why students react in certain ways.

In this study, listening to two ESL students voices has allowed me to see what has gone on beneath students' written products, and it illuminates how important talking to students and not just looking at their papers is for instructors to know how to teach ESL students effectively. It reveals that what we see from the written products of ESL writers involves hidden students challenges, agonies, and successes.
APPENDIX A

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINE
Guidelines for Essay #3: Observing Workplace or Academic Cultures
Eng. 86b—Winter 2002

Typed Rough Draft (at least two pages) due: Wed. 2/27
Typed Full Submission Due: Fri. 3/8
Typed Revision Due: Mon. 3/18

Assignment (5 pages, typed, double-spaced, 1 in. margins, 12 pt. font)
Every workplace has its own culture—with its own norms, beliefs, and values. As you go through your four (or more!) years of college, you will probably think about what kind of workplace culture you want to “join.” Imagine that an academic counselor, a parent, or a friend (perhaps yourself!) is concerned that you choose a workplace where you will be happy and that you avoid those where you will not be happy. Write this audience an essay arguing that the culture of a particular workplace (you choose which one!) would be good one (or not) for you and why. You will need to support your argument with your own observations of that workplace, interviews with people at that workplace, class readings, and library research.

Other guidance
1. IMPORTANT: You will need to integrate the following sources of support into your essay:
   a. Your own observations of the workplace.
   b. Interview(s) with at least one person who has worked at the workplace.
   c. Paraphrase and quotation from at least one of our class readings.
   d. (Optional) Information about the workplace from the internet.
   e. Paraphrase and quotation from at least two magazine or newspaper articles, or books (found through library research) about the workplace.
2. Use at least four vocabulary words from the readings.
3. Include a Works Cited page in MLA style.

Getting started
1. Think about a workplace whose culture would be interesting to analyze. (This could be the workplace of your ideal job, your least ideal job, a past/present job, or another job of interest.) Try to pick a workplace that will be interesting and easy for you to observe.
Some examples of workplaces:
- business offices
- restaurants
- car dealerships
- university offices/library/classrooms
- barber shop/beauty salon
- elementary school
- child care center

- hospital
- doctor’s office
- university health center
- retail stores (e.g. Wal-Mart, Home Depot, 7-11, Barnes & Noble)
- computer lab

1. Once you have selected a workplace to write about, go observe people working in that environment. Public workplaces (e.g. Wal-Mart) are easy to get access to, but you may need to ask permission to enter more private workplaces.

2. Take notes on what you observe about the culture of that environment. (See next page)

Here are some questions that may help guide your observations:

**norms for employee appearances**
- What are people wearing?
- Is there a dress code?
- What is their hair like?

**norms for interaction/conversation**
- How do workers interact with each other? How do they interact with customers or others coming into the workplace?
- Are the interactions among employees, employees and customers, and employees and supervisors more informal or formal? Why? Examples?
- How do employees address each other? (first name?)
- How directly or indirectly do they speak to one another? Examples?
- Are employee interactions about business? Are they social? Examples?

**the social hierarchy**
- Who is in charge? Is the boss or supervisor always in control, or do subordinates do whatever they want?

**the psychological mood**
- What seem to be the attitudes or feelings of those working?
- What is their facial and/or body language like?
- What is the pace of the work like? --fast? slow?
- Is there a friendly mood in the workplace?

**other norms for employees**
What else do people (supervisors, colleagues, customers) expect from employees in this workplace?

values
From what you observe, what seems to be valued in this workplace? Are these values a good fit for your own?

the physical work environment
Where does the work take place? Is it an office, a clinic, a lab, outdoors? How pleasant is this work environment? Why?

the nature of the work
What does a worker do all day? Describe a typical day.

Alternative for the Assignment
If you do not think you can observe a workplace, you can choose university classes in a specific major as your “workplace.” You could choose, for example, a major you are interested in, ask the professors’ permission to visit one or two classes, and observe the norms and values of those classes. (You can adapt the questions listed above to fit the students and the teachers in the classes.)

If you choose this alternative you can still do your library research on workplaces related to that major (e.g. If you are studying computer science classes, you could do library research on norms for computer-related workplaces.)

PLEASE come talk to me if you are not sure of what workplace or classes to observe.
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS FOR EACH INTERVIEW
Interview I

1. What was your first impression of this assignment?
2. Do you understand what this assignment asked you to do?
3. What do you think you need to do for this assignment?
4. What type of paper do you think it will be?
5. Did the second discussion of your instructor help you understand what this paper is about?
6. Do you think your instructor explained enough about this assignment? If yes, then why?
7. Is this assignment challenging for you?
8. Do you have a clear idea of what to do for this assignment now?
9. Do you have to use any source for this assignment?
10. Why do you think this requires to integrate sources into your essay?
11. How are you going to support your point in an essay?
12. How are you going to integrate sources?
13. Have you learned how to integrate them?
14. What is difference between paraphrase and quotation?
15. Suppose you obtained all required sources, what is going to be the most difficult one to integrate?
16. What is the most challenging thing when you write?
17. Is this guidance explained well enough for you to get an idea what this paper is about?
18. What did your instructor mostly look at in your paper based on your previous experiences?
19. What will she look at in your paper this time?
20. When you write this paper, what do you plan to do?
Interview II

1. How do you feel about your completion of full length paper?
2. On the whole, what was the most difficult thing about doing this assignment?
3. Did you meet all the requirement for the paper in the guidelines?
4. How did you integrate sources?
5. How about your integrating found sources into your paper?
6. How did you borrow one’s words?
7. Have you ever been taught about integrating sources?
8. What was the most helpful class activity?
9. When did you integrate sources?
10. What was the first thing to do when you paraphrase or quote them?
11. When you read an article, how do you read it?
12. How did you integrate sources?
13. How was your actual integration in your paper?
14. Didn’t you have any more difficult thing or easier thing?
15. What was the most difficult thing among requirements?
Interview III

1. What kind of feedback did you get?
2. Did the feedback come out as you expected?
3. Did you include instructor’s feedback in revision?
4. Did you understand instructor’s feedback?
5. Do you like to get a feedback from an instructor?
6. What part of your paper do you want to get a feedback?
7. Do you think getting a feedback is important?
8. Do you feel you learned something after taking English composition class for two quarters?
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