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LANGUAGE LEARNING

Writing Development in Secondary/Post Secondary Language Learning: Integrating
Multiple Motivating Factors, Explanatory Feedback, and Explanatory Writing Tools to
Increase Competence and Confidence in Writing

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Abstract

Background: This study discusses data-driven results of newly-developed writing tools that are objective, easy, and less time-consuming than standard classroom writing strategies; additionally, multiple motivation triggers and peer evaluation are evaluated together with these new, modernized writing tools. The results are explained separately and within the context of the students'/educators' environmental and social context from known interdisciplinary practice and theory. In contrast, many studies present writing tools that are more subjective and/or time consuming, and these studies may offer less comprehensive help in writing instruction.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to increase competence and confidence in writing development, while minimizing subjectivity in writing tools, and to provide a comprehensive context for their use.

Research Design: This is a mixed research study that includes both quantitative and qualitative results. The single measurement and pretest/posttest research designs were employed. This was studied by collecting extensive data from 159 students and replicating the process of using explanatory corrective feedback (ECF), which is a combination of specific feedback and detailed scoring, 472 times.

Conclusion: The writing tools and ECF were proven to be efficient and effective in increasing writing competence and confidence in students. Challenges, successes, and interdisciplinary theory/practice are discussed.

Key Words: writing development, composition development, confidence in writing, competence in writing, peer feedback, corrective feedback, online writing programs, computer assisted language learning (CALL) in writing, Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL), Second Language Learner (L2), Subsequent Language Learner (LS)

**Writing Development in Secondary/Post Secondary Language Learning:
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Writing Tools to Increase Competence and Confidence in Writing**

This mixed-methods study analyzes writing development using explanatory corrective feedback and multiple motivation triggers. The explanatory corrective feedback utilizes special rubrics along with specific feedback; this type of feedback and its components are discussed at length in this paper. In this study, the results are extensively data-driven. I share this data both independently and within the environmental and cognitive factors that affected 142 of my students' ability to succeed in a rigorous writing development course during the semester that I focused this inquiry. On a micro level, I put great significance on students' ability to develop specific essay skills throughout the investigation. There is a smaller component dedicated to using these writing tools as they pertain to time and efficiency, which will be expanded to other educator's experiences in a subsequent study.

In this investigation, the assessment tools were applied 474 times while the explanatory feedback was contributed on over 800 written assignments. Some of the students in the study were also in my composition class from the previous semester when some of the tools were first being established. Therefore, I compared and contrasted the views and work of these students in this paper. A more in-depth investigation of students that took my composition classes for this semester or both semesters can be reviewed through case studies on jeffersonresearch.org. While these instruments were employed in an accredited writing course delivered online, it will become apparent that the tools and

methods analyzed in this paper can easily be successful in computer-assisted language learning as well as in offline environments.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how specific personalized feedback, combined with specific rubrics, are more effective in improving students' writing and are better tools for consistent grading than traditional methods. These tools utilize interdisciplinary theory and practice from the following fields: teaching English as a second language (TESOL), linguistics, English education, and human development. Combined with the aforementioned writing tools, they become what I call Explanatory Corrective Feedback (EFC). This work gives specific tools which will allow teachers to move away from rubrics that lead to scoring inconsistencies due to the evaluator's personal preferences and which leave students wondering how to genuinely improve their writing.

In my previous work as an Early Childhood Education professor, few of my students were focused on learning English writing development; therefore, I did not see a need for a detailed evaluating process that would help students develop in English writing. Once I took my position as an Assistant Professor in Fall 2012 at a Korean university, I immediately had about 150 students that needed more detailed assistance than what I could find available in current research. In the same class, some of my students lacked foundational basic grammar and paragraph writing skills while others could already write a full five-paragraph essay. From my experience in teaching children, I wanted to meet university students where they were in the writing process and help them to progress to the next level. I desired to assist students with their specific needs;

even if they were more advanced than what we were studying in our particular course. Developing a more definitive assessment system would later provide an efficient way to address my students' need to develop beyond their current writing ability. While I was able to develop consistent feedback for common errors/mistakes during my first term, I found that my original rubric was too subjective and time-consuming to be effective for development and/or grading. Assigning students to a particular grading category based on their proficiency in four areas was not detailed enough and was also too subjective. I found that I might move a student into one category and then out after thinking about their writing more. In addition, I would place a student in a higher or lower category based on how I personally felt about their ability to meet a particular writing element. I began to notice my biases; for example, I would be inclined to feel as though that student did not care about the assignment when a student failed to capitalize words at the beginning of a sentence. Discussions with other educators revealed that they too might subconsciously mark a student lower or higher due to a conflicting personal viewpoint or intolerable grammar mistake/error. I saw this issue in myself. I remember putting two graded assignments next to each other and not feeling confident about why the scores differed. I began to realize that I struggled with my own personal biases in my grading, and it appeared that other educators did as well.

Explanatory Corrective Feedback (ECF), which includes a combination of specific explanatory feedback and the Jefferson Efficient Paragraph Rubric Analysis (JEPR) or Jefferson Efficient Essay Rubric Analysis (JEERA), restricted my grading autonomy and allowed me to be consistent and more effective. The elements targeted on the rubrics were modeled on standardized English tests (e.g. TOFEL and TOEIC) with

specifics that both the students and I could measure. I programmed the rubric to calculate my subjectivity over more specific task elements with degrees of agreement for each task that a student met. In this way, I acknowledge that there is personal judgment involved, but it is limited by degree and over more elements.

Rationale

During my search for instruments that would help with consistent grading and independent writing maturation, I found tools that were too theoretical, too broad, too subjective, too limited, too difficult to understand, or that simply did not help the learner to understand how he/she was being evaluated so that the student could progress independently. These factors reveal a gap in how we teach and evaluate writing as well as in how students can learn to improve their writing independently. In order for students to improve their writing, they need clearer information and better explanations so they can make logical and more accurate writing decisions.

Part of the difficulty in innovating effective writing development tools is likely due to a lack of interdisciplinary practice and theory. This research paper offers efficacious practice tools that can improve the writing process and evaluation methods across the curricula related to language (or communication), and at the same time, I hope to promote more cross-disciplinary practice tools and debate among researchers and practitioners in fields associated with language development.

Limitations

There are a few limitations for this study. For one thing, the physical location of the university is in Seoul, S. Korea; however, the students are enrolled in a cyber-university and are therefore located in different parts of the world. It would be more

difficult for our students to obtain live writing tutor assistance, which may be available for students on campus in most Western schools/colleges/universities. Tutors that were available for the course possessed skills and compensation more suited for interpretation, translation, and administrative tasks; this is discussed more in the discussion section. Since it was more difficult to obtain a traditional 1:1 writing tutor for the students in this online degree program, the effectiveness of EFC became even more evident. The student population was largely Korean and shared similar English language production challenges to other Koreans, as I saw in the sample written interview and in their completed work. However, the study's method and literary summary are not specific to the Korean population. Therefore, the process discussed in this paper can easily be adapted for other English language writers (L1 [first language learners], L2 [second language learners], and LS [language subsequent learners]). One advantage is that it is easy to see how an educator can mentor students in writing directly through the process discussed in this paper; equally beneficial is that students' work is indirectly improved through modeling this process to fellow students for peer feedback. In contrast, educators who grade papers by hand will less likely be able to reap the full benefits that this study has to offer due to the time needed to hand write and score papers.

While these tools in this research can be used for post-secondary students, starting at about the ninth-grade level, it will likely be more difficult for an educator to use EFC for high school students in the United States than those in a non-English speaking country. One reason for this may be that U.S. teachers often rely on the historical tendency to use Whole Language Learning rather than teaching grammar. As a student, Whole Language Learning allowed me to write more fluidly at length but not accurately

or with appropriate language for the targeted assignment. For example, I would more likely write an academic essay using language and sentence structures found in a Shakespearean play as an avid, youthful reader and writer. While I received high marks in my high school English program, I was stunned when I tested into remedial English at the beginning of my post-secondary career. I postulate that Whole Language Learning is ultimately feeble when taught by itself, but it can bear productive fruit if married to EFC. If a high school is using a method of teaching English like Whole Language Learning, then EFC can be added efficiently and effectively to its program.

Definitions

Educator refers to 9-12 grade teachers and professors/instructors in higher education.

Jefferson Efficient Paragraph Rubric Analysis (JEPRA) consists of ten specific elements that are generally evaluated on English standardized tests (e.g. TOEIC and TOFEL) and measures the degree of agreement between an educator's requirements for an assignment and a student's composition output in that area. The rubric is specific enough so that the educator cannot over- utilize personal stressors in grading the assignment. In addition, the student is able to understand better what he/she must do in order to develop his or her writing per standardized testing protocols. At the paragraph level, there are three major categories: Topic/Task, Body Paragraph Elements, and Grammar/Vocabulary.

Jefferson Efficient Essay Rubric Analysis (JEERA) is similar to the JEPRA, but has 20 specific elements that are generally evaluated on English standardized tests (e.g. TOEIC and TOFEL). At the essay level, there are six major categories: Topic/Task, Organization, Introduction, Body Paragraph Elements, Conclusion, and Grammar/Vocabulary.

Explanatory Corrective Feedback (ECF) is a combination of specific feedback and JEPRA or JEERA scoring. Students receive feedback on the essay, paragraph, and sentence level as needed. It is called “Explanatory” because the feedback goes beyond simple labeling, error correction, and reformulation. The feedback gives explanation and/or reasons for mistakes. In addition, the ECF allows the learner to progressively develop writing skills as the rubrics largely tell the student which areas are weak and strong; so the educator can then teach the learner how to strengthen weak points through explanation and/or reasons.

Language refers to both the capacity to produce language and the environmental and social context that shapes its being in a particular language group.

Language Subsequent Learner (LS) is a learner that is learning more than one language after they have acquired their first language.

Background

Literature summary of selected articles

Historical foundation.

A common theme in my research is to include human development theory as the foundation, or springing point, for the discussion. It makes little sense to discuss issues associated with humans without at least addressing cognitive development. Out of the four major areas of human maturation, I will focus on cognitive and language progression.

While Noam Chomsky and Jean Piaget may disagree on what language is, they both lend important insight to second-language development (e.g. Chomsky, 2012, speech; Piaget, 1977, video). During the debate between Chomsky and Piaget in 1979,

Chomsky declared that Piaget's view was inconsistent because Piaget agreed with Chomsky that there is some innateness in language. He stated, "If there are elements of innateness involved in the structure of language, then it is false that it is unnecessary to postulate innate structures" (Piattelli-Palmarini, 1980).

To some degree, I concur with Chomsky because there are similarities among languages that help us to acquire and produce native and subsequent languages. For example, I have studied Korean and Spanish for over seven years. Like English, both languages have these basic elements in common in a sentence: subject, verb, and object. Order, word choice, and other grammar elements seem to be a part of the social context of the languages. While I agree with Chomsky that language in a social context is communication, I do not agree that communication is not language (Chomsky, 2012). Repeatedly, Chomsky argues that a "neutral scientist should approach cognitive structures such as human language more or less as he would investigate an organ like that heart" (Piattelli-Palmarini, 1980) or "an eyeball" (Chomsky, 2012). However, language has significant differences from a heart or an eyeball. If one—with normal functioning eyes—opens his eyes, he can see. Similarly, the heart functions automatically without any conscious thought. Language is more like using one's legs. Most normal functioning people have the capacity to walk or play sports, but these skills are not automatic. Therefore, I value Chomsky's arguments about innateness; at the same time, I see Piaget's work as useful in studying language development.

I speculate that Piaget stated it was unnecessary to postulate innate structures concerning language because he believed that innateness was trivial to his research and is a given element. To illustrate, there are some elements in mathematics that are given. If a

mathematical problem states that $x = 36$ is given, then there is no need to argue this point. On the other hand, $x(y+3)^6 = 296$ where $x = 36$ possesses a given element but not every person will reach the same answer. The reasons why one might reach a right or wrong answer and how they could reach the right answer are more interesting to the type of cognitive research in which Piaget was involved. Once we accept the given components of language, it more resembles Piaget's assertion: "Knowledge, therefore, proceeds from action...When objects are assimilated to schemes of action, there is a necessary 'adaptation' of objects to the schemes of that subject...*Adaptation* results from external data, hence from experience" (Piattelli-Palmarini, 1980, 24). Thus, the innate or given factors within the cognitive/language portions of the brain must adapt and form within experience that is likely set in an environmental or social context. This concept leads us into an area where I more closely agree with both Chomsky and Piaget.

In his speech, "What is Special About Language?" (2012), Chomsky spoke about how learning a second language is studying *externalization* in a structure format that is not in linear order. From my experience during my study of Spanish and Korean, I have had more success with language formats that have a structural foundation. The writing tools created and explained in this paper are structural in that the tools address the participants' current use of English language writing and supports development at specific points, though not in a particular order. The only specific order in my method is that students learn how to write a proper paragraph before attempting to write a five-paragraph essay. Similarly, Piaget (1977) postulates that we continually organize what we know through structuring and re-structuring our knowledge (video). This is, of course, the process of language, whether L1, L2 or LS. This process of structuring and

restructuring, common to both Chomsky and Piaget, seems to be an appropriate method for writing development as well as for language learning.

Educator Feedback and Evaluation

While there is much research available concerning written corrective feedback (WCF), researchers appear to agree that the research is limited in scope and is not particularly useful to classroom practitioners (Storch, 2010; Van Beuning 2010). One of the reasons that WCF may not have helped improve writing for L2 or LS learners is that students have had difficulty understanding writing feedback (Ferris, 1995; Hyland 1998). This should not surprise us since, in most circumstances, the English teacher is usually a native English speaker not fluent in the L2 or LS learners' language. To address this, I used a combination of tools that were first written in English and that were later made bilingual to compare the students' ability to successfully understand and use the feedback. Our program has at least one bilingual English/Korean assistant teacher assigned to each course who assists in translating instructions for students. As part of the final student written interview, I included a written interview question about if students were able to understand my English-only feedback or if they needed Korean language assistance for clarity. The results of that question are displayed and discussed in the Results and Discussion sections. Another reason research in WCF has been lacking is due to investigators evaluating limited structures in the studies; as an example, Neomy Storch (2010) states the following:

Many of the studies, particularly those which show evidence supporting WCF, have focused on a limited number of linguistic structures: the acquisition of the English article system (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, b; Bitchener

et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007; Sheen et al., 2009), the simple past tense, and use of prepositions (Bitchener et al., 2005, p. 41).

In contrast, my research focuses on the students' writing on a whole, which is similar to many English standardized tests. Storch's review of writing accuracy improvement between 1980-2010 demonstrates obvious accuracy improvements in research results between 2007 and 2010. However, those improvements were on writing tests done with one revision that students reviewed shortly before a writing exam, were mostly timed tests under 60 minutes, and often only tested improvement of limited structures (p. 43). Both Storch (2010) and Van Beuning (2010) call for more practical and comprehensive research that involves observations of writing development over longer periods of time. The present study includes the components that they found missing in over 40 studies dedicated to WCF during the last 40 years. Even before reading about Storch's and Van Beuning's concerns on how writing improvements were measured, I have been reluctant to follow a revision-based model because it was ineffective in my own learning for shorter papers. In essence, I had learned to copy the educator's corrections, but I could not consistently apply the strategies to other pieces. Therefore, this investigation measures learners' development over time as new learning is applied to different writing topics. Then the final timed assessment topics are different from any topics the students were allowed to practice during the semester in order to give a true measure of the students' writing maturation.

Educator Rubric

Rubrics/assessments that provide significant detail have been called analytic, authentic, and formative rubrics (Beyreli, 2009; Montgomery, 2002; Flateby, 2010). They

support the idea that teachers need more specific criteria to be more objective and consistent. Beyreli (2009), Fluckinger (2010), and Montgomery (2002) admitted these more detailed rubrics/assessments had a drawback of being time-consuming for teachers and students. Although other authors avoided mentioning any time element in using their assessment tools (Loveland 2005; Flateby, 2010), I observed that it took me about the same amount of time to use more detailed rubrics as it took to use the more general ones. The detailed rubrics had structures that required more time in explaining and calculating results, while the more general rubrics left me unsure about which score category a student might justifiably fit. Even from linguistic authors noticing the same issue with objectivity in writing assessment tools (Zhihui and Zhijun 2011), the time required to implement suggested tools was considerable. In contrast, the tools I have developed for assessing writing are intuitively quicker, easier to understand, and more detailed because they resemble the same thing that supports good writing—structure.

Peer Feedback and Evaluation

Zheng (2007) and Joyce (1992) found that peer feedback was a great learning tool for students. Not only did I attempt to use peer feedback as learning instrument, but I also included motivational triggers. Unlike Murthy (2007), I did not focus on directly training students for 25% or more of the semester to correctly edit each other's papers. Instead, students received indirect training for peer feedback as I modeled feedback, as well as using assessment tools on their specific papers three times before beginning the team project. As suggested by Xu (2013), I encouraged students to take responsibility for their work. Thus, how students communicated with each other, how many peers would give them feedback, and which topics to write about were left up to the groups to decide. What

has not been studied much is the success of group work when students have little university supervision regarding class order selection, working hours, and class load in bachelors' programs. I discuss the team project that required peer feedback in the context of these afore-mentioned environmental factors.

Motivating Participants to Submit Best Works

Chanseawrassammee (2012) and Gardner (2011) found that adult students are, at least partially, motivated by competition and rewards. In Chansewrassammee's research, there appeared to be challenges in finding the right positive reward to induce motivation. This was due to students feeling guilty about the teacher spending money or lack of student interest in the reward itself. I utilized both positive and negative reinforcements that cost no money and implemented competition in the team peer feedback project. Papi (2012) gave a generalization about why students' actual motivated behavior differed from their self-reported motivation about why they would learn English. While I saw similar evidence in my students, I give more detailed specifics about why some triggers were real and others were only perceived to be significant motivating factors for students. Furthermore, I show and explain in detail how the rewards and competition elements affected motivation, competence, and confidence in writing.

Research Questions

1. How does explanatory corrective feedback (ECF), which includes the Jefferson Efficient Paragraph Rubric Analysis (JEPRA) and Jefferson Efficient Essay Rubric Analysis (JEERA), allow teachers to give consistent and developmentally appropriate feedback?

In a composition course that implements multiple motivation triggers and ECF, which factors contribute the most to student competence and confidence in writing development?

2. How does student writing, using the ECF model, compare to what their English standardized test (i.e. TOEIC and TOFEL) scores would have been at each stage of their writing development in the four-month period?

Research Method

Research design

This is a mixed research study that includes both quantitative and qualitative results.

Design for teacher feedback.

The single measurement and pretest/posttest research designs were employed to create effective tools for evaluating students writing, teacher feedback consistency, awareness of subjective influences, and confidence in the feedback given. The design was also made to maintain consistency while managing time per paper. Observations were of consistency in feedback and students writing development over five writing assignments. Two of the writings are paragraphs and received Explanatory Corrective Feedback (ECF). Two essays received explanatory feedback: one by the teacher and one by student peer evaluators. Under standardized testing time constraints of 90 minutes, students wrote

the last essay. The team project and final exam essay only received the JEERA, which is 50% of the ECF.

Design for student peer feedback.

The group pretest/posttest was used.

Research Setting

The research setting is in an online environment conducted through our private university Learning Management System (LMS). In other words, popular LMS like Blackboard and Moodle were not utilized in this study. Even so, the functions of our LMS are similar enough that someone using a private or popular LMS could easily use the research available in this study.

The university has some special considerations to take into account in order to understand the data in this investigation. For one thing, the physical location of the university is in Seoul, S. Korea; however, our students are located in different parts of the world. One advantage is that it is easy to see how a professor can mentor students in writing directly through the process discussed in this paper and indirectly through modeling this process to students for peer feedback. Although most high schools and higher education institutions dedicate a portion of studies to foreign languages, it is highly unlikely that foreign languages would be one of the main focuses. At the same time, specializing in languages helps make this research more relevant for other educators that want to utilize this model for an English language course on/off line.

Data Sources and Research Samples

Educator component

One part of the data was documented notes and revisions of the process to develop a case study using ECF in mentoring and evaluating about 800 (159 students x 5 assignments) composition assignments. Due to missed assignments and early course withdrawal, the total student papers evaluated were 474.

Student Component

The other portion of the data was from students' written peer feedback and the final product of the peer feedback using ECF. The proportion of the student population was 159 non-native English-speaking students that were majoring in English to one native English university professor. Although all students were enrolled in a basic composition class, they ranged from freshmen to seniors in their class standing. Their English skills and prior years of studying English varied widely when they began the course, which was revealed in their writing and self-report during the written interview. While there is objective representation of their progression of writing during this course, students also offered information about their personal challenges and successes using the ECF model in the written interview.

Strategy for Data Collection

Data collection procedures

All data was collected through LMS and other electronic means requiring the Internet. Some data was collected informally beginning Fall 2012 when I was developing methods to effectively assist students with writing development. However, the procedures were under revision between January 2013 and April 2013. The population for this

research project was studied from March 4, 2013 to June 17, 2013, which is about a three-month period.

Educator data collection procedure

I kept notes and observations regarding student progress, challenges, and my reasons for revising the data instruments.

Student data collection procedure

I used the same method of ECF for the first three assignments, which included two paragraphs and one essay. Even though many students completed assignment two and three before the received ECF, they were instructed to revise assignment two after receiving ECF for assignment one or be penalized for making the same mistakes on subsequent assignments. Additionally, students could submit revisions of the same assignment for a higher grade. The same instructions were given to students for assignment three after all the second assignments were given ECF. Once this procedure had been modeled three times and students had progressively reevaluated their writing according to the ECF, students utilized this procedure for the peer feedback that was due after the first three assignments. I offered students a motivating element of receiving 3% extra credit if everyone on their team scored 90% or above. Then the students submitted a portfolio of their work from the semester. The last component was to evaluate the students' ability by producing a timed five-paragraph essay for the final exam. The final assessment occurred during the 15th week of the semester.

Data collection instruments**Word processing document for educator notes and revisions.**

The notes began Fall 2012 and were maintained through the end of the project in mid- June, 2013.

Jefferson Efficient paragraph rubric analysis. (JEPRA)

This rubric was made for the paragraph level, using ten specific elements that are generally evaluated on English standardized tests (TOEIC and TOFEL) to measure the degree of agreement between the student work and what I expected as a teacher. The rubric is specific enough so that I could not over-utilize personal stressors in grading the assignment; in addition, students would be able to better understand what they must do in order to develop their writing per standardized testing protocols. At the paragraph level, there are three major categories: Topic/Task, Body Paragraph Elements, and Grammar/Vocabulary. The JEEPA is located at jeffersonresearch.org.

Jefferson Efficient essay rubric analysis. (JEERA)

The JEERA is similar to the JEPRA, but has 20 specific elements that are generally evaluated on the TOEIC and TOFEL. At the essay level, there are six major categories: Topic/Task, Organization, Introduction, Body Paragraph Elements, Conclusion, and Grammar/Vocabulary. The JEERA is located at jeffersonresearch.org.

Writing Portfolio

Starting from the last composition task, the students arranged their written work by date, in a descending order, in order to demonstrate student progress over time. Case studies that include selected student work can be found on jeffersonresearch.org.

Student written interview

The student written interview was administered online via Kiwi Surveys between June 3 and June 5, 2013. The written interview was in English and Korean since most of the students had Korean as their native language. However, the students were only allowed to write the answers in English for the following reasons:

- 1) Since the students were able write five-paragraph essays on social topics in English, then they should be able to explain their ideas concerning their learning in two or three sentences.
- 2) Having students write in English would save time and money over having someone translate their comments.
- 3) The person translating the Korean into English could make mistakes where a trained educator, experienced with teaching English, would be able to better interpret students' meaning when they wrote in English.

Results

Whenever possible, data that contained decimals was rounded to the nearest hundredth and converted to a whole numbers in percentage form. Therefore, the displayed total may be +/-2% from 100%.

Overall class progress in essay development

While 159 students enrolled in the class, only 143 of them completed one or more written assignments. Although 143 students submitted one or more assignments, only 142 of them completed the course. Out of the 143 learners, 42% of them scored below 71 on their first essay; only 32% of the pupils scored between 71 and 100 on the first essay. However, only 11% of students received marks below

71 on the team project essay while 51% scored between 71-100. Even though 48% of the students did not take the final exam assessment, the result on the timed assessments were similar to those achieved on the team project essays. In this section, significant data reveals major factors that were related to challenges outside of this course, which impeded students from completing the assignments (Tables 22, 23, and Figure 1).

Table 1.

Overall Progress of Student's Writing development through Assignments and Assessments

Assessment	Did Not Complete	Compro- mised (Cheated)	50 or below	51-60	61-70
Paragraph 1 (1St p)	45 (31.47%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (1.40%)	2 (1.40%)	22 (15.38%)
Paragraph 2	36 (25.17%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (6.29%)
Essay 1	37 (25.87%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	27 (18.88%)	33 (23.08%)
Team Project	54 (37.76%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (3.50%)	11 (7.69%)
Final Exam	69 (48.25%)	1 (0.70%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (1.40%)	11 (7.69%)

Table 1 (continued).

Assessment	71-75	76-80	81-85	86-90	91-95	96-100
Paragraph 1 (1St p)	14 (9.79%)	24 (16.78%)	15 (10.49%)	10 (6.99%)	6 (4.20%)	3 (2.10%)
Paragraph 2	17 (11.89%)	23 (16.08%)	22 (15.38%)	25 (17.48%)	9 (6.29%)	2 (1.40%)
Essay 1	16 (11.19%)	16 (11.19%)	6 (4.20%)	4 (2.80%)	2 (1.40%)	2 (1.40%)
Team Project	6 (4.20%)	11 (7.69%)	17 (11.89%)	15 (10.49%)	19 (13.29%)	5 (3.50%)
Final Exam	8 (5.59%)	15 (10.49%)	19 (13.29%)	7 (4.90%)	10 (6.99%)	1 (0.70%)

Note. These writing assignment scores were out 143 students.

This table compares the students' ability to meet essay writing skills between essay 1 (E1), the team project (TP), and the final exam (FE). There were nine brackets in which a student could have a score displayed: 50 or below, 51-60, 61-70, 71-75, 76-80, 81-85, 86-90, 91-95, and 96-100. When a student did not complete of the assignments in the selected comparison, I marked not applicable (N/A).

Table 2.

Comparison of all students' ability to meet essay writing skills between essay 1 (E1), the team project (TP), and the final exam (FE)

Progression	E1 to TP		E1 to FE		TP to FE	
Plus 7 brackets	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Plus 6 brackets	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%
Plus 5 brackets	5	3%	3	2%	0	0%
Plus 4 brackets	10	7%	7	5%	3	2%
Plus 3 brackets	13	10%	11	8%	1	1%
Plus 2 brackets	15	10%	5	3%	10	7%
Plus 1 brackets	15	10%	12	8%	3	2%
Minus 1 bracket	5	3%	7	5%	12	8%
Minus 2 brackets	3	2%	0	0%	12	8%
Minus 3 brackets	0	0%	0	0%	7	5%
No difference	13	10%	20	14%	19	13%
N/A	60	42%	76	53%	76	53%
Total Students	143	99%	143	99%	143	99%

Table 3.

Comparison of students, which completed at least two essay assignments and/or assessments, and their ability to meet essay writing skills between essay 1 (E1), the team project (TP), and the final exam (FE)

Progression	E1 to TP		E1 to FE		TP to FE	
Plus 7 brackets	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Plus 6 brackets	2	2%	2	3%	0	0%
Plus 5 brackets	5	6%	3	4%	0	0%
Plus 4 brackets	10	12%	7	10%	3	4%
Plus 3 brackets	13	16%	11	16%	1	1%
Plus 2 brackets	15	18%	5	7%	10	15%
Plus 1 brackets	15	18%	12	18%	3	4%
Minus 1 bracket	5	6%	7	10%	12	18%
Minus 2 brackets	3	4%	0	0%	12	18%
Minus 3 brackets	0	0%	0	0%	7	10%
No difference	13	16%	20	30%	19	28%
Total Students	83	100%	67	98%	67	98%

When I analyzed specific students' progress, the difference between the team project and the final exam was clearer. Out of the 88 students that completed the team project, 30 of them scored +/- 5 points from their team project score.

Additionally, 30 of these students scored the same score as the team project or higher on the timed assessment. Therefore, 55% (44 students) of students that completed the team project performed just as well on the team project or better on the timed assessment.

Student work that met criteria to be compared

Of the 143 students in my composition class, 85 students met the criteria for having their writing development analyzed more closely. These pupils had completed at least two out of three essays: Essay 1, Team Project Essay, and/or the

Final Exam Assessment Essay. Learners were given the topics and instructions for every assignment during the first week of class, in English and Korean. Essay 1 was administered between April 1 and April 8, 2013. The Team Project Essay was open for submissions between May 29 and June 12. Thirty-six teams were created on May 8, 2013. All teams possessed four members except for two teams, which had three members each. On May 8, students were able to begin communicating with their team members regarding their team project essays. On June 22, the final exam was administered online from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Out of the 83 students that completed the final exam, 11 students did not submit the exam before the access closed at 11:40 am. Two of the 11 students chose to retake the exam the following day with a different essay topic. Those that did not expressly choose to take the alternative exam were given penalties. Five students were penalized because they submitted the final exam more than an hour after it was due or posted it on the online board where there was no time stamp; their essays were not graded or included in this research project. Four students had 12% deducted off their personal grades, but their essay scores were not altered in the results of this project due to their actual grade reduction.

Paragraph 1 and 2

Table 4.

Evaluation of Paragraph 1, Embarrassing Moment, Over 10 Skill Areas

Measure and variable	1 Agree	2 Mostly Agree	3 Somewhat Agree	4 Mostly Disagree
Topic/Task	19 (30.16%)	8 (12.70%)	14 (22.22%)	22 (34.92%)
One main idea	34 (53.97%)	13 (20.63%)	11 (17.46%)	5 (7.94%)
Topic sentence	29 (46.03%)	16 (25.40%)	7 (11.11%)	11 (17.46%)
3+supporting sentences	42 (66.67%)	8 (12.70%)	10 (15.87%)	3 (4.76%)
Concluding sentence	18 (28.57%)	13 (20.63%)	13 (20.63%)	19 (30.16%)
5-8 sentences	54 (85.71%)	2 (3.17%)	5 (7.94%)	2 (3.17%)
Sentence variety	18 (28.57%)	23 (36.51%)	18 (28.57%)	4 (6.35%)
Grammar/formatting	2 (3.17%)	18 (28.57%)	23 (36.51%)	20 (31.75%)
Basic/intermediate vocabulary	21 (33.33%)	33 (52.38%)	8 (12.70%)	1 (1.59%)
Low Redundancy	24 (38.10%)	12 (19.05%)	17 (26.98%)	10 (15.87%)

Note: Sixty-three students completed paragraph one.

Table 5.

Evaluation of Paragraph 2, Education in Korea, Over 10 Skill Areas

Skills	Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree
Topic/Task	70 (94.59%)	2 (2.70%)	2 (2.70%)	0 (0.00%)
One main idea	61 (82.43%)	8 (10.81%)	3 (4.05%)	2 (2.70%)
Topic sentence	38 (51.35%)	17 (22.97%)	10 (13.51%)	9 (12.16%)
3+supporting sentences	53 (71.62%)	9 (12.16%)	9 (12.16%)	3 (4.05%)
Concluding sentence	20 (27.03%)	13 (17.57%)	14 (18.92%)	27 (36.49%)
5-8 sentences	65 (87.84%)	1 (1.35%)	4 (5.41%)	4 (5.41%)
Sentence variety	11 (14.86%)	29 (39.19%)	26 (35.14%)	8 (10.81%)
grammar/formatting	3 (4.05%)	18 (24.32%)	17 (22.97%)	36 (48.65%)
Basic/intermediate vocabulary	70 (94.59%)	3 (4.05%)	1 (1.35%)	0 (0.00%)
Low Redundancy	23 (31.08%)	4 (5.41%)	33 (44.59%)	14 (18.92%)

Note: Seventy-four students completed the second paragraph.

Table 1.

Evaluation of Essay 1, Book Review, Over 20 Skill Areas

Skills	Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree
Topic/Task	37 (45.12%)	8 (9.76%)	33 (40.24%)	4 (4.88%)
Has major essay components	49 (59.76%)	6 (7.32%)	2 (2.44%)	25 (30.49%)
Essay components are separate	46 (56.10%)	7 (8.54%)	5 (6.10%)	24 (29.27%)
Intro: Thesis statement	5 (6.10%)	7 (8.54%)	7 (8.54%)	63 (76.83%)
Intro: Background information	20 (24.39%)	17 (20.73%)	15 (18.29%)	30 (36.59%)
Intro: interesting first sentence	11 (13.41%)	11 (13.41%)	26 (31.71%)	34 (41.46%)
Intro: Main idea of essay	9 (10.98%)	13 (15.85%)	33 (40.24%)	27 (32.93%)
Intro: 3-6 sentence	37 (45.12%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (2.44%)	43 (52.44%)
Each BP has one Main idea	32 (39.02%)	23 (28.05%)	25 (30.49%)	2 (2.44%)
Each BP has topic sentence	24 (29.27%)	24 (29.27%)	27 (32.93%)	7 (8.54%)

Table 6 (continued).

Skills	Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree
Each BP has 3+ supporting sentence	17 (20.73%)	19 (23.17%)	31 (37.80%)	15 (18.29%)
Each BP has a concluding sentence	19 (23.17%)	16 (19.51%)	28 (34.15%)	19 (23.17%)
Each BP has 5-8 sentences	45 (54.88%)	2 (2.44%)	9 (10.98%)	26 (31.71%)
CP: main idea restated	10 (12.20%)	9 (10.98%)	29 (35.37%)	34 (41.46%)
CP: interesting Concluding sentence	7 (8.54%)	9 (10.98%)	31 (37.80%)	35 (42.68%)
CP: 3-6 Sentences	26 (31.71%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (3.66%)	53 (64.63%)
Sentence variety	11 (13.41%)	59 (71.95%)	8 (9.76%)	4 (4.88%)
Grammar/Formatting	6 (7.32%)	51 (62.20%)	14 (17.07%)	11 (13.41%)
Basic/intermediate vocabulary	72 (87.80%)	9 (10.98%)	1 (1.22%)	0 (0.00%)
Low redundancy	56 (68.29%)	8 (9.76%)	14 (17.07%)	4 (4.88%)

Note: Eighty-two students completed the first essay.

Team Project: Each team member chose one topic of seven given social, cultural, or political topic

Table 7.

Evaluation of Team Project Essays That Were Peer Evaluated First

Skills	Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree
Topic/Task	51 (63.75%)	5 (6.25%)	23 (28.75%)	1 (1.25%)
Has major essay components	71 (88.75%)	1 (1.25%)	1 (1.25%)	7 (8.75%)
Essay components are separate	69 (86.25%)	2 (2.50%)	2 (2.50%)	7 (8.75%)
Intro: Thesis statement	21 (26.25%)	27 (33.75%)	17 (21.25%)	15 (18.75%)
Intro: Background information	53 (66.25%)	13 (16.25%)	4 (5.00%)	10 (12.50%)
Intro: interesting first sentence	38 (47.50%)	22 (27.50%)	9 (11.25%)	11 (13.75%)
Intro: Main idea of essay	36 (45.00%)	23 (28.75%)	11 (13.75%)	10 (12.50%)
Intro: 3-6 sentence	57 (71.25%)	2 (2.50%)	1 (1.25%)	20 (25.00%)
Each BP has one main idea	55 (68.75%)	16 (20.00%)	9 (11.25%)	0 (0.00%)
Each BP has topic sentence	36 (45.00%)	24 (30.00%)	19 (23.75%)	1 (1.25%)
Each BP has 3+ supporting sentence	26 (32.50%)	21 (26.25%)	24 (30.00%)	9 (11.25%)
Each BP has a concluding sentence	19 (23.75%)	13 (16.25%)	24 (30.00%)	24 (30.00%)
Each BP has 5-8 sentences	41 (51.25%)	5 (6.25%)	13 (16.25%)	21 (26.25%)

Table 7 (continued).

Skills	Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree
CP: main idea restated	29 (36.25%)	23 (28.75%)	14 (17.50%)	14 (17.50%)
CP: interesting concluding sentence	18 (22.50%)	36 (45.00%)	13 (16.25%)	13 (16.25%)
CP: 3-6 Sentences	54 (67.50%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.25%)	25 (31.25%)
Sentence variety	6 (7.50%)	74 (92.50%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Grammar/Formatting	10 (12.50%)	27 (33.75%)	29 (36.25%)	14 (17.50%)
Basic/intermediate vocabulary	79 (98.75%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.25%)
Low redundancy	56 (70.00%)	10 (12.50%)	13 (16.25%)	1 (1.25%)

Note: Eighty students completed the team project essays

Ninety minute timed five-paragraph essay: Each student chose one topic of two given social/cultural/political topics.

Table 8.

Evaluation of Ninety Minute Five-Paragraph Essay with Topics Students Had Not Practiced in Course

Skills	Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree
Topic/Task	38 (55.88%)	11 (16.18%)	17 (25.00%)	2 (2.94%)
Has major essay components	60 (88.24%)	1 (1.47%)	3 (4.41%)	4 (5.88%)
Essay components are separate	59 (86.76%)	2 (2.94%)	1 (1.47%)	6 (8.82%)
Intro: Thesis statement	11 (16.18%)	27 (39.71%)	22 (32.35%)	8 (11.76%)
Intro: Background information	45 (66.18%)	14 (20.59%)	3 (4.41%)	6 (8.82%)
Intro: interesting first sentence	33 (48.53%)	25 (36.76%)	6 (8.82%)	4 (5.88%)
Intro: Main idea of essay	17 (25.00%)	33 (48.53%)	14 (20.59%)	4 (5.88%)
Intro: 3-6 sentence	52 (76.47%)	5 (7.35%)	1 (1.47%)	10 (14.71%)
Each BP has one main idea	43 (63.24%)	18 (26.47%)	6 (8.82%)	1 (1.47%)
Each BP has topic sentence	26 (38.24%)	30 (44.12%)	11 (16.18%)	1 (1.47%)

Table 8 (continued).

Skills	Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree
Each BP has 3+ supporting sentence	14 (20.59%)	22 (32.35%)	17 (25.00%)	15 (22.06%)
Each BP has a concluding sentence	11 (16.18%)	13 (19.12%)	19 (27.94%)	25 (36.76%)
Each BP has 5-8 sentences	25 (36.76%)	5 (7.35%)	11 (16.18%)	27 (39.71%)
CP: main idea restated	16 (23.53%)	23 (33.82%)	16 (23.53%)	13 (19.12%)
CP: interesting concluding sentence	12 (17.65%)	35 (51.47%)	6 (8.82%)	15 (22.06%)
CP: 3-6 Sentences	48 (70.59%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.47%)	19 (27.94%)
Sentence variety	9 (13.24%)	56 (82.35%)	3 (4.41%)	0 (0.00%)
Grammar and formatting	4 (5.88%)	12 (17.65%)	19 (27.94%)	33 (48.53%)
Basic/intermediate Vocabulary	67 (98.53%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.47%)	0 (0.00%)
Low redundancy	44 (64.71%)	10 (14.71%)	11 (16.18%)	3 (4.41%)

Note: There were sixty-eight students that completed the timed final exam assessment. It is important to note that students were given topics that had not been previously used in class for the timed assessment.

Resubmission of Assignments for a higher grade

Table 9.

Resubmission of Assignments for a Higher Grade

Assignment	Date Given	Deadline to resubmit	N of resubmissions	Resubmission % out of 143 students
Paragraph 1	March 11, 2013	April 14, 2013	19	13%
Paragraph 2	March 18, 2013	June 5, 2013	24	17%
Essay 1	April 8, 2013	June 17, 2013	18	13%

Only 50% of the students that resubmitted the first essay received less than 71 on their first submission of the assignment.

Written Interview

Out of 143 students, 82 students participated in the written interview. They gave their student ID numbers so that I could better understand how their circumstances affected the progress in writing development. I have written case studies about the students that completed the written interview, including observations on their progress and development in writing. Students were asked to submit signed waivers for using their written work in research that may be published. Therefore, 44 case studies from this project can be found online at jeffersonresearch.org.

Table 10.

Overview of Students Deciding to Complete Written Interviews and Research Waivers

Decisions	Students	%/143 (total active students)	%/82 (total students that completed interview)
Completed written interview	82	57%	N/A
Signed research release/waiver	44	31%	54%
Requested to have identity revealed in published research	24	17%	29%

Demographics at a Glance (self-reported on survey out of 82 students)

Table 11.

Significant Factors Reported in Demographics

Demographics	Major Factor	Percentage	Factor 2	Percentage
Gender	Female	68%	Male	32%
Country Residence	Korea	89%	Other	11%
Ethnicity	Korean	98%	Other	2%
Native Language	Korean	100%	Other	0%

Table 12.

The amount of year's students had learned English writing

Students	Less than 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	More than 4 years
Percentage	44%	35%	6%	5%	4%	6%

Note. Eighty-two students reported how long many years experience they had with English writing.

Table 13.

Amount of Years Students Had Been taught English Writing by a Native English Speaker

Students	Less than 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	More than 4 years
Percentage	65%	26%	4%	1%	1%	4%

Note. Eighty-two students reported how long many years experience they had with English writing.

Table 14.

Amount of Years Students Had Practiced Writing Five-Paragraph Essays in a Classroom

Environment (Online or Offline)

Students	Less than 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	More than 4 years
Percentage	74%	21%	0%	2%	1%	4%

Note. Eighty-two students reported how long many years experience they had with English writing.

Out of the 82 students that completed the written interview, 27 of them took one or both of my composition classes the previous semester. One student took both of my writing classes during the last semester. The class that focused on writing reviews and summaries did not have a team project. Neither of the classes from the fall semester had skill-focused rubrics nor outlines, but all other aspects of the classes were the same as my writing class in Spring 2013.

Table 15.

Students Compared How Much They Learned This Semester to Last Semester if They Took One of My Composition Classes

My Classes Fall 2012	Learned more last semester	Learned more this semester	Learned the same	Did not learn in either semester
1. Focused on writing reviews and summaries	0	21	2	4
2. Focused on writing business letters	0	0	2*	0
3. Out of 27 students	0	21	3	4

Note. *One student took both of my writing classes last semester.

Student Positive Opinions on Skill-Focused Rubrics

Table 16.

Students' Opinions on Skill Focused Rubrics

Students	Rubrics were easy or not difficult to use for peer editing	Helped improve their writing more than expected or greatly	Essay rubric helped improve their writing more	Both paragraph and essay rubrics helped improve their writing the same
Percentage *	78%	56%	43%	39%

Note. Eighty-two students completed this question.

Overall, 89% of the students that completed the interview indicated that they would want to use the rubrics to improve their writing in the future.

Students' opinions on selected factors that helped improve their writing

Students were able to choose all factors that they felt applied to improving their writing development.

Table 17.

Students' Opinions on Factors in the Course that Improved Their Writing

Students	Professor's Feedback	Essay Rubric	Paragraph Rubric	Practicing Paragraph writing first
Count	60	36	24	36

Table 17 (continued).

Students	Evaluating classmates essay	Knowing there was a timed final exam	None of these	Other
Count	11	15	1	2

More students stated that the professor's feedback (66%) helped them most and that evaluating their peers' work (39%) helped them least.

Confidence in Writing

The university provides Korean-speaking tutors for all courses; therefore, many students tend to write questions and comments in Korean on the boards and through email. However, 61% of the interviewees claimed that they wrote questions in English in most courses at the university, 20% claimed that wrote questions in Korean, and 20% claimed that they wrote equally in both languages. Students were required to post questions in English or English/Korean on the boards to avoid losing points by writing in Korean only. At the same time, they received extra points for posting their writing in English. The extra-credit points were based on the quality of their writing.

Table 18.

Fear about Posting Questions on the Boards in English

Students	Not Afraid	Somewhat Afraid	Very Afraid
Percentage of students out 82 students	20%	38%	43%

**Motivating factors for writing emails and board postings in English with ‘5’
signifying the strongest motivating factor at the beginning of course**

Table 19.
Students’ Ranking of Motivating Factors for Publishing English on Public Boards and Emailing
Before the Midterm

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Responses
1. It was a requirement	10 (12.35%)	6 (7.41%)	15 (18.52%)	14 (17.28%)	36 (44.44%)	81
2. Points would be lost if post was in Korean only	18 (22.50%)	14 (17.50%)	10 (12.50%)	15 (18.75%)	23 (28.75%)	80
3. Extra credit points for writing in English	4 (5.13%)	10 (12.82%)	17 (21.79%)	21 (26.92%)	26 (33.33%)	78
4. Confident about writing in English	27 (34.18%)	17 (21.52%)	15 (18.99%)	9 (11.39%)	11 (13.92%)	79
5. Glad to practice practical English	10 (12.66%)	14 (17.72%)	18 (22.78%)	17 (21.52%)	20 (25.32%)	79

**Motivating factors for writing emails and board postings in English with ‘5’
signifying the strongest motivating factor after the midterm**

Table 20.

*Students’ Ranking of Motivating Factors for Publishing English on Public Boards and Emailing
After the Midterm*

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Responses
1. It was a requirement	5 (6.17%)	14 (17.28%)	17 (20.99%)	11 (13.58%)	34 (41.98%)	81
2. I would lose points if I wrote in Korean only	15 (18.99%)	16 (20.25%)	14 (17.72%)	10 (12.66%)	24 (30.38%)	79
3. I received extra credit points for writing in English	5 (6.25%)	11 (13.75%)	24 (30.00%)	13 (16.25%)	27 (33.75%)	80
4. I was confident about writing in English	19 (24.05%)	18 (22.78%)	15 (18.99%)	15 (18.99%)	12 (15.19%)	79
5. I was glad to practice practical English	10 (12.66%)	16 (20.25%)	16 (20.25%)	17 (21.52%)	20 (25.32%)	79

**Elements that increased confidence and competence in the course with ‘5’ signifying
the strongest element**

Table 21.

*Students’ Opinions on How Much Certain Elements Affected Their Confidence and Competence
in Writing*

Elements	5	4	3	2	1
1. Writing emails and posting questions in English about the class and assignments	22 (26.8(3%))	21 (25.61%)	24 (29.27%)	7 (8.54%)	8 (9.76%)
2. Receiving specific written feedback on my composition assignments	49 (59.76%)	17 (20.73%)	13 (15.85%)	2 (2.44%)	1 (1.22%)
3. Receiving a detailed rubric on my composition assignments	38 (46.34%)	19 (23.17%)	16 (19.51%)	8 (9.76%)	1 (1.22%)
4. Participating in a team project where we helped each other write the best essays for submission	15 (18.29 %)	18 (21.95%)	19 (23.17%)	16 (19.51%)	14 (17.07%)
5. Having the opportunity to receive 3% extra credit points if my team produced essays with each score being 90% or above	13 (15.85%)	12 (14.63%)	23 (28.05%)	16 (19.51%)	18 (21.95%)
6. Being able to revise my assignments for a higher grade after Receiving the professor’s feedback	35 (42.68%)	20 (24.39%)	14 (17.07%)	7 (8.54%)	6 (7.32%)
7. Knowing that improving my writing in this class was important to passing the timed composition final exam	22 (26.83%)	24 (29.27%)	22 (26.83%)	7 (8.54%)	7 (8.54%)

Note. Eighty-two students answered this question.

Ability to understand the feedback and rubric

While the instructions were often written in English and Korean, the feedback on writing assignments and the rubrics were in English only. The students did not receive a bilingual rubric until after they began their team projects, which was after the first three assignments and one month before the final exam.

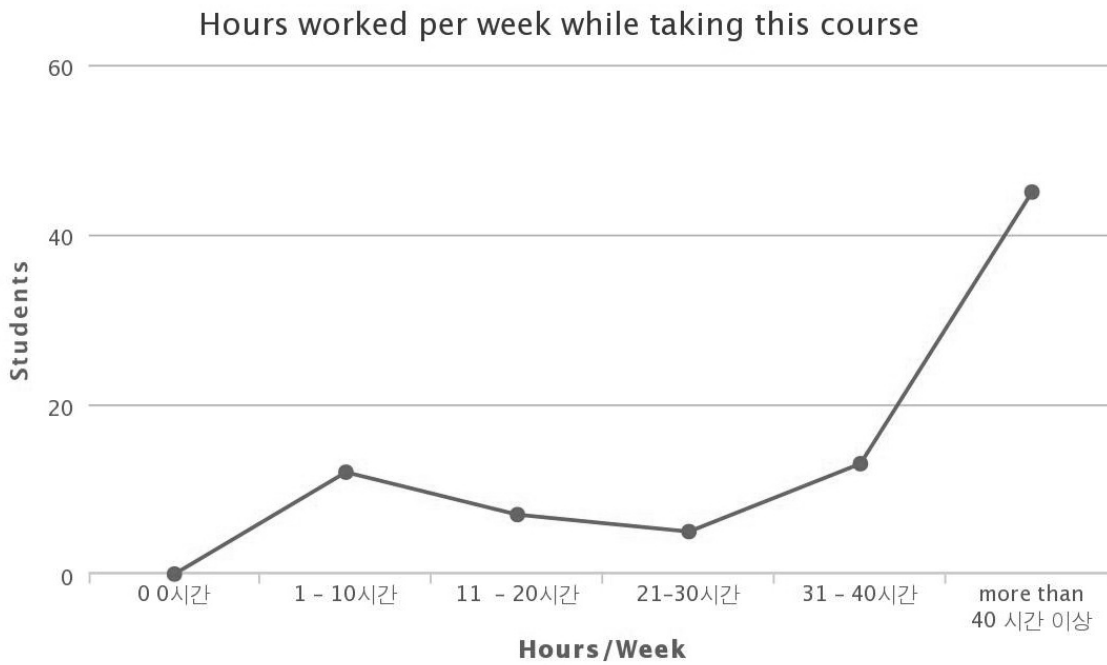
Table 22.

Students' Ability to Understand the Feedback

Students	Did not understand and did not ask for help	Mostly asked a Korean speaker for help	Understood the majority without help from Korean speaker
Percentage of students out of 82 students	20%	33%	48%

Factors that Were a Challenge to Students Completing Assignments and Progressing in Writing Development

Figure 1. Students' Working Hours



Out of the 82 students that took the survey, 77% of them worked more than 20 hours per week while taking this course. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of these students (55% or them) reported that they worked more than 40 hours per week.

Classes taken concurrently

The majority of the classes were worth three credits.

Table 23.

Amount of Classes Students Took During the Semester with the Composition Class

Students	Less than 4 class	4 classes	5 classes	6 or More classes
Percentage	1%	15%	31%	54%

Note. Eighty-two students answered this question

Delayed feedback

The data for this section was better explained in the discussion section due to the necessity to include much background information.

Discussion

Overall student performance

In general, students made significant gains in essay writing development from the first essay to their performance on the team project. As seen in Tables 1 & 2, 42% of 143 composition students scored below 71 on their first essay while only 32% of the students scored between 71 and 100. However, only 11% of students received marks below 71 on the team project essay while 51% scored between 71-100. Their success seemed to be due to multiple factors, as students reported in

their written interviews and as I determined by reviewing their work. While students have declared that my feedback was the most helpful in their writing development, students also indicated that using the JEERA and practicing paragraph development were both major parts of increasing their proficiency in writing academic essays. However, the effect of the team project on their writing progression is puzzling.

When I compared the students' feelings towards the team project and their ability to revise assignments with their incredible increase in applying essay writing skills after mostly failing at the first essay assignment, the data did not correlate properly. As displayed in Table 21, pupils did not overwhelmingly point to working on the team project as a significant factor in their writing development, like the other factors that I presented; instead, they selected each number from 1-5 almost equally. Learners gave much more favorable scores to having permission to revise and resubmit their assignments for a higher grade; yet, less than 18% of the entire class chose to resubmit their assignments. When I examined the data, only 3.5% of the students that made progress from a grade below 71 on the first assignment and had resubmitted the assignment were actually a part of the 51% of the learners that scored between 71-100 on the team project. Therefore, the 19% gain of students achieving scores between 71-100, from below 71 on the first essay, only minimally resulted from resubmitting the first essays. As discussed in the Environmental Challenges section, these students had extraordinary environmental challenges in completing assignments and having time to study, so I assume the negative feelings towards the team project was due to students' heavy schedules. However, it appears

the team project helped many learners be more successful in the process of writing and in retaining writing skills applicable to other essays topics under pressure. The data shows that 55% of the students that completed the team project did about the same or better on the timed essay assessment. Therefore, the team project was likely inconvenient for students, but assisted greatly with their writing maturation.

Development at paragraph level

The given topics for the paragraphs supported students' movement from introspection to discussing social issues in a broader context, but I did observe challenges in their ability to properly use particular elements of the paragraph during the transition. For the first paragraph, the topic prompted students to write about an embarrassing moment that occurred to them or someone else, while the second paragraph asked for responses on education in Korea. The first paragraph assignment gave a structure to follow for a paragraph, a topic that the student could write about in first person, and required a brainstorming activity. Of ten areas identified for paragraphs, students earned the lowest scores in three areas: 1) ability to write on the given topic and complete the task as instructed, 2) ability to write a concluding sentence, and 3) use of correct writing format and grammar. However, the second paragraph required the same elements, except the students were required to write in third person.

For the assignment to write about education in Korea, the majority of the students were able to stay on topic and complete the task correctly, yet their ability to write concluding sentences, use the appropriate writing format and grammar, and reduce word redundancy decreased significantly with the shift to writing in the

3rd person format as compared to the narrative format. It appeared that students had more practice with writing in a narrative format, so they initially achieved more success writing in that form. With the struggle of writing about a social/cultural topic in general, students appeared to find it more difficult to use proper grammar, formatting, and varied word use. To me, it seemed two things largely affected these students' grammar and formatting proficiency in the second paragraph: 1) the social/cultural topic required more advanced writing skills, so students tended to make more errors with run-ons, comma splices, and confusing sentences than when they wrote a story, and 2) students had not yet been introduced to how to easily use a thesaurus to reduce redundancy. As students wrote longer compositions, their grammar, formatting and word choice improved.

Even though students were able master many of the issues they had encountered at the paragraph level, students had two major problems that were not previous issues when they wrote the first paragraph. First, learners were inconsistent in writing a topic sentence for each paragraph. Second, students had underdeveloped paragraphs. In the first paragraph, most of the students had a topic sentence and at least three supporting sentences. Only including a concluding sentence was a challenge. In the second assignment, however, students now struggled with each part of a paragraph.

In addition to having paragraph level problems with the essay assignment, students seemed unable to produce five paragraphs. Since my students had varying levels of skills and were able to self-select courses without a placement test, I desired to assess their ability to write a five-paragraph essay using only instruction

on how to write a paragraph. While instructions were given in Korean and English, directing students to produce an introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph, I received many essays with five sentences in the format in of one paragraph or five sentences spaced to represent five paragraphs. Each of these students received EFC in the English language only. After I gave the feedback tools to learners, they were mostly able to write an actual five-paragraph essay with five minimally developed paragraphs.

Student Background in Writing

Since students self-selected their English level to take courses, it became important to try to meet students at their own levels and attempt to bring them to the goal for the class. The written interview revealed that almost half of those students had only begun to learn writing in English for less than year (Table 13). Many pupils indicated that “less than year” was equivalent to the time they were studying in my class during the semester in the comment section. For 74% of them, this was their first time to practice writing a five-paragraph essay (Table14). Therefore, this class intensively taught the skills the students needed to acquire to go from forming a paragraph to writing an academic five-paragraph essay, over the course of three months.

Motivation

Students were asked to reflect on how their motivation to post public messages and send emails in English changed before and after the midterm according to five factors (Tables 19 &20): 1) it was a class requirement, 2) points would be lost if they wrote these messages in Korean without any English

translation, 3) they would receive extra credit points according to the quantity and quality of their postings/emails, 4) they gained confidence by writing, and 5) they were glad to have the opportunity to practice English. Students singled out losing points and lack of confidence as the most demotivating factors of writing on the boards, although students gave almost equally high points to writing on the boards because it was a requirement, a way to lose points, or a means to gain extra credit. Losing points was the second least motivating factor, compared to a lack of confidence in writing. While positive feelings towards practicing English remained constant, there was a visible correlation between the other four motivational triggers. Positive feelings were accumulated for scores four and five only because factors that had a score of three were seen to be neither negative nor positive. After the midterm, more students felt encouraged to write in English because they had gained confidence while becoming less motivated to write in English in order to meet a class requirement or to influence their class grades. As discussed below, students would be more inclined to write in Korean if they were not required and rewarded for writing in English. As posting ideas and questions in English became more common, the students' confidence levels increased and made the other motivation triggers less necessary.

Confidence

Students reported gaining confidence in writing, which was validated by objective factors indicating that students had acquired self-assurance in essay writing (Table 21). Eighty percent of learners claimed that they were afraid to write on the boards in English (Table 18). Since students were fearful, implementing

different enforcers and drivers to compel them write in English was necessary. As stated above, students needed less extrinsic tools to publish their English writing after the midterm because their confidence in writing had increased (Tables 19 and 20). An indicator that students had gained confidence in writing is that 29% of those completing the written interview asked for their identity to be revealed on their writing assignments if my research was published. Thirty-three percent of the students that requested that I reveal their identity in published research were students that received a score below 71 on the first essay but had earned a 10-30 mark increase on either the team project, timed assessment, or both. Students that chose to remain anonymous performed similarly. While students that wanted to keep their identities concealed made great gains, they may not have felt brave enough to associate themselves with the work publically yet. However, it appears that one reason students indicated that they wanted their personal information disclosed on their work is because they were self-assured that they had met their writing goals. Still, 54% of the students that completed the research waiver showed varying levels of confidence and their work can be seen through case studies on jeffersonresearch.org.

There was a discrepancy between how much students stated that they wrote in English in their class and the inference I made by comparing the data in this course with my other classes. While 81% of the students claimed that they wrote mostly in English in the majority of courses at the university, they may have been confused and thought that the question regarded my composition class. I taught two other classes the same semester: one in basic listening and the other in American

culture. Those two classes contained over 300 students. I sent out mass emails to the students in my listening and American culture classes and encouraged them to write in English but less than five percent ever did. In my composition classes, I required that learners write in English. Students received both positive and negative reinforcement to help them meet the requirement. Up to three percent of composition students' total grade could be lost to writing a message in Korean without at least an English translation. At the same time, pupils could receive up to five percent on their total grade for their English postings based on the writing quality and quantity of entries. I would agree that 81% of the 82 students taking the written interview did submit public entries in English in my composition class. In fact, 42% of the 142 students in the class did receive extra credit for writing in English on the class electronic boards. Since the majority of my students in my other classes were reluctant to write in English when asked, it is unlikely that 81% of the students that took the written interview mostly wrote in English in their other classes.

Environmental Challenges

When looking at the overall student performance in my composition class, it seems fair to say that about 80 students' work would represent how the measures used in this class might compare with another educator implementing similar tools and stimulus triggers. One thing that is clear is that student writing assignment participation was almost equal from the beginning of the class to the end. Although there were 142 students that were enrolled at the end of the course, only 63 of them completed the first writing assignment and 68 pupils completed the timed final

exam. While there was an increase of almost 20 students that completed composition assignments during the middle of the course, it is obvious that a large portion of this student population did not intend to do any work from the first day of class. One reason for this is that our courses were graded on a scale system. Therefore, no student must receive a grade lower than a C+, regardless of his/her actual grade. Even if the student missed all the lectures, I could clear his/her absence and still give him/her a passing grade. In this class, only seven students were required to get a grade lower than a B. Other reasons are explained in the section below that concerns student challenges to completing work. Although there were only about 80 active participants in the class, I displayed and discussed the data using both the entire student population and the selected active learner population.

Student Workload

Perhaps the most troubling obstacle for students in completing their writing assignments was the workload they carried during the semester. I am dedicating a truncated discourse on student workload here because I write more extensively about this topic and administrator responsibility for online Bachelor degree programs in another paper. In the interview, 77% of learners reported that they worked more than 20 hours per week, while 55% of the interviewed students declared that they worked over 40 hours per week. This information would not be so significant if these pupils were enrolled in one to three classes respective to the amount of hours they worked. However, 99% of all students taking the interview were enrolled in four or more classes. What is probably even more unconscionable

is that 54% disclosed that they took six or more classes during the semester that they were enrolled in my composition class. Most classes at the university are accredited three-unit courses. When I consider the students' class load and time spent working a job, it is easy to see why students have had extraordinary difficulty completing assignments in my composition class.

Delayed Feedback

One of the challenges for students is they received feedback on assignments after the next assignment was due; delayed evaluations were a result of the amount of students I managed and my teaching assistants' limited duties. Although students were able to revise their writing assignments, some communicated that delayed feedback was a challenge in their writing development.

I managed over 450 students for the spring term in which about 150 students were from the composition class. I had two native Korean teaching assistants; one was a graduate student in Airline Management and the other had graduated from a graduate program in Elementary English Education. Their duties included translation, interpretation, and basic administrative assistance. The assistants were required by the university to respond to students within 24 hours. Students posted questions on two or more boards, emailed, sent messages through the online system, sent text messages, and called the assistants for help. One of the teaching assistants reported that students sent text messages and called well after 10 P.M. and on weekends. Teaching assistant duties did not include grading assignments or helping students with any aspect of writing. There were four reasons that I did not include grading assignments in their duties:

- 1) One of the teaching assistants revealed that she and other teaching assistants received about 250,000KRW (~\$250) per month for each class, regardless of the requirements per faculty member.
- 2) Out of the two teaching assistants, only one had advanced to fluent level English. This teaching assistant was experienced with teaching preschool and elementary writing development but not university level writing.
- 3) I needed consistency in the instruction delivery and evaluation of student work for valid research results.
- 4) The teaching assistants were assigned to me, but I did not know their specific job descriptions nor was it acceptable to evaluate them in this culture.

Ability to Understand Educator Feedback

Some students reported that they need additional help to understand my feedback on their assignments. Although 48% of the students taking the written interview declared they understood the majority of feedback and instructions without help from a Korean speaker, more than half of these students needed language assistance from someone that spoke their native language. It is important to note that the instructions for assignments were always given in English as well as the students' native language, Korean. The teaching assistants for the class provided support in both languages for pupils and me. Yet there were still 20% of these students that did not understand the feedback and refused to ask for help. There are several reasons discussed in this paper that concerns why some students did not complete assignments or attempt to seek help when it was readily available. However, the more helpful information for this discussion is related to the large

percentage of students that need language assistance to complete their composition assignments.

Research Implications from Proposed Questions

Educator ability to give consistent, more objective, and developmentally appropriate feedback

One of the largest motivators for me to develop tools that gave more reliable, objective, and developmentally appropriate feedback were the following:

- 1) I had 150+ university-level composition students per semester, so I did not have much time to labor over each paper.
- 2) When I attempted to follow other rubric models, I found that the categories were too broad for me to make quick and consistent judgments on student work.
- 3) I found that my own ideas about the topic or annoyance with certain mistakes/errors caused me to grade papers differently.
- 4) Students were able to self-select their course without prerequisites, so they came into my classes with widely different writing abilities.

The immediate effect of my tools was cutting down grading time. In the previous semester, I would spend almost 15 minutes per paper debating what the students' grades should be according to broad rubric categories. When I would look at papers later in the semester, I was not confident about why students' scores varied by as much as 15 points. When I used the Efficient Paragraph Rubric (EPR) and the Essay Rubric (EER), I was able to grade the papers in less than two minutes and was confident about why each student obtained a specific score. Additionally, I was now able to go from giving students scores in intervals of five to giving students

scores down to the ones; for example, last semester a student may receive a score of 80 or 85 depending on which category I placed a student's work on a broad rubric, whereas I was able to calculate a student's score to 83 based on his/her ability to meet specific writing skills using JEERA or JEPRA. When I considered grading a little easier on one of my favorite students, I was stopped by the fact he did not meet three specific skills well enough to earn the next grade level. One of things this student stated was that he learned more about how to improve his writing from the rubric this semester than from only having my comments the previous semester. Therefore, I was able to be fairer to students in my grading and use this more skills-focused rubric as a tool to develop my students' understanding of how they could develop their writing.

While the rubrics allowed me to grade confidently and fairly, I still needed to give specific comments to help improve student writing. Over the previous term, I had kept a list of common writing mistakes/errors in an electronic word processing format. I would simply highlight the learner's mistake/error using the "comment" function in Microsoft Word and paste the comment in the comment box. Students reported that they found it helpful to see exactly where they had made a mistake/error and having an explanation on how to fix the issue in the paper and in general. I tried to limit the in-text comments to three or less comments and the overall comments to four or less comments so that students could limit their focus to a few things that needed attention. Often the overall comments gave further instruction for consistent mistakes/errors and organizational issues. Since the students submitted their assignments to me electronically, it was easy to copy and

paste comments on each assignment. This was important since students sometimes had a difficult time reading my handwriting, nor was there enough space to provide detailed comments on physical assignments. Hence, I was able to give students more detailed comments quickly and legibly using my word processing system.

Motivation triggers and explanatory corrective feedback (ECF) that contributed most to student competence and confidence in writing development

Due to the students' workload and fear of writing publically, certain motivation triggers were crucial to encourage learners to remain active in their writing development. As explained in more detail previously, students appeared to prefer having required writing components and receiving extra credit for the quantity and quality of certain assignments (Tables 19 and 20). However, students seemed to begin transitioning from external motivational factors to internal motivational factors as they became more competent in writing. While I think removing requirements would yield less progress in most students because there are many more interesting or necessary things that compete for students' time (i.e. spending time with friends or working for a salary), other triggers such as extra credit can be minimized as students become stronger in their writing abilities. Still, the motivational factors helped students create mental space for ECF.

ECF appeared to contribute to students' competence, confidence, and growth in composition in a cross-effectual manner. While students claimed that my feedback was the most beneficial to their improvement, they likely had difficulty separating my feedback from the other forms of ECF, since all feedback and rubrics were returned to the student on his or her assignment (Table 17). When the rubric

and my comments were looked at together, students could see where they could improve in each skill area as well as receiving more specific comments on how they could improve on a few consistent or major problems. One indicator that my assumption is correct is that out of the 27 students that took my composition courses the previous semester, 78% of them felt that they learned more during this current semester (Table 15). My feedback in the previous semester was similar to the feedback in the current semester. However, the following were different: 1) in the previous semester, there was only an internal rubric that had broad categories based on broad goals; the students never saw a rubric, and 2) the students did not have a JEERA or JEPRA to help them understand particular writing issues. When I looked at their writing, I noted that students were better at meeting skills for writing body paragraphs and more fluid with expressing complex ideas in English.

I look at the JEPRA and JEERA as formulas. Similar to mathematics, students can produce more accurate and dependable results when students understand the formula. However, students were able to exceed the bounds of obtaining the correct format. They became more competent in creating paragraphs and essays that declared stronger supported opinions (case studies on jeffersonresearch.org). The class as a whole was mostly limited in their experience in English writing (Tables 12-14), as seen in the written interview and as I saw in their writing. It seems clear that the majority of students initially had trouble understanding how to write a five-paragraph essay when the course began; but later, they were able to acquire those skills quickly using ECF (Tables 1-9).

How does students' writing, using the ECF model, compare to what their English standardized test (i.e. TOEIC and TOFEL) scores would have been at each stage of their writing development in a 15-week period?

In general, it appeared that students that scored above 70 on JEERA would also have a passing score on the specific writing assessments on TOEIC and TOFEL. It was difficult for me to determine more precisely what a student's score bracket would be for standardized tests due to the tests having broad categories in which students work must fit. While the goal for each level is clear, I could not find an accessible means measuring my ECF model against standardized tests because the subjectivity of either the grader or to the training delivered by the standardized test creator could skew my hypothesis.

However, I created the JEPRA and JEERA based on reaching the two levels closest to the top the TOFEL's "Writing Skills Based on Knowledge and Experience" (ETS, 2007) and the TOIEC's "Write an Opinion Essay" (ETS, 2009). In theory, 70-79 score on the JEERA would be equivalent to fair to good outcome on the TOFEL (scores 2.5-3.5) and TOIEC (score 3). Further research needs to be conducted where students have obtained scores from TOFEL and TOEIC before and after being in a rigorous course that utilizes the EFC method.

Further Research

In addition to this current paper, there are several further aspects of this project. Another part of the project concerns surveying secondary and post-secondary educators who are teaching English Language Learners in countries where most of the students speak English, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, and Arabic as their native language about using explanatory corrective feedback (ECF). This will

give better insight into the effectiveness of ECF from an educator's perspective in both offline and online environments. I will also do a more in-depth comparison of students' writing development, using ECF in offline and online environments, that will give extensive details as prepared in this current report. As stated in the prior section, more research needs to be done that contains actual test scores from the TOFEL and TOEIC writing exams to compare the affect of EFC on these types of standardized testing models. Unexpectedly, this study revealed a major issue between pupils' ability to be successful in rigorous bachelor degree program courses where they had liberty to self-select their skill level, amount of classes, and work hours. I will address this problem in a subsequent report because it is an essential discussion to have in academia due to the speed that accredited degree programs are appearing online globally. This project in ECF writing will continue to develop as new challenges appear universally in off/online secondary and higher education environments.

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