Working with Generation 1.5 & ESL Students

Wan

There are different ways language can be used in communication. The language I use in school, family, and friends are all different. In school, I use English to talk to my instructors and fellow classmates. At home, I speak three different languages. I speak English to my brothers and sister, while speaking Mandarin to my parents and speaking Lao with my brother-in-law. With all these different languages I use in my daily life, I find I am most comfortable with the language I use with my friends.

When I speak to my friends, I always use English. Even if some of my friends are Chinese and can speak the same language as I can, I have never spoke Chinese with any of my friends. I find myself to communicate better in English than my own language. When I speak to my friends, I don't pay attention to my grammars. We often talk to each other using slangs, that others might find it weird. But to us, it's fun because instead of saying one complete word, we tend to say a short cut of the word. Although I find myself speaking English, my best language, to my friends, it has somewhat affected me in my grammars.


1. Analysis of sample paragraph (Wan)
   - Based on her essay, where should Wan be placed? In basic writing or in an ESL writing course?
   - What reasons did you use to justify your decision?

2. Who are our multilingual students at this university? What are their characteristics? How can we identify them? What challenges do they face?

3. Who are Generation 1.5 students?
   - The term was first coined in the Korean-American community: il cheom o se (one point five generation)
   - Immigrants who:
     i. Arrived in the U.S. at a young age
     ii. Learned English primarily through informal means
     iii. Received most or all of their education in the U.S.
iv. Entered college with language and literacy profiles between those of “basic writer” and “ESL student”

- Roberge (2002) expands the definition to include:
  i. “In-migrants” from U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico
  ii. “Parachute kids” who come to live with relatives in the U.S. and attend school here
  iii. Children of transnational families who experience multiple back-and-forth migrations between their home country and the U.S.
  iv. U.S-born children of immigrants in linguistic enclave communities
  v. Immigrants who are speakers of “Other Englishes”

4. What sort of knowledge and skills do we draw on when we engage in writing?

- **Process** — knowledge of how to prepare and carry out a writing task.
- **Genre** — knowledge of the communicative purposes of the genre and its value in particular contexts; knowledge of the **schematic structures** that define a genre; contrastive rhetoric
- **Context** — knowledge of readers’ expectation, cultural preferences, and related texts; knowing the contexts in which the genres are used and the roles and relationships that they imply
- **System** — knowledge of syntax, lexis, and appropriate formal conventions needed; elements of the language system students need in order to understand the genre and to complete the task
- **Content** — the ideas and concepts in the topic that the text will address

*How do these types of knowledge/skills impact L2 writers?*
*What do we need to know to be prepared to assist L2 writers?*

5. Responding to student writing & **Error Types** that we should focus on in responding to L2 student writing (Ferris, 2002)

> “While teachers should not be excessive/y focused on eradicating errors, they should also be careful to avoid emphasizing ideas to the neglect of form” (Hyland, 2003, p.184).

> “Language is a resource for making meanings, not something to turn to when we have worked out what we are going to say, and the two cannot be realistically separated when responding to writing”

(ibid., p. 185).

- **Genre-specific errors** — those particular to the current target text-type
- **Stigmatizing errors** — those that most disturb the particular target community of readers
- **Comprehensibility errors** — those that most interfere with the clarity of the writing
- **Frequent errors** — those consistently made by the individual student across his or her writing
- **Student-identified errors** — those the student would like the teacher to focus on

- **Write personalized comments** — maintain a dialogue between reader and writer
- **Provide guidance where necessary** — avoid advice that is too directive or prescriptive
- **Make text-specific comments** — relate comments to the text rather than to general rules
- **Balance positive and negative comments** — avoid discouraging students with criticism

7. Some suggestions for working with ESL/Generation 1.5 students (Goen et. al., 2002):

- **Set up an System for Active Editing**
- **Use Grammar Reference Cards**
- **Give a Dictocomp as a Diagnostic & for Practice**
- **Develop Self-Editing Sheets**
- **Coordinate with a tutoring center**
- **Other Suggestions?**

### Principles for Working with Orally Fluent Second Language Writers

(Goen et al., 2002)

1. **Drawing on students’ backgrounds to promote language learning**

   1. Avoid making assumptions about your students’ educational backgrounds, language use, and/or how they identify themselves. Use some kind of survey or interview questions at the beginning of the semester.
   2. In lesson planning and responding to writing, work to connect the backgrounds of your students with how they learn and how they write. Try to appeal to different learning modalities: visual, oral, aural, tactile, and kinesthetic.
   3. Help students see the connection between their backgrounds and their writing: specifically, help them to make connections between how they speak and how they write.
   4. In structuring in-class work that focuses on form, capitalize on students’ oral fluency and comfort level with spoken English through small group activities that encourage students to help and learn from each other.
   5. Consider the literacy backgrounds of your students by using meaningful texts for teaching. Whenever possible, teach from the students’ own writing.

2. **Setting priorities for editing**

   6. Since you can’t assume that “1.5” learners have knowledge of grammar terms and rules, make basic grammar information succinct and accessible.
   7. Prioritize concerns/errors and figure out a focus for your response to student writing. Resist the urge to teach and mark “everything.”
   8. Give manageable editing and error correction tasks. Don’t overwhelm students,
especially students who have had minimal language instruction.

9. Help students set "grammar and writing" goals for now vs. for the future. Help them follow up and see their progress.
10. Help students develop focused strategies for editing beyond "check your work."
11. Encourage students to participate in their own language learning processes by giving them choices about what they want to work on and how they want to work on it.

III. Working with students

12. Whenever possible, give students the opportunity to "write through" their errors through the revising process.
13. Help students learn to be patient with themselves and develop their own "voices" as academic writers.
14. Remember that language learning is a slow and protracted process. Breaking old patterns and learning new ways takes time and time and more time. The work you do this semester may not show up as "success" until much later.

References and Suggested Reading


