Nurturing Interdisciplinary Competence in Academic Writing Classes: Two Taiwanese TESOL Professionals' Shared Journey

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This study delineates two Taiwanese TESOL teachers' efforts of combining English writing with entrepreneurship education to cultivate English majors' interdisciplinary competence in academic writing classes. An integrated business-and-writing approach was proposed to foster English majors' academic writing skills and entrepreneurial capacities. In this study, farming metaphors ("The two farmers," Planting the seed," "Growing the seed," and "Harvest") will be used to portray the instructors' shared journey of guiding students to complete a creative business planning project. Feedback from students reveals that students gained content knowledge about the business world, and they learned how to write a business plan. For the two instructors, their endeavors to transform English writing courses to link academic knowledge with real-world purposes have encouraged them for more cross-campus collaborations to inject new energy into higher education institutions. To conclude the paper, pedagogical recommendations are provided to foster English majors' learning of English beyond disciplinary boundaries.

Keywords: interdisciplinary competence, academic writing, entrepreneurship education, creative training

1 Introduction

In recent years, many countries around the world have witnessed a huge expansion in higher education (Hyland, 2009). In Taiwan, for example, the government's policy to transform its higher education has resulted in a drastic increase in the number of higher education institutions (HEIs) and student

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enrollment rate (Chiang, 2013). As a result of this transition from elite higher education to mass higher education, educational resources have become strained (Chou, 2015). The competition among the 160 plus HEIs on this island to fight for scarce funding is further complicated by the country's extremely low birth rate. Starting in 2013, several universities have been closed, and the government is trying to merge some public universities to reduce the total number of HEIs and better integrate resources. HEIs in Taiwan are facing a tremendous amount of pressure to survive and transform in the midst of domestic and international economic challenges.

As tertiary education has gradually become an educational norm for the younger generations, many HEIs in Taiwan has progressed to a new stage where interdisciplinary learning is highly emphasized so as to boost students' competitiveness in the domestic or international job markets. Interdisciplinary learning is a pedagogical approach by which teachers incorporate knowledge of different disciplinary studies (Pharo et al.,2012). It is often carried out by combining a content-based course and a skills-based course into curriculum, wherein students can develop their content knowledge and academic skills at the same time (e.g., Campbell, 2012; Grose-Fifer, Helmer & Zottoli, 2014). Research that examines interdisciplinary pedagogies at higher education have shown that interdisciplinary learning is beneficial for enriching students' learning of content knowledge, helping students bridge knowledge across disciplines, encouraging peer cooperation and negotiation, and developing learner autonomy (e.g., Campbell, 2012; Grose-Fifer et al.,2014).This increased attention on interdisciplinary learning has motivated many HEIs across this island nation to proffer interdisciplinary courses or programs.

To explore how interdisciplinary pedagogies can serve as a foundation for English academic writing classes in particular, in this article, we proposed an integrated business-and-writing approach, and based on this approach, a creative business-planning project was developed to foster English majors' academic writing skills and entrepreneurial capacities. Such integration was primarily inspired by the fact that, over the last few years, the Taiwanese government's pursuit for better economic growth and social development has encouraged HEIs to place a stronger emphasis on developing students' entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education now takes place in many different forms across universities. This project and its underlying framework primarily built on this growing awareness of nurturing university students' entrepreneurial capacities and innovative mindsets.

2 Literature Review

Research has found that entrepreneurship education is beneficial for developing university students' entrepreneurial qualities and skills (e.g., Bagheria & Lope Pihie, 2013; Støren, 2014). For example, Bagheriand Lope Pihie (2013) analyzed the feedback from a group of Malaysian

undergraduates on the benefits of university entrepreneurship programs. According to their analysis, entrepreneurial activities developed students' leadership characteristics and skills, and created opportunities for students to hone their entrepreneurial skills and enrich their entrepreneurial experiences. Støren's (2014) analysis of higher education graduates' comments also demonstrated that entrepreneurship education was perceived by approximately one third of the respondents to effectively improve their innovative thinking, motivate them to act proactively, facilitate their studies, and stimulate their creative abilities, albeit to different levels. Other minor advantages include helping them to obtain a job, assisting their current job performance, and supporting them to start their own business.

A review of relevant literature (e.g., Li, Yen, & Cheng, 2008)reveals that most of the scholarly discussions on the teaching of business planning have been generated by faculty members from business departments. Not much is known about how business planning can be incorporated into other academic disciplines to link students with real-world purposes and prepare them for future career development. This article reports the efforts of two Taiwanese TESOL teachers to connect their English writing courses to business planning. Their cooperation on this intercollegiate business-planning project aimed to stimulate English majors' creative thinking, develop their writing skills and business knowledge, and kindle their passion for starting their interested business in the future. Specifically, their collaboration processes will be delineated, and their reflective remarks as well as student feedback will be discussed. It is hoped that insights gained from this article will help to shed light on the incorporation of business planning to courses offered outside the realm of business education.

3 Methodology

3.1 Context of the project

This project was implemented in the spring semester of 2015 by two Taiwanese TESOL teachers who taught Sophomore English Writing in two public universities. A total of 40 English majors in the second-year divisions participated in this project. Prior to this study, all of them had successfully completed their first-year English writing courses, which suggests that they knew basic concepts of composing effective paragraphs according to different genre requirements. Like many other universities in Taiwan, these two universities place a great emphasis on entrepreneurship education in the school curricular or activities. Specifically, for nearly two decades, one of the universities (University B) has run a creativity and innovation incubation center, devoted to promoting students' entrepreneurship and assisting local industries with product creation or technological advancement. Entrepreneurship workshops also take place on campus regularly to expand

students' entrepreneurial mindsets. Likewise, the other university (University A) is also strongly committed to nurturing students' entrepreneurial capacities. In addition to a well-established innovation and incubation center, it also encompasses several departments that specifically aimed to educate creative professionals. Taken together, both universities have endeavored to consolidate the connection between disciplinary learning and entrepreneurship education.

3.2 The creative business-planning project

3.2.1 The integrated business-and-writing approach
The integrated business-and-writing approach focuses on the integration of entrepreneurship education into academic writing courses to nurture English majors' expository writing skills and understanding about the essentials of starting a small business. Primarily structured as three concentric circles of different sizes, the approach can be discussed from three dimensions— creative training, entrepreneurship education, and English writing—with the pedagogical focus moving from the innermost circle outwardly to the outermost circle (see Figure 1).

To begin with, creative training is considered as the core of the framework because it trains students to produce novel ideas effectively. At this level, instruction focuses on fostering students' divergent thinking skills, particularly ideational fluency (i.e., the ability to come up with many ideas), ideational flexibility (i.e., the ability to generate diverse types of ideas), ideational originality (i.e., the ability to think of new ideas), and ideational elaboration (i.e., the ability to delineate ideas in detail), which according to the review by Kaufman (2009) and Kaufman, Plucker and Baer (2008), are among the essential skills and representative measures of creative thinking. This creative training serves as avital cornerstone where students could step on when they generate new business ideas in the entrepreneurial education stage or creative writing ideas in the final writing stage.

At the entrepreneurship education level, the objective is to familiarize students with the essential concepts of business planning and operation. More specifically, students learn to analyze industry trends and customer preferences. Based on their analysis, they develop business ideas, select appropriate pricing and marketing strategies, and project future financial statements.

At the English writing level, the framework intends to build a logical and holistic connection between entrepreneurship education and academic writing, which allows students to hone their task-related writing skills when they learn to plan and manage small businesses. In this framework, we particularly emphasize four elements of writing: expository writing skills, rhetorical strategies, purposes of writing, and audience awareness. In other words, the approach engages students in the process of practicing multiple

expository writing skills (e.g., descriptive skills, or comparing and contrasting skills), using different rhetorical devices (e.g., metaphors and similes), and adjusting writing according to various writing purposes and reader interests.

With the three dimensions interconnected, this integrated framework hopes to develop English majors' writing skills while engaging them in the process of business creation. Based on this framework, a creative business-planning project was developed and administered on two university-level writing classes to probe how the project and its underlying framework could enrich students' learning of English writing and business knowledge.
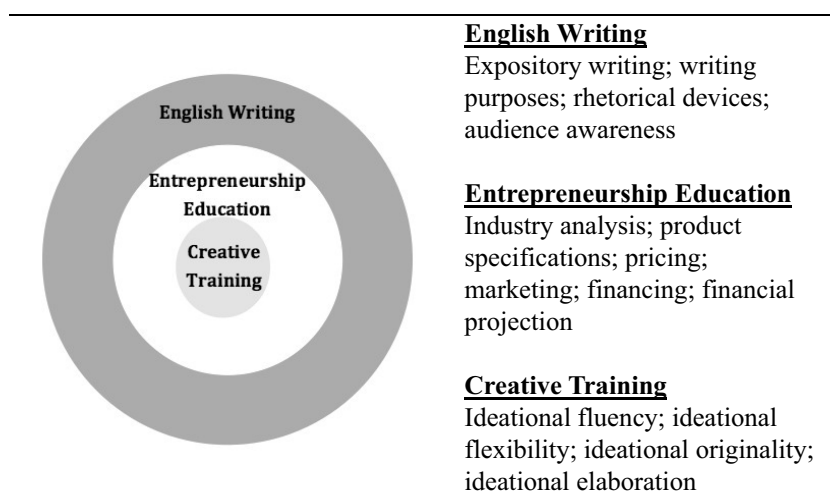

English Writing
Expository writing; writing purposes; rhetorical devices; audience awareness

Entrepreneurship Education
Industry analysis; product specifications; pricing; marketing; financing; financial projection

Creative Training
Ideational fluency; ideational flexibility; ideational originality; ideational elaboration

Figure 1. The integrated business-and-writing approach

3.2.2 Project design and implementation process
The administration of this creative business-planning project can be delineated in ten phases (see Table 1). In the first phase, ideational incubation, the instructors began the project by discussing the value of business creation and product creativity. A special inflatable bike helmet designed by a group of Swedish graduate students was presented to lead students to think about the strengths and weaknesses of the product. To emphasize the value of entrepreneurship and product creativity, a creativity task, called the clothes hanger project (see Figure 2) was further administered. This activity required all students to think about problems regarding conventional triangular clothes hangers. More importantly, it asked them to brainstorm for an innovative type of hangers that could not only address the problems but also have high value for mass production. Students presented their innovative product ideas by drawing and writing about the features of their products on a poster. While

this activity was both intriguing and challenging, it helped students realize that innovative products emerged from human needs for greater convenience and satisfaction in life. More importantly, this creativity task stimulated students' ideational fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration when they were engaged in the process of developing unique product ideas and describing their attributes in detail.
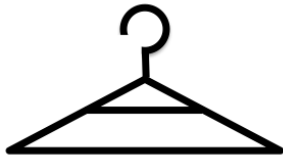
Directions: Have you ever encountered any problems when using this type of triangular clothes hangers to hang your clothing? Please discuss with your classmates the problems people may encounter when using triangular clothes hangers, and then create a unique type of hangers that can best address the problems. You can change the shape, features, size and material freely, and your ideas have to be original and practical.

Figure 2. The clothes hanger project

After the initial clothes hanger project, the creative business-planning project was officially introduced to students. Students were assigned to work in small groups to brainstorm for creative products or business service models that could solve problems they encountered in different life situations. Based on the definition of creativity proposed by Plucker, Beghetto and Dow (2004), two features for product creativity were particularly highlighted—novelty and usefulness. Students were constantly reminded that necessity was the origin of product creation; their proposed business ideas had to be original and valuable in addressing the problems and making a change to real life. Because the students might have never participated in any creative business-planning project like this before, providing a few concrete business examples would be helpful for students' incubation of business ideas. After crosschecking many resources, the instructors decided to present several businesses launched by domestic or international celebrities (e.g., Jessica Alba's The Honest Company). In so doing, they hoped to provide students with more concrete role models to facilitate their initial search for business ideas.

Students developed their business ideas with their teammates collaboratively. After each group had developed some business ideas in mind, the instructors then proceeded to the writing stage. According to their study on a variety of print materials (e.g., Zacharakis, Spinelli, & Timmons, 2011) and online resources, most business proposals contained five fundamental sections: executive summary, industry analysis and opportunities, product/service

specifications, marketing plan, and financial projection. These five components were thus designated as the core components of students' final business plans. Owing to students' lack of experience in writing business proposals, the instructors helped students develop their business plans section by section.

The writing process, which spanned from Phase 2 to 8, was divided into two sessions. Students learned to write about industry analysis and product/service specifications in the first session (Phases 2 and 3), and marketing plan, financial projection and executive summary in the second session (Phases 5 to 7). Class lectures on each of the five components encompassed both business focus and writing focus. Take writing marketing plans for example. Class lectures guided students to look into the strengths and weaknesses of common pricing strategies (e.g., premium pricing and penetration pricing), distribution channels (e.g., franchises, wholesalers, and distributors) and promotion strategies (e.g., sales promotion and advertising). Students also learned to price their products or services and decided the distribution and marketing strategies that best fit their proposed business. Another purpose of class lectures was to familiarize students with the fundamental writing principles and structures of marketing plans by leading them to analyze different writing samples.

After teachers' lectures, students had one to two weeks to compose each of the designated sections with their peers. Two rounds of peer editing took place to help the student entrepreneurs to collect feedback on their proposed business (Phases 4 and 8). Each round involved one in-class peer-editing activity and one intercollegiate peer-editing activity. To begin with, students initially perused the half-baked proposals of their classmates in the same class and commented on their business operation and writing style. As students had been paired with students from the other university, all groups also set up a Facebook or LINE group to complete the intercollegiate peer-editing task. After students drafted their proposals, they presented their business plans orally in a simulated crowd-funding campaign (Phase 9). Crowd-funding refers to a mechanism of raising fund for a project primarily launched by an individual or an institution to seek small monetary support to materialize the project (Antonenko, Lee, & Kleinheksel, 2014). When situated in a classroom setting, a simulated crowd-funding campaign, whereby students present their business ideas to request for monetary donations, could enhance their audience awareness in writing and help them stay interested and motivated in the composing process.

Similar to the earlier peer-editing activities, this crowd-funding campaign encompassed two parts—in-class financing and intercollegiate financing—both of which were conducted by using toy cash. First of all, all groups presented their business ideas in their respective class, and their presentations were videotaped. After listening to all group presentations, students were asked to decide how they would fund other groups' businesses

from an investor's perspectives. After the conclusion of this in-class crowd-funding campaign, all videotaped group presentations were displayed to the students in the other writing class the next week. Students were asked to make their investment decisions afterwards. All in all, this crowd-funding campaign allowed the student entrepreneurs to re-evaluate the feasibility and favorability of their proposed business based on the feedback they received.

The last phase of the project (Phase 10) required all students to complete an individual reflection journal on how they developed their business proposals. The instructors provided them with several guiding questions inquiring about how they generated their business ideas and how they dealt with their problems in the business creation and proposal writing process. These questions could assist students to look into their process of business creation and proposal writing in depth.

Table 1.Pedagogical Objectives for the Creative Business-planning Project

Phase	Topic	Issues discussed in each topic
1.	Ideational incubation	• Administer the clothes hanger project • Create a new product idea or service mode • Analyze the industry, potential market, target consumers, and opportunities and feasibility of the proposed business • Distinguish three types of business plans • Examples of innovative business ideas and proposals
2.	Industry analysis and opportunities	• How to analyze market structure and industry trends • Purposes and principles of writing an industry analysis • Examples of industry analysis and opportunities
3.	Product/ service specifications	• Purposes and principles of writing about product and service specifications • How to describe products, service modes and competitive strengths • Examples of product and service specifications
4.	Peer editing I	• In-class peer editing and intercollegiate peer editing
5.	Marketing plan	• Introduction to pricing strategies, distribution channels, and promotion strategies • Purposes and principles of writing a marketing plan • Examples of marketing plans

6.	Financial projections	• Introduction to income statements, balance sheets and cash flow statements • Introduction to operating expenses (e.g., facilities and equipment, payroll, utilities, and rental) • Purposes and principles of writing a financial projection • Examples of financial projections
7.	Executive summary	• Purposes and principles of writing an executive summary • Distinguish two executive summary templates: structured summary versus unstructured summary
8.	Peer editing II	• In-class peer editing and intercollegiate peer editing
9.	Crowd-funding campaign	• Proposal presentations • Crowd-funding activities
10.	Self-reflection	• Requirements on individual reflection journals • Collect students' reflection journals

3.3 Instrument

The instruments utilized for data collection can be discussed on two dimensions. On one hand, during the course of the project, the two instructors wrote teacher journals which delineated their experiences, opinions and feelings towards any aspects of the project. In addition to teacher journals, their intensive communication on social media networks (e.g., Facebook and LINE) and e-mail correspondence were also documented for analysis. On the other hand, the students were required to write a reflection journal illustrating their editing experience after each round of intercollegiate peer editing. In addition, as a summative evaluation of the project, the students handed in an end-of-course reflection journal, wherein they described their learning progress and the strengths and weaknesses of the creative business-planning project.

3.4 Data analysis

Data collected in this study were analyzed to unravel the perceptions of the two instructors and the forty English majors towards the design and implementation of the creative business-planning approach. In so doing, we would like to specifically delineate how the creative business-planning project facilitated English majors' learning of English writing and entrepreneurial capacities, and what factors might influence the implementation.

4 Results

4.1 The two farmers

As scarce attention has been paid to the issue of interdisciplinary education in academic writing classes, farming metaphors will be used throughout the article to discuss the two TESOL teachers' collaboration because they could best represent the teachers' exploratory practice of integrating entrepreneurial education into academic writing classes from the ground up. In this study, both instructors obtained their doctoral degrees in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and have worked as full-time instructors in English departments in universities in Taiwan. After a school event of visiting the hot spring industry in Taipei, one instructor, Po-han (pseudonyms will be used throughout the article when names are mentioned), told the other instructor, Li-mei, about listening to a speech by a professional trainer who specializes in business planning. At that time, Po-han was about to teach Sophomore English writing to English majors for the first time in a leading research university and wondered how he could better organize his course to link English writing with real-world purposes. On the other hand, Li-mei had been teaching Sophomore English writing for four consecutive years in a leading technological university. Prior to the administration of the current project, she was also looking for new ideas to allow her students to see that their writing had real-world purposes and audiences. They decided to initiate an intercollegiate, business-planning project in the spring semester of 2015.

The two instructors' concern for linking English writing to real-world purposes is related to the issue of how to teach writing. In his conceptual overview of writing, Hyland (2002) identifies three such approaches. The text-oriented approach views writing as "textual products" (Hyland, 2002, p.6) whose formal and structural elements are examined in various ways. One of the best examples of this approach is Swales' (1990) "Create a Research Space," or CARS, model for writing introductions in academic papers. The second approach is writer-oriented, and it focuses on the writer and the writing process. As Hyland (2002) explains, this approach concerns with "what it is that good writers do when they are confronted with a composing task, and seek to formulate the methods that will best help learners acquire these skills" (Hyland, 2002, pp. 22-23). The third approach focuses on the reader in which writing is seen as an interactive act to engage an audience, which suggests that writing is produced for an intended audience group.

The foundation for this intercollegiate business-planning project lies in parts of the writer-oriented and reader-oriented approaches—student writers from the two instructors' classes were asked to devise a business plan with their partners, write and rewrite components of their business plans, conduct in-class as well as cross-campus peer editing of their plans, and present their plans to their classmates as well as the students from the other

university. It was hoped that this project could help students "achieve a sense of agency, ownership, and emotional connection with the language they are learning" (Hanauer, 2015, pp. 83-84).

4.2 Planting the seed

Both instructors began their course planning during the winter break. They read books (e.g., Mckeown, 2014; Zacharakis et al., 2011) and searched the Internet for relevant information. During their reading, they were inspired by many studies in project-based learning that acknowledged its effect on boosting students' self-efficacy, encouraging students to use the target language for communication, and developing their language skills and research competence (e.g., Alan & Stoller, 2005; Hsu, 2014; Mak & Coniam, 2008; Mak, Coniam, &Chan, 2008; Mills, 2009; Trabelsi, 2013). Furthermore, as cross-campus studies (e.g., Chen, Shih, & Liu, 2015) were gaining popularity, they also believed that initiating an intercollegiate project based on collaborative efforts from two universities would offer many new insights for teachers and students across schools. In addition, they found that some scholars (e.g., Dai, 2010, 2012) urged English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) writing teachers to see writing as a creative enterprise and move beyond the conventional form-focused or genre-based instruction. These readings reassured the two instructors the feasibility and importance of their project.

Before the new semester began, the two instructors met in person to go over the main components they wanted students to write in their business plans. Although the instructors had reached a mutual consensus on the design and procedure of the business-planning project, the project played a different role in their respective writing classes. On one hand, Po-han's department had developed well-established writing syllabi for all required writing courses offered in the department. According to the designated syllabus for second-year writing, students should learn to write several types of expository writing (e.g., definition essay and classification essay) and use different rhetoric strategies (e.g., metaphors and similes) in their writing. With this in mind, Po-han decided to follow the department's recommended writing syllabus and integrated the business planning project on an equal footing. On the other hand, because Li-mei's department did not have any designated writing syllabi, she opted to administer the business-planning project as the primary writing task and help her students develop their writing skills during the course of composing business proposals.

4.3 Growing the seed

The new semester soon unfolded in late February, 2015. The project was announced to the classes in the two universities. Upon hearing the announcement, students had rather mixed feelings. In their end-of-semester reflection journals, the reported feelings ranged from interested/excited, worried, to confused/lost. Several students also worried that their lack of business background would be an obstacle to the completion of their projects. Like the students, the two teachers were not trained in business, but they felt that with some self-study and discussion, they should have the ability to guide their students through the process.

The lack of business training was a problem when it was time to teach students to write the section of financial projections. The results of the two instructors' personal study revealed that most standard financial projections need to include balance sheets and income statements (Zacharakis et al., 2011). After a thorough online discussion, the two instructors decided to ask their students to write a simplified financial projection which covers the essential costs of running the business and estimated sales in a period of three or five years. In one of her entries for her teacher journal, Li-mei wrote (teacher journal, 2015/4/29):

> Today, I introduced how to write the financial projections section. I made it clear to the students that since we are not accounting majors, we will not be able to produce professional balance sheets and income statements. I told them to do a simplified financial projection, but I reminded them that their numbers need to be realistic. I asked them if they know how much their parents pay for electricity every two months. Most of them shook heads.

For those students who would like to open shops or run offices, the instructors also urged them to check the leasing price of their desired destination. This search for information helped students become better aware of the ins and outs of running a business. In the final proposal, a group who proposed to manufacture a special type of facial mask to protect people from air population decided to locate their office in a small town in Taiwan to be close to their contract manufactures. This decision shows that in the process of having to make many modifications for their business plan, students have gained essential business knowledge as well as become realistic for their enterprise.

Throughout their semester-long collaboration, over 100 emails were exchanged between the two instructors, not to mention the hundreds of instant messages exchanged on daily basis. In these exchanges, the two instructors shared instructional resources, teaching ideas, and related published articles. They also shared much information about their students'

ongoing performance. As Li-mei exclaimed in one of the instant messages, this professional collaboration really became her most important source of professional development (instant message, 2015/6/2) during the course of the semester and beyond.

On the side of Po-han, it was mentioned earlier that it was his first time of teaching Sophomore English course. He also took over the course from another instructor, meaning that he did not have the bond Li-mei enjoyed with her students when the project began. Like Li-mei, he was intrigued by the idea of integrating the business-planning project into his English writing classes. Po-han was quite confident and goal-oriented at the beginning of this writing course. However, as mentioned earlier, Po-han's writing class placed an equal weight on the teaching of expository writing and business writing. Near halfway through the writing project, he started to feel that incorporating the business planning project into students' academic writing routines was a challenge for him. This is primarily because sometimes he needed to discuss two seemingly independent, unrelated writing tasks with his students during one class meeting. In one of the teacher journal entries, he wrote:

> Because our department has a recommended writing syllabus, there's designated content I'm supposed to teach to my students. Honestly, teaching business writing on a par with academic writing is exhausting. […] Every week, I discuss expository writing with my students in the first two hours and then have my students work on their business proposals in the last hour. Although my writing course is indeed informative and resourceful, sometimes I feel it lacks unity. (2015/4/8)

According to this entry, the biggest challenge Po-han faced during this project was not related to his lack of corporate knowledge or business experience, but how to align the business-planning project and students' regular academic writing activities appropriately.

4.4 Harvest

The outcomes of this intercollegiate, business-planning project can be discussed from several dimensions. One requirement of the project was that each of the six teams in Li-mei's class would be teamed up with one of the six teams in Po-han's class to conduct cross-campus peer editing. The two peer-editing sessions took place in the first and third weeks of May respectively. In the first session, students from the two schools had to comment on their partner's industry analysis and product descriptions. In the second session, the focus was on marketing plan and financial projections; for both sessions, students needed to hand in their exchange logs. An analysis

of students' first batch of logs revealed that because students were not familiar with each other, they were not quite sure how much they should comment on the ideas. Some students seemed to take a more conservative step by mainly commenting on the writing errors and organizational issues. Because some groups experienced delay in establishing contact with their partner groups from the other school, the first intercollegiate peer-editing was completed in a hurry.

Two weeks later, another cross-campus peer-editing took place. From reading students' logs, it was found that there was less awkwardness during their discussions, and ideas were exchanged in a more relaxing manner. Some of Li-mei's students also made friends with Po-han's students. One student, Ruby, wrote in her reflection journal:

> One of the University B's students chatted with us not only for this work, but also talked about her daily life and experiences. From this assignment, I make new friends. The cooperation with other schools makes the idea exchange not just limited to the same school or class. There may be so much more to learn from other people.

The same emotional bond was also evident in some of Po-han's students' reflection journals. As Josephine remarked, "The interaction with University A is a good chance to let us know how to write and also it is a good chance to let us know more outside of our own department" (reflection journal).

Some students also felt a strong sense of accomplishment upon the completion of this project, while others felt that starting their own business is not something completely impossible in their future. The experience of writing their first business plan also promoted some students in Li-mei's class to form a team to join a nation-wide student competition on creative business planning. Li-mei received information about this competition from a school e-mail and announced the news to see if any student was interested. Five students expressed their interest in writing a proposal to open a restaurant with the aboriginal theme to enter the competition. They were excited upon learning that their proposal was chosen as one of the final ten business plans to be presented on stage in mid-June. Although it turned out that they did not win the first three places, the students received many constructive comments from the judges and became quite aspirational in business planning.

In terms of students' writing development, most students from the two schools indicated that this business-planning project was beneficial in developing their writing skills and helping them write more coherently and logically. This project also enhanced students' awareness of the audience and writing purposes in the composing process. However, several students from Po-han's classuttered their concerns in their semester-end reflection journals. Specifically, one student felt that the business-planning took away precious

time for developing her expository skills while another student commented that not everyone wanted to study business in the future.

On the side of the two instructors, the journey of helping their students to complete their projects was a rewarding one. They served as each other's sounding board, and every decision was carefully made to try to maximize students' learning. Because this was the first time that the two teachers ever launched a business planning project in their English writing courses, there was always some uncertainty on how the students would react to such a large-scale project. Li-mei remarked in a later entry (2015/5/25):

> The writing part of the project is more or less over now. Overall, I think students have done a good job on initiating an innovative idea and putting together a business proposal. I hope that they like the process as much as I do. I am still a bit worried about the writing development part, since everything has been done in a group manner; I am afraid that some aspirational students may feel that they did not get enough of my "individual" attention. Some "lazy bones" also get "covered" by their more diligent students.

Li-mei's concern echoes to Alan and Stoller's (2005, p. 18) advice to integrate tasks that "require both independent and collaborative work." If the project is to be implemented again, individual work needs to be designed so that the instructor can judge each student's contribution, strengths, and weaknesses.

When the project ended, Po-han had somewhat different concern. Although Po-han enjoyed the entire process of leading students to brainstorm for business ideas and put their ideas into words, he wondered how he could better incorporate such a project into the curriculum guidelines. This reflects that, in the process of integrating business planning into courses outside the realm of business education, an essential pedagogical issue is how to best align business planning and scholarly discussion in the discipline. While engaging learners in the business-planning project can help them develop their business knowledge, a proper integral that links the project to the subject matter can better enrich learners' learning experiences.

5 Conclusion and Moving Beyond

In this study, an integrated business-and-writing approach was proposed to demonstrate how entrepreneurship education and writing training could be integrated in academic writing classes. Based on the framework, a creative business-planning project was developed and implemented on two university-level English writing classes. To the best of the authors' knowledge, the interdisciplinary project reported in this article was the first

attempt to link up entrepreneurship education and academic writing training in English writing courses to enrich English majors' interdisciplinary competence. This project has shown that interdisciplinary learning in academic writing classes is not only feasible but also invaluable in nurturing English majors' writing skills and entrepreneurship.

Data showed that the journey of guiding students to complete their business planning projects was full of challenges and excitement. This multidimensional project maximizes the benefits of project work as students actively engaged in gathering, processing, and reporting information (Alan & Stoller, 2005), writing and rewriting components of the project, and conducting peer-editing in their own class as well as with partners from the other school. Students not only gained content knowledge about the business world, but also learned how to write a business plan. Students' interest in the project was sustained because the project focused on real-world subject matter (Alan & Stoller, 2005). The project combined the learning of English writing skills with the applications of such skills to write real-world business proposals. It also helped students explore their interests and encouraged them to pursue their goals beyond the classroom. Some students have even initiated a new plan to join a national competition. The whole semester's hard work has planted the seed for entrepreneurship.

On the side of the two instructors, this business-planning project has consolidated their interest in business and passion for entrepreneurship, as well as motivating them to bring more fresh insights into their future writing classes. Even long before the semester ended, Li-mei and Po-han had decided to collaborate something similar again in the new school year. The journey depicted in this article is not simply a personal reflection on teaching, but a portrayal of how teaching practitioners in Taiwan are currently endeavoring to transform courses or school curricula to link academic knowledge with real-world purposes. Through the process of engaging in pedagogical transformation, it is hoped that new energy can be injected into HEIs and new talents be cultivated.

Although the project was situated in two English writing classes in Taiwanese universities, this interdisciplinary project and its underlying business-and-writing framework are of great value to nurturing English learners' interdisciplinary competence in other ESL/EFL countries. They can also serve as good pedagogical models for English teachers interested in injecting interdisciplinary scholarship in their English writing classes to include other disciplinary knowledge and skills, such as journalism and social science, to enhance English majors' learning within and across disciplines.

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