English Teaching, Vol. 73, No. 2, Summer 2018
DOI: 10.15858/engtea.73.2.201806.87

Mentoring New English Writing Teachers: Advice from Experienced Teachers

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Lee, Song-Eun. (2018). Mentoring new English writing teachers: Advice from experienced teachers. *English Teaching, 73*(2), 87-113.

Many instructors new to teaching English composition at the college level feel frustrated with what to teach and how to teach it. To learn about the context of support for these instructors, this small scale pilot study asked current ESL composition instructors in a large Midwestern research university to respond to a questionnaire aimed at revealing how experienced teachers give advice to new teachers. The participants included 16 experienced English composition instructors—eight teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience and eight teachers with more than five years of experience. From each open-ended question response, emerging themes were coded and counted; additional data were qualitatively analyzed. Results showed that no differences in the number of themes per response were found between the two groups; however, similarities and differences regarding the orientation and content of advice given were found. Based on what was learned from this study, the researcher discusses how experienced teachers can better mentor new L2 composition teachers.

Key words: L2 writing, writing teachers, mentoring, novice teachers, first-year English composition

1. INTRODUCTION

A number of novice teachers leave their jobs in the early stages of their careers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Glazer, 2018; Newberry & Allsop, 2017); more specifically, a third of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years due to lack of support networks in their working environments (Stanzbury & Zimmerman, 2000). The first year of teaching is critical in that teachers start to shape their identity as educators and decide to stay or leave the profession during this time period (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Liu & Xu,

2011). However, many first-year teachers are unready for "the emotional, physical, social, and psychological demands of teaching" (Babinski & Rogers, 1998, p. 285); they tend to feel helpless, isolated, strange, foreign, uncertain, and unconfident to the highest degree during the induction year (Schatz-Oppenheimer & Dvir, 2014). Multiple studies reported beginning[1] teachers' challenges: high-pressure working environments with high attrition rates (Ingersoll, 2001), encounters with low self-efficacy, and indications of ineffective teaching practices in classrooms (Benner, 2000; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Another study (Kauffman, Johnson, Kados, Liu, & Peske, 2002) suggested that novice teachers in Massachusetts struggled to prepare class content and materials even though the state had established standards and statewide assessments. These new teachers did not receive the support that they needed; they were provided with little or no guidance regarding what to teach and how to teach it.

Many new instructors teaching first-year English composition at the college level experience similar difficulties and express similar frustrations because many of them are inexperienced in teaching composition. The situation of teaching composition to L2 writers seems worse; most L2 writing is taught by underprepared and inexperienced teachers in many contexts throughout the world (Johns, 2009). Most L2 writing teachers in EFL contexts, in particular, lack knowledge of composition (Reichelt, 2009); they are not given opportunities of learning how to give feedback to student writing although it is the most essential but difficult aspect of being a writing teacher (Ferris, 2007; Lee, 2008). Therefore, it is demanded that new composition teachers are provided with appropriate ongoing education/professional development opportunities at their workplace in the form of mentoring or induction, for example. Given the assumption that beginning teachers may face the same difficulties in teaching composition that experienced teachers faced, experienced teachers can help new teachers; experienced teachers can anticipate possible challenges (e.g., heavy workload for feedback practices) and help new teachers prepare for them (McCann & Johannessen, 2008). Therefore, new teacher professional development may include observation, coaching, supervision, and advice from experienced teachers (Moir, 2004). Through mentoring programs, novice teachers can also build their own community in which they can share information on current teaching strategies that they learned from their mentors (McCann & Johannessen, 2009).

In order to find out how to better support new English composition teachers, the present study explores what advice is often provided by experienced teachers of First-year Composition for International Students (L2 writers) in a large Midwestern research university. Designing the study, the researcher hypothesized that the more experienced

[1] In this paper, novice, new, first-year, and beginning are interchangeably used to qualify teachers/instructors who have just started their teaching career; they all have the same meaning here.

composition teachers are, the more pieces of advice they provide and that more experienced teachers would give more detailed and practical advice than less experienced teachers would. Accordingly, the study also intends to investigate how the lengths of their teaching experience might influence that advice through differences and similarities of given advice by dividing teachers into two groups—less-experienced and more-experienced teachers (see section 3.2.1. The two groups). Ultimately, based on the findings, the researcher discusses how to better mentor new teachers of English L2 composition; therefore, the research questions (RQ) of the present study are articulated as follows:

1. What advice is given by experienced teachers of First-year ESL Composition to support novice teachers?
2. Do differently less-experienced and more-experienced teachers give advice to new teachers? How differently or similarly do two groups of teachers give advice to new teachers?
3. In what ways can we better mentor new teachers of English L2 composition based on the findings of the present study?

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. L2 Writing Teachers and Their Education

The field of second language writing has devoted its scholarly history to best practices in student writing; it has not emphasized preparing teachers to teach writing (Hirvela & Belcher, 2007). The L2 writing field has paid much attention during the last few decades to inquiries about contrastive rhetoric, product vs. process pedagogy, the fluency vs. accuracy debate, and error correction as well as other methodologies or strategies for students learning to write (Casanave, 2004). With an increasing influx of international students in US universities, the interest in and concerns about teaching L2 student writers has become a shared question between the fields of L2 writing and composition. In fact, the composition field has encouraged mainstream composition teachers to prepare for teaching those international student writers (Zawacki & Habib, 2014). Two decades ago, Matsuda (1999) argued for interdisciplinary cooperation between composition studies and L2 writing to encourage “division of labor” (p. 699) and effectively and efficiently assisting L2 student writers. Composition specialists have been asked to actively learn about L2 writing and writers because they could meet L2 writers in any US college composition classes these days; then, L2 writing specialists can assist for them to do so by providing presentations, workshops, or relevant literature on L2 writing. Additionally, English

teachers teaching young children in elementary schools have been urged to use "generous reading" beyond rubric-based assessment when evaluating linguistically diverse students' (English language learners') writing (Spence, Fan, Speece, & Bushaala, 2017). In other words, English teachers need to understand particular cultural and literacy background of their young L2 writers rather than to apply the same standard that they use for their L1 student writers.

Despite the need and call for this type of preparation (even supported outside the field), the L2 writing field lacks literature on teacher preparation (Hirvela & Belcher, 2007). Although second language writing has established its status as a discipline, L2 writing is relatively new and does not have the *ethos* to institute its own canons or principles for teacher education. Throughout the world, regretfully, most L2 writing teachers lack experience and knowledge/expertise for teaching composition (John, 2009). Although responding to student writing is the most important and challenging part of being a writing teacher (Ferris, 2007), most L2 writing teachers are not trained in giving feedback (Lee, 2008). In EFL contexts, in particular, teacher preparation is inadequate; many EFL teachers have not been explicitly taught composition in their educational backgrounds. That is, they lack knowledge of composition (Reichelt, 2009). Even worse, writing is not regarded and taught as an important skill or component of language use in many EFL countries such as Japan and Taiwan (Lee, 2010); Korea is no different from those countries regarding the teaching of writing. English teachers in Hong Kong perceived their writing competence as the weakest among all of their language skills (e.g., speaking, listening, reading, and writing); in fact, they received their lowest scores in writing on their governmental proficiency assessments for English teachers (Lee, 2010). Despite writing teachers' unpreparedness and inexperience, EFL writing research has largely dealt with how to assist student writers with their writing challenges; writing teacher education has not been paid explicit attention to a fault (Casanave, 2009; Hochstetler, 2007; Reichelt, 2009).

A decade ago, the L2 writing field attempted to create public and visible conversations about teacher education through a special issue of the *Journal of Second Language Writing (JSLW)*. In that issue, established teacher educators and L2 writing specialists contributed research in four important areas of writing instruction: vocabulary/grammar (Coxhead & Byrd, 2007), genre (Hyland, 2007), responding to student writing (Ferris, 2007), and assessing writing (Weigle, 2007). Since then, several additional studies have been conducted on teacher education and published in *JSLW*. That is, L2 writing teacher education is a growing area of interest in L2 writing research (Hirvela & Belcher, 2007). Lee (2010) investigated four EFL writing teachers' development at the end of an in-service writing teacher education program; three years later, she studied four EFL teachers' identity changes and formation while they were learning to teach writing (Lee, 2013). Distinct from previous studies that explored teachers' experiences, perceptions, or thought

changes about writing teacher education in general, Worden (2015) focused on how teachers developed their understanding of specific content—parallelism—as a rhetorical device in a TESL methodology course. One recent study by Junqueira and Payant (2015) examined what a novice teacher believed regarding giving feedback and how she implemented feedback in her ESL composition class; the study found discrepancies between this novice teacher's beliefs about and practices of giving written feedback. As an emerging research realm in L2 writing, teacher education studies have lacked a focus on novice teachers, in particular; therefore, future studies will likely investigate new or pre-service teachers of L2 writing and listen to their specific challenges during the early stages of their careers, which will provide helpful insight for writing teacher induction/preparation and mentoring programs.

2.2. Mentoring as Teacher Education

Teacher education or mentoring for new teachers has often been addressed in the fields of English teaching and learning as well as in general education of international academia. McCann and Johannessen (2004) studied the major concerns and frustrations that cause beginning teachers to leave the profession. They categorized them into the following themes: "relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and supervisors; workload/time management; knowledge of subject/curriculum; evaluation/grading; and autonomy/control" (p. 139). They subsequently concluded that a quality mentoring program is important; mentors and supervisors should proactively approach new teachers and listen to their difficulties, not wait for them to feel helpless. Superficial, mandatory, and burdensome mentoring programs are detrimental rather than supportive; therefore, mentors should focus on relieving discouraging workloads and on helping new teachers to establish positive relationships with school-affiliated people (McCann & Johanessen, 2004).

McNally and Martin (1998) studied a mentoring pedagogy through which experienced mentors engage new teachers in critical reflection about their teaching practice while assisting and challenging novice teachers to help them develop as teachers. They found that cooperation between experienced teachers and novice teachers provides positive effects on shaping new teachers' visions of teaching as well as on making the school a learning community in which teachers can share diverse views on pedagogy. Babinski and Rogers (1998) also examined a supportive consultation program for new teachers; they adopted Caplan's consultee-centered group consultation model in which school psychologists and counselors provide new teachers with opportunities for professional and engaging conversations with colleagues. This consultation model helps new teachers establish "self as teacher" (p. 285) and develop their professional and problem-solving

skills.

Moir and Gless (2001) emphasized investment for quality teacher induction, arguing that the first few years of teaching is critical for a teacher's career since they are likely to be overwhelmed by many responsibilities. They also suggested there is critical connection between students' achievement and the quality of teachers. The researchers addressed quality mentoring as one of the essential components of quality induction, claiming that a knowledgeable and skillful veteran teacher is more powerful than any kind of technology, well-designed curriculum, or standardized structure (Gschwend & Moir, 2007; More & Gless, 2001). Similarly, LoCasale-Crouch, Davis, Wiens, and Pianta (2012) examined the role of mentors in supporting novice teachers regarding self-efficacy, reflection, and quality. Seventy-seven novice teachers participated in their study, which revealed that teachers' perceptions of mentoring efficacy, quality, and reflection were determined by time spent with their mentor, their engagement in mentor-assisted professional development, and quality interaction with their mentor.

Finally, one current study by Schatz-Oppenheimer (2017) examined 170 experienced teachers' conceptions of mentoring by administering a questionnaire; each participating teacher was enrolled in an mentoring training course. All new teachers have to be supervised by a mentor during their first year of teaching in Israel; therefore, efforts for developing optimal mentor training courses have been made to ensure quality mentoring processes for the novice teachers. The findings of the study indicated that mentors should understand the complexity of support for new teachers, differentiate between the two jobs of mentoring and teaching, bridge theory and practice as a mentor and a teacher, and value the role of reflection in mentoring; these findings provide insight into developing professional mentor training courses.

Teacher education has been also an important issue in Korean academia and real education settings. Min and Park (2013) defines teacher education as overall activities and endeavors aimed at improving the quality of teachers' teaching. As students' communicative competence has been a focus in many areas of real life and education in Korea, English teachers' continuous growth and development as foreign language educators is in high demand; accordingly, there has been administrative support and many professional development opportunities for English teachers in Korea (Ahn, 2015). Compared to the interest in and significance of the topic of teacher education, however, not many studies have been done in the field of English education in Korea—despite more emphasis than ever before (Kim, 2006; Min & Park, 2013). According to Ahn's (2015) synthesis, studies on teacher education published in *English Teaching* for the last fifty years have focused on the following six themes: (1) teacher qualification and roles, (2) teacher induction and professional development, (3) teacher cognition and perceptions, (4) teacher identities, (5) teacher talk and classroom English, and (6) English teacher

evaluation. Among them, teacher induction and professional development studies have largely addressed situations and effects of teacher training and professional development programs and teachers' perceptions/attitudes toward the professional development activities that they participated in.

There is a call for more research on pre-service teacher education; additionally, professional development through teachers' cooperation is an area that needs to be explored by Korean scholars (Ahn, 2015). That is, mentoring by experienced teachers that requires cooperation among teachers can be another important research area. Additionally, there has been little research on new teachers in particular, that is, on their challenges and adaptation to real school settings and support or professional development for new teachers, for instance. Furthermore, most of these studies on teacher education appear to pay attention to content or subject matter knowledge rather than to pedagogical knowledge, which is also required for all teachers. New teachers tend to face difficulties regarding classroom management, juggling multiple jobs (e.g., class preparation, student guidance, school administrative work, etc.), establishing relationships with students and/or colleagues, and other pedagogical issues; therefore, it is worth exploring what difficulties new teachers encounter in the beginning of their careers and how they can be helped with their challenges. To contribute to the scholarship on teacher education and mentoring for novice teachers, the present study specifically attempts to learn about the context of support for new ESL composition instructors through the advice provided by experienced teachers.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. The Survey Questionnaire

The instrument for the study was a questionnaire (see Appendix A). It consisted of four short bio questions and seven open-ended questions; the questionnaire was distributed through Qualtrics, which is Web-based survey software. The majority of the open-ended questions asked the participants to respond as specifically as possible regarding advice they would give about several issues—"Designing class material," "Presentation of class material/content," "Classroom management," "Giving formative feedback," "Interacting with students," and "Grading"—in teaching the First-year Composition course in a large Midwestern research university. In other words, the seven open-ended questions were devised to collect qualitative data, which were first quantified and then analyzed qualitatively as well to explain the quantitative findings.

3.2. Participants

The researcher emailed the link to the anonymous questionnaire via the listserv of the graduate program to which she belongs (the Second Language Studies/English as a Second Language program within the department of English). In that e-mail, she requested that her colleagues who had ever taught international first-year composition voluntarily participate in the survey. Since the majority of the graduate students in the Second Language Studies/English as a Second Language program teach both regular (domestic) and international first-year composition during their graduate study, most of her colleagues and several continuing lecturers were regarded as potential participants for the present study. The participants' ages ranged from early twenties to early fifties the majority of the participants were graduate teaching assistants while a couple of them were continuing lecturers. Sixteen questionnaires were completed by previous or current instructors of the course and collected by the researcher.

3.2.1. The two groups

As explained earlier, the researcher presumed that more experienced composition teachers would provide more pieces of advice with more detailed and practical description than less experienced teachers would. Therefore, she intended to verify the hypothesis by dividing teachers into two groups. The 16 participants' years of experience of any kind and levels of classroom teaching experience ranged widely from 1 year to 22 years (Table 1). Their college composition teaching experience also varied from 1 year to 22 years (Table 2). The means for both categories of teaching experience were calculated as follows:

TABLE 1

Participants' Years of Classroom Teaching Experience

Participants' Responses										
Years of Teaching	1	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	11	19	22
N	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
*M*ean = 7.3 years										

TABLE 2

Participants' Years of Teaching College Composition Experience

Participants' Responses										
Years of Teaching	1	1.5	2	2.5	4	4.5	5	6	7	22
N	3	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	1	1
*M*ean = 4.6 years										

Since the researcher believed that the "experience of any kind" and "level of classroom teaching" variables would positively influence the participants' current teaching practices, years of summative teaching experience were inquired about to better understand the participants' teaching experience background. The mean for the participants' summative years of classroom teaching experience was 7.3 years, and the mean for years of teaching college composition was 4.6 years. Then, the researcher made the decision to use five years of summative teaching experience as the division point for the two groups—less-experienced teachers and more-experienced teachers. The reason for the decision is that division point (five years of summative teaching experience) also fairly divides the teachers into two groups of eight teachers according to the college composition teaching experience. Subsequently, the eight instructors who had taught for five years or fewer in classroom and for four years or fewer in college composition classroom were classified as less-experienced teachers (LET), and the other eight who had taught for more than five years in classroom and for four years or more in college composition classroom fell into the more-experienced teachers (MET) group.

3.3. Data Analysis

The participants' reported years of teaching were first examined to better understand the range and the average length of experiences; then, the means for both cases (for summative classroom teaching experience and for college composition teaching experience, more specifically) were calculated to make a distinction between less-experienced and more-experienced teachers. Additionally, all of the responses from the seven open-ended questions were read repeatedly and scrutinized to code for emerging themes (several themes emerged per each question of the survey and are shown in Table 3 through 5). Emergent themes were coded inductively in each question while additionally emerging themes were categorized into existing themes or new themes after the researcher's thorough discernment and reflection. Then, the frequencies of the specific themes were counted and discussed to indicate similarities and differences between the two teacher groups. In other words, the study quantified the collected qualitative data, first; then, additional data were analyzed qualitatively to explicate the quantitative findings.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

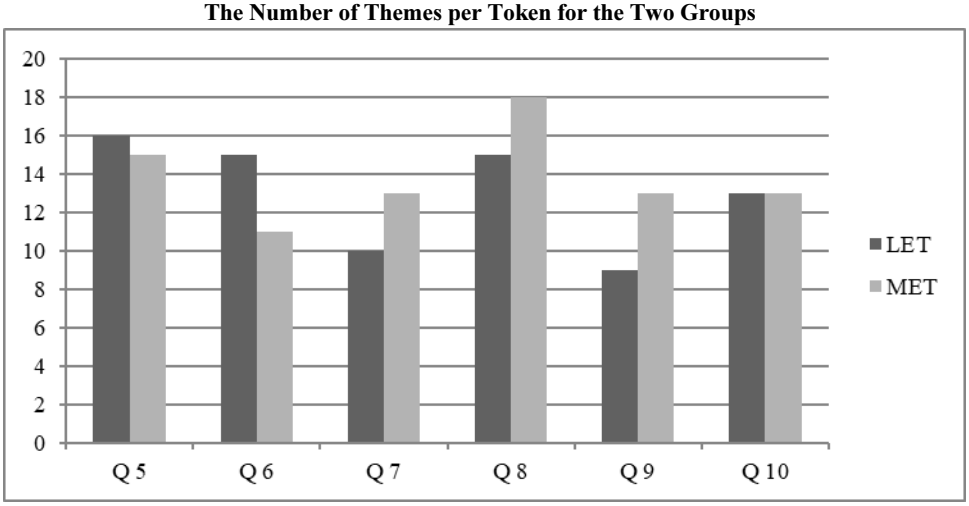
4.1. The Number of Themes per Token

Questions 5 through 10 asked the participants to provide significant and practical advice

for new instructors who would teach First-year ESL Composition in a large Midwestern research university next fall. At the beginning of the data analysis process, the emerging themes for each question were counted while they were coded; contrary to the hypothesis that the researcher posed, no differences were found between the two groups in the number of themes per token. The less-experienced teachers provided a similar variety of pieces of advice for each question as did the more-experienced teachers. The results are shown in Figure 1, below. The total number of themes from the less-experienced teachers' responses was 80, and that of the more-experienced teachers' responses was 83.

FIGURE 1

The Number of Themes per Token for the Two Groups



Note. LET: Less-experienced Teachers, MET: More-experienced Teachers

4.2. The Orientation and Content of the Advice

For the six teaching aspects addressed in the questionnaire, quantitative analysis was completed using the frequency of the emerging themes in the responses; then, qualitative analysis followed. This analysis of the orientation and content of the teachers' advice showcases what advice is often given by experienced teachers of composition (RQ 1) and how differently or similarly the two teacher groups give advice to new teachers of English L2 composition (RQ 2).

4.2.1. Designing class material

The researcher clarified what was meant by "class material" in the questionnaire; class material could have included supplementary reading handouts (example essays), group

discussion worksheets, quizzes, class/group/individual activities, etc. With respect to how to design class material, the participants in the two groups brought up many different issues with low frequency, only once or twice. Accordingly, it was difficult to detect noticeable quantitative similarities or differences between the two groups' responses. Among the various themes, however, one perceptible similar theme arose between the two groups: "relying on given resources such as OWL[2] material or former instructors/mentors" (LET: frequency 2; MET: frequency 2). Interestingly, the two teachers in the LET group who advised relying on given resources had different intentions; the teacher with four years of college composition teaching experience advised not spending much time on designing materials because there were already many available resources while the other teacher with two and a half years of college composition teaching experience advised not only asking former instructors/mentors for resources and ideas but also dedicating a specific amount of time to designing new class materials. Additionally, another interesting and distinct response from a teacher with one year of college composition teaching experience was "Do not just follow the mentor's choice" for class materials. This teacher reasoned that an instructor should follow his or her own interests and expertise when designing class materials for confident teaching.

As a result of examining all of the themes in the responses provided by the LET group, it was found that no teachers advised considering class objectives/goals and outcomes when designing class materials even though they are the fundamental factors to consider for this aspect. Only one teacher (with 11 years of classroom teaching and seven years of college composition teaching experience) in the MET group mentioned that the outcomes of the class should be considered when designing class materials.

The most interesting finding regarding this aspect was obtained from the two most-experienced teachers' (with 19 years of classroom teaching and six years of college composition teaching experience and 22 years of both classroom teaching and college composition teaching experience, respectively) responses, which were very similar. The teacher with 22 years of both teaching experience advised designing class activities in which students prepare the class material themselves rather than advising how an instructor should design class material. In other words, the participant suggested making students work for themselves. The teacher with 19 years of classroom teaching and six years of college composition teaching experience likewise advised creating small group activities that require students to produce something tangible at the end of class rather than giving a lecture about topics such as APA style or visual rhetoric, for example. Additionally, this teacher concretely described how a group activity could be administered and how a handout could be used for students to demonstrate what they learned about APA style

[2] Online Writing Lab at Purdue

through hands-on experience. It was interesting to note that the two most-experienced teachers advised very similarly when it comes to designing class materials in that they suggest students learn by doing.

4.2.2. Presentation of class material/content

Presentation of class material/content was exemplified in the questionnaire through the following examples: using visual aids (PowerPoint, videos, pictures, mind-mapping, etc.), showing examples/illustrations, explaining/approaching new concepts, using textbooks, etc. Regarding how to present class material/content, a noticeable similarity and a difference in the advice provided by the two groups were found. Both groups advised using visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations, pictures, videos, or mind-mapping, at the highest frequency (LET: 4, MET: 3) among the emerging themes, as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Theme Frequency from Two Teacher Groups' Q6 Responses

Themes	Emerging themes		Number of Frequency	
			LET	MET
Theme 1	Use visual aids (PPT, video, mind-mapping, etc.)		4	3
Theme 2	Technology	Use multimedia technology (Blackboard or Drupal site)	2	0
		Focus on content, not on new technology; use comfortable technology	0	2
Theme 3	Use a variety of formats		1	1
Theme 4	Rely on given sources like OWL & former instructors		2	0
Theme 5	Check students' understanding		2	0
Theme 6	Use students' work as examples		1	0
Theme 7	Class discussion		2	0
Theme 8	Consider relevance		1	0
Theme 9	Be simple		0	1
Theme 10	Imagine how class is going and plan properly in advance		0	2
Theme 11	Incorporate students' active participation (pair/group activities)		0	3

Less-experienced teachers mainly mentioned the technical aspects of presentations, such as useful technologies and forms for presentations; however, more-experienced teachers advised beyond the technical aspects by suggesting how to integrate students' participation into the presentation (at the same high frequency of 3 as the theme 1) and advising that teachers imagine how the presentation will go given the students' learning traits before class and plan properly ahead of time (at the frequency of 2).

Even though the LETs brought up "class discussion" (frequency 2) and "checking students' understanding by asking questions" (frequency 2), which might include students' participation to some extent, they did not deal with these themes as specifically and

predominantly as did the METs; they briefly mentioned these two themes as forms of presentations. Contrary to the LETs, the METs who suggested "incorporating students into the presentation" dealt with this theme as the only item for this token and provided detailed guidance with concrete examples of specific activities and visual materials that they have used to actively engage students in presentations. One teacher in the MET group advised limiting lecturing during presentations and, instead, integrating students into how teachers present by incorporating class materials into group activities. Additionally, this teacher introduced one specific technique, "think-pair-share," which s/he had been using to get students involved, and described how it works in detail. Another teacher in the MET group with 19 years of classroom teaching and six years of college composition teaching experience reported that s/he had been moving away from using PowerPoint when introducing material and toward getting students to introduce the material to each other in groups as much as possible; additionally, this teacher introduced concrete examples of visual material, short film scenes—such as "Helvetica" and "History Boys"—, that s/he had been using for student-centered activities when presenting new class content; therefore, these more-experienced teachers suggested student-centered pair or group activities for entire presentation sessions or for the major portion of presentations, at least, while the less-experienced teachers did not mention "students' participation" overtly and specifically in any of their responses.

It is interesting to note that several of the more-experienced teachers placed emphasis on students' active participation during the presentation of class material as well as on effective methods for presenting using visual aids. From their rich teaching experience, those METs might have a better understanding of how presentation practice works than have LETs. In other words, METs are well aware of the fact that no matter whether good technology or visual aids are used, if the class content is not understood by the students through hands-on experience, then the presentation might be useless. Additionally, those METs concretely described how student-centered activities could proceed and used specific examples rather than bringing up several themes superficially as did the LET group, which is another noticeable difference between the two groups.

4.2.3. Classroom management

The researcher gave a detailed account of "classroom management" in the questionnaire; it included keeping students interested in class, keeping students' attitudes positive and respectful, dealing with difficult students (behavioral issues), drawing the whole class's attention effectively, establishing a lively atmosphere in class, etc. With regard to advice about classroom management, a noticeable similarity and an interesting difference between the two groups was found. Less-experienced teachers advised being strict and consistent in

administering class policies and being clear about class expectations at the highest frequency (5), as shown in Table 4. Other than this theme, they additionally advised making the class fun and engaging (frequency 2), understanding students quickly (frequency 1), complimenting students (frequency 1), and even not being discouraged if there is difficulty in getting students involved (frequency 1); therefore, all five themes comprise what teachers should do for better classroom management.

TABLE 4

Theme Frequency from Two Teacher Groups' Q7 Responses

Themes	Emerging themes	Number of Frequency	
		LET	MET
Theme 1	Be strict, consistent, and organized about class policies	5	3
Theme 2	Make the class fun and engaging	2	0
Theme 4	Understand students quickly	1	1
Theme 5	Compliment students	1	0
Theme 6	Don't be discouraged if having difficulty in classroom management	1	0
Theme 7	Respect students	0	1
Theme 8	Mix students with different language groups	0	1
Theme 9	Make students keep working by organizing effective class structure	0	7

More-experienced teachers also advised being strict and consistent in managing class and class policies/rules at frequency of 3, as shown in Table 4; however, the most frequent theme was "making students keep working" (frequency 7) during the entire class period by utilizing a class structure that engages students in a variety of activities and makes students feel responsible for achieving a goal from a task that they are doing. In other words, the MET group advised about how to make students lead the class rather than about what teachers should do themselves to control the class, which is a very interesting and noticeable difference between the two groups' responses.

While the LET group believed that a focused and organized atmosphere could be maintained largely by what teachers did and how they did it to engage students in the class, the MET group believed that once students were engaged in an activity or a task that they would feel responsible for, then they would lead the class rather than be led by a teacher, which meant a teacher would not need to struggle to involve students in the class. In other words, they believed that students' active participation naturally brought about good classroom management. One teacher in the MET group (with seven years of classroom teaching and five years of college composition teaching experience) reported s/he tried to create a variety of activities to get students involved; s/he described how an activity, "a jumbled text," functioned to engage students in her or his class in detail and explained how a peer review, in-class writing, and in-class presentations could be used for students'

involvement. Another teacher with 22 years of (both classroom and college composition) teaching experience advised letting students be aware that a teacher valued their input and saw them not just as objects to fill with knowledge but more as individuals who accompanied the teacher on a journey of learning by encouraging participation and tolerating a little chaos through a variety of activities. Another teacher with 11 years of classroom teaching and seven years of college composition teaching experience suggested having a well-organized class structure—a presentation, an in-class activity, and a class discussion to present results and answer questions—, which would make students feel responsible for the outcomes of the class, for effective classroom management.

The researcher found the most frequent theme, "making students keep working," in the advice provided by the MET group to be very interesting because she did not expect the teachers to bring up students' participation for better classroom management. They suggested an indirect but effective way that could help teachers to not worry about classroom management issues. These more-experienced teachers might better understand that a teacher should be a facilitator with students taking a major role in class and might apply this belief to their teaching practice than might the less-experienced teachers.

4.2.4. Giving formative feedback

Regarding giving feedback on students' drafts, a variety of advice was provided by the participants—15 themes from the LET group and 18 themes from the MET group. Among these various pieces of advice, a salient similarity was found between the two groups; the most frequent theme emerging from both groups' responses was "focusing on only major/recurrent problems, content, and meaning making, not focusing on grammar," as shown in Table 5. Giving formative feedback on students' early drafts is generally thought to be the most time-consuming and difficult task in teaching this course. The researcher also finds this aspect to be the most difficult part of teaching this course because it is very time-consuming and cognitively laborious; therefore, it is always difficult for her to decide how much feedback to provide on students' drafts and how in-depth that feedback should be. Many other instructors might find this decision to be hard and important as well given that the majority of teachers in both groups advised about what to focus on and what not to focus on for effective feedback practice. Additionally, the MET group elaborated more in their responses, such as "Do not overburden L2 student writers with too much feedback and do not give more feedback to a student than a student is willing to respond to," which the researcher finds intriguing and helpful because she has found that some of her L2 student writers have struggled to understand all of her comments and to revise their papers properly according to the given feedback. It is important for composition instructors not to overwhelm L2 writers with excessive feedback, but to give understandable and reasonable

amount of feedback on their writing. Additionally, both groups' teachers advised making students correct their own mistakes (after teachers mark students' errors) at the same frequency of 2 as shown in Table 5, which would be a good learning moment for students.

TABLE 5

Theme Frequency from Two Teacher Groups' Q8 Responses

Themes	Emerging themes	Number of Frequency	
		LET	MET
Theme 1	Focus on major problems in content/meaning making, not on grammar	6	7
Theme 2	Make student correct their own mistakes	2	2
Theme 3	Be clear in comments and show examples	1	3
Theme 4	Negotiate with students in the process of revision	2	1
Theme 5	Use conferences and include peer review	1	1
Theme 6	Do not spend too much time	2	0
Theme 7	Start with positive feedback	2	0
Theme 8	Focus on what was taught in class	0	1
Theme 9	Be aware of individual student's needs	0	1
Theme 10	Spend much time on giving feedback	0	1
Theme 11	Focus only on paragraph level	0	1

Since many instructors teaching this course are also students who pursue their own studies, it is important to balance between time for studying and time for teaching; the participants seemed to consider this time management issue to be important when providing new teachers with practical advice regarding giving formative feedback. Several teachers in both groups implied that instructors should limit time given to feedback on students' drafts by suggesting providing more focused feedback rather than dealing with many areas in comments.

4.2.5. Interacting with students

The token "interacting with students" was exemplified in the questionnaire as facilitating classroom discussion/group discussion, holding conferences, communicating via email, establishing a good rapport with students, etc. The most frequent theme from both groups' responses was "being professional, fair, and consistent" while interacting with students (LET: frequency 4; MET: frequency 3). The second most frequent theme was "being open through all channels such as email, office hours, conferences, etc., and interacting with students as much as possible" (LET: frequency 2; MET: frequency 2). In addition, a variety of advice was provided, such as "using humor," "respecting students," "checking students' understanding all the time," "asking students for feedback on teaching," etc.

4.2.6. Grading

By grading, the researcher meant final assessment of projects using a rubric (i.e., summative feedback or, in other words, assigning students' work a final letter grade from a grading scale and any accompanying response or task that may go with it). In terms of grading, both groups' teachers advised using a clear rubric to make grades transparent and to justify the grade that was given to a student at the highest frequency (LET: frequency 3, MET: frequency 4). Additionally, the LET group advised being fair and consistent and not being emotional when grading at the same highest frequency, 3 .

4.3. The Biggest Challenge of Teaching Composition

At the end of the questionnaire, the researcher added one more question that asked the participants to describe, as specifically as possible, the biggest challenge that they had faced when they first started teaching English composition and its potential causes. The researcher included this question because she expected that there might be some connection between their challenges and the advice that they provided and that she could learn what support could be given to new teachers from the current instructors' challenges.

In exploring the participants' challenges and the attendant suspected causes and in comparing them with their responses to the previous questions (5 through 10), it was difficult to discover any relationship between the challenges and the advice that they had previously provided; however, the most frequent theme among all of the variety of coded themes in both groups was thought to have some relation with what the majority of the teachers emphasized in their previous responses; the biggest challenge that the most teachers experienced was with assessment (LET: frequency 6, MET: frequency 3)—both formative feedback and summative feedback—because it is a very time-consuming task and laborious work. Given that the participant teachers advised limiting the amount of (formative) feedback given on students' drafts by focusing on content and major/recurrent problems at the highest frequency (LET: frequency 6; MET: frequency 7), it can be assumed, to some extent, that their advice about giving feedback correlated with their biggest challenge that they had already experienced and, subsequently, that they were well aware that new teachers would go through the same challenge when they first started teaching the course.

Additionally, the nature of teaching composition is distinguished from teaching any other subjects in that teaching composition requires teachers to do extra work because of giving feedback on students' work. This feature of composition courses seemed to challenge many instructors who did not have their own know-how or strategies for giving feedback. Accordingly, it is worth questioning how new composition instructors might be

mentored or trained more effectively to manage formative feedback practice as well as summative feedback for final assessment to better assist L2 (EFL/ESL) writers in particular.

4.4. How to Better Mentor New Teachers of English L2 Writing

Based on the findings of the study, the two most important strategies were elicited from the most distinct and significant themes of the teachers' advice in an effort to better mentor new teachers of English L2 writing as follows.

4.4.1. Transfer strategies for making student-led class

In analyzing the differences and similarities of the advice given by the two teacher groups, the most salient difference was for METs to address students' active participation in several different questions about teaching composition. METs emphasized student engagement, student responsibility, and students' learning by doing in several aspects of teaching composition (i.e., designing class material, presentation of class material/content, and classroom management). One of the METs, with 19 years of classroom teaching and six years of college composition teaching experience, responded regarding "designing class material" as follows:

> In the past couple of years, I have been moving toward creating short group activities that require them to produce something tangible at the end of the period rather than talking at them about topics such as APA style or visual rhetoric. Undergraduate students lack the attention span. . . . That would be putting the students in groups of 3 or 4 and giving them a handout with the basics of APA style and then a worksheet with a works cited page full of APA errors. I might spend five or ten minutes talking about APA style guidelines, but they will spend most of the class fixing the errors in the flawed citation page and send it to me by the end of the period (Text response to the question about "designing class material" in teaching first-year ESL composition).

This participant suggested that in this way, students feel responsible for completing the task and engage in solving problems while learning about APA style by doing. Therefore, making students actively participate in and lead the class seems to be a much more effective way of teaching composition than lecturing in front of the class with fancy or well-made material. Another of the METs, with 11 years of classroom teaching and seven

years of college composition teaching experience, provided the following text response to the question about "presentation of class material/content."

> Whatever your class material is, you should find ways to integrate students into how you present it. In other words, limit lecturing as much as possible and instead look for ways to incorporate class material into group activities. "Think-pair-share" is a simple but useful way (students think about something, then talk about it with a classmate, then share their ideas with the class) to get students involved, and can be used before a more teacher-centered presentation (Text response to the question about "presentation of class material/content" in teaching first-year ESL composition).

In sum, more experienced teachers are encouraged to transfer their know-how or strategies for making student-led class to new teachers of composition. New teachers tend to only think about what they should do in class to better teach, not anticipating students' reaction and learning in class. More experienced teachers could provide specific tips for making group activities and worksheets and for how to present them to students to effectively engage them.

4.4.2. Give practical training in giving feedback

As indicated in teachers' responses about their biggest challenge of teaching composition, the participant teachers found assessment (both formative and summative feedback) the most difficult. Some of the participant teachers submitted text responses as follows:

> Probably the hardest part then (and now) is the assessment—responding to drafts and grading. Really time-consuming, and that's the thing that students seem to care about the most (Text response about the biggest challenging of teaching composition).

> Grading. I spent too much time on each paper and felt overwhelmed by the task. I later learned to limit myself to 10-15 minutes per paper. This helps me to be clearer and more concise with my feedback (Text response about the biggest challenging of teaching composition).

New teachers are likely to face the same challenges that experienced teachers faced (McCann & Johannessen, 2008); additionally, responding to student writing—either

formative or summative feedback—is the most essential but the most difficult aspect of teaching composition (Ferris, 2007). Accordingly, new teachers have to be trained in giving feedback by experienced teachers; they have to learn efficient and effective ways to give feedback to student writing from experienced teachers through mentoring. Additionally, new teachers should learn strategies for providing optimal feedback for L2 student writers, in particular, not to overwhelm them with too much or complicated feedback.

5. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The present study produced several interesting findings that provide meaningful pedagogical implications. Experienced teachers of First-year ESL Composition gave much practical advice regarding teaching composition on the assumption that they are asked to provide support for new instructors of the course. Even though no difference was found in the number of themes in the advice provided by the two groups of teachers—less-experienced teachers and more-experienced teachers—, noticeable similarities and differences were found in the orientation and content of the advice provided by the two groups regarding multiple aspects of teaching English composition. Additionally, the more-experienced teachers provided more specific and practical advice, giving detailed accounts of how activities worked in class and/or using concrete examples.

Concerning "presentation of class material/content," both groups emphasized using visual aids such as PowerPoint, videos, pictures, or mind-mapping, at the highest frequency; however, the more-experienced teachers also advised beyond presentation itself by suggesting how to actively integrate students' participation into the presentation at the same high frequency. Regarding "classroom management," both groups advised being strict and consistent in administering class policies at relatively high frequency; however, the more-experienced teachers offered advice about how to make students keep working during the entire class period and how to make students feel responsible for the outcomes of the class at the highest frequency. While the less-experienced teachers' advice was all about what teachers should do themselves for better classroom management, the more-experienced teachers' advice was about what students should do and how to make students do it. In other words, the more-experienced teachers provided an indirect but effective method that would naturally bring about effective classroom management by suggesting how to engage students in class.

The orientation of the more-experienced teachers' advice, which emphasized students' participation, was also shown in their advice for "designing class material." The two most-experienced teachers (with 19 years of classroom teaching and 6 years of college

composition teaching experience and 22 years of classroom teaching and college composition teaching experience, respectively) advised designing handouts or group activities that would require students to create class material themselves or to produce something tangible. This indicates that the more-experienced teachers were likely to have had a better understanding of what would lead to better learning for students and of how to apply this expertise to practical teaching than had the less-experienced teachers. The more-experienced teachers were well aware that no matter how good of a job an instructor did in teaching a class, if lessons were not learned by the students through hands-on experience, then the class could have been useless. Additionally, the more-experienced teachers seemed to have had a better vision of how the class was going to flow from their rich experience in classroom teaching given that they provided detailed accounts and concrete examples of specific teaching practices and anticipated beyond those particular practices as well. It cannot be generalized that the longer teachers teach composition, the better mentors they can/will be or that the lengths of their teaching experience will be in direct proportion to their quality as teachers or mentors; however, the study results evidence that teaching experience matters as claimed by previous works (Gschwend & Moir, 2007; McNally and Martin, 1998; More & Gless, 2001). Therefore, it can be argued that experienced teachers should share their teaching experience and expertise more often regarding practical aspects of teaching English composition. During meaningful conversations about pedagogy, more-experienced teachers, in particular, are thought to be able to teach new teachers about how to design effective student/learner-led English composition classes by giving practical tips for making students lead the class, as indicated in their advice.

In terms of the biggest challenges that the participants had faced when they had first started teaching composition, they mentioned “assessment”—both formative feedback and summative feedback—at the highest frequency because it is very time-consuming and cognitively laborious. This challenge seems to have been somewhat connected with the advice for “giving feedback,” which included limiting the amount of feedback and focusing on content/meaning-making and major problems that should/could be revised. As suggested in their responses to the question about their biggest challenge, giving feedback is the most common and difficult aspect of teaching composition; therefore, the results of the present study imply that experienced composition teachers should transfer their know-how and strategies for giving feedback to novice teachers through formal and informal conversations. Additionally, new teachers of this particular course—First-year ESL Composition—should learn about the effective ways for providing optimal feedback on English L2 texts that do not overwhelm L2 student writers but assist them in improving their writing appropriately.

In sum, the present study suggests that current instructors of First-year ESL Composition can provide useful and practical advice that new instructors teaching English

L2 writing in any other contexts of the globe might find helpful and might apply to their teaching. In collecting, synthesizing, and analyzing their advice, the study further suggests that the current English composition instructors should provide more support networks for new instructors. Based on the findings, this pilot study provides significant insight into developing an instrument—a survey questionnaire—for a larger population in a future study on supportive advice for new EFL/ESL composition teachers. Ultimately, as a small-scale pilot study, this study has limitations in methodology; the sample size (n = 16) is too small to show meaningful quantitative findings, which may also cause a problem in dividing the participants into two groups. The outlier (the teacher with 22 years of college composition teaching experience) was not excluded from the study because of the small sample size and qualitatively important data that he/she provided. Since the study quantified qualitative data, it also put emphasis on qualitative value of the collected data. If future research is conducted with a bigger sample, statistically more meaningful findings would be elicited.

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APPENDIX

Advice for New Instructors for First-year Composition

Q1. Are you an international TA or a domestic TA?

( ) International TA ( ) Domestic TA

Q2. Which course are you currently teaching?

( ) First-year Composition (ENGL 160 & 160I)
( ) Classroom Communication for International Graduate Students (ENGL 620)
( ) Written Communication for International Graduate Students (ENGL 621)

Q3. How long have you been a teacher (including this semester and any kind and level of classroom teaching, but excluding non-classroom teaching such as swimming, judo, golf, etc.)?

( ) semesters or years

Q4. How long have you been teaching college-level composition courses in a traditional classroom (including this semester, but not including online courses)?

( ) semesters or years

Consider the following scenario: if you were to give significant and practical advice to the new PhD students who will join our program and teach ENGL 106 next semester, then what advice would you give them, as their friend and as an experienced instructor? I have developed a series of open-ended questions to record your authentic and sincere responses to this scenario. Please be as specific as possible in your responses (e.g., "You should make your attendance/tardiness policy clear and concrete in your syllabus so that the students will not complain or argue against your policy later in the semester" rather than

"Make your syllabus clear"). Also, please note that providing multiple pieces of advice in response to a single question is more than welcome. – (Q5 – Q10)

Q5. What advice would you give new students and instructors in our program about "designing class material" for teaching ENGL 106?
(Class material might include supplementary reading handouts [example essays], group discussion worksheets, quizzes, class/group/individual activities, etc.)

Q6. What advice would you give new students and instructors in our program regarding "presentation of class material/content" when teaching ENGL 106?
(Presentation of class material/content might include using visual aids [PowerPoint, videos, pictures, mind-mapping, etc.], showing examples/illustrations, explaining/approaching new concepts, using textbooks, etc.)

Q7. What advice would you give new students and instructors in our program regarding "classroom management" when teaching ENGL 106?
(Classroom management might include keeping students interested in class, keeping students' attitudes positive and respectful, dealing with difficult students [behavioral issues], drawing the whole class's attention effectively, establishing a lively atmosphere in class, etc.)

Q8. What advice would you give new students and instructors in our program about "giving formative feedback on students' rough drafts (before revision)" when teaching ENGL 106?

Q9. What advice would you give new students and instructors in our program about "interacting with students" when teaching ENGL 106?
(Interacting with students might include facilitating classroom discussion/group discussion, holding conferences, communicating via email, establishing a good rapport with students, etc.)

Q10. What advice would you give new students and instructors in our program regarding "grading" (i.e., final assessment of projects using a rubric, summative feedback) when teaching ENGL 106?
(Please note that grading, here, is defined differently than the "feedback" mentioned in Q8; by grading, I literally mean assigning students' work a final letter grade from a grading scale and any accompanying response or task that may go with it.)

Q11. When you first started teaching composition (anywhere), what was your biggest challenge? And, what do you think was the cause of your challenge? (Please describe your challenge and its potential causes as specifically as possible.)

Applicable levels: Tertiary

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Received on March 1, 2018
Reviewed on April 15, 2018
Revised version received on May 15, 2018