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Capstone Project

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Spring 2007

**Content-Based Instruction in ESL Composition 202:
Second Language Acquisition for Second Language Learners**

Background and Rational

Often ESL composition courses - and English composition courses for that matter - are taught using a comprehensive writing textbook. These textbooks may vary in their focus on the target student population and the writing genre, but the format and function of these texts is quite homogenous, especially considering the overwhelming number of such texts on the market. Typically each chapter will include a couple of readings, comprehension and grammar or style exercises, and a writing assignment complete with pre-writing strategies and peer-review activities. Most often the writing assignments are essays reflecting on the readings and asking students to use their own opinions or experiences for support. At some point in the text, students are expected to use outside resources so that they can understand how to find, use, and cite sources appropriately and avoid plagiarism.

While learning to write essays, short response papers, and a research paper are important goals for new university students, the topics and genres of these papers and the readings that provide the context for them are often not applicable to the genres that will be found in the learner's field of study. Even if the readings are academic readings (most often they are

journalistic, editorial, or literary), a textbook of varying genres cannot go in depth into any one field making the readings introductory, tertiary readings.

One way to enhance the composition course experience for learners is to engage in Content-Based Instruction (CBI). By choosing one content area to learn in greater depth, students are offered the opportunity to read challenging academic texts (including primary sources), to hone their analysis skills, and to write a variety of text types that are found within the chosen field. Which field to tackle is often a problem, however, since few if any students in a class will pursue the same major field of study. One possible option to resolve this issue, and the one this project focuses on, is the area of Second Language Acquisition. All students will be able to relate to the study of learning a second language since they are in the process of acquiring English themselves. Understanding more about their own learning process, at the same time as working on their academic reading and writing skills, can capture their interest, provide an area of inquiry that is multidisciplinary, and lead to better acceptance of the difficult process they are engaged in.

Course Design

This course was developed to meet the needs of English Language Learners on the MSU, Mankato campus, to prepare them for the reading and writing skills needed in general course work, and for taking English Composition 101. Since some students who take this course are transfer or graduate students, they also need to be trained to access primary research studies and write a research paper in this class. For objectives and other course information, see the syllabus in Appendix A.

In terms of text selection, there are a number of textbooks to choose from that are written for the American foreign-language learner to enhance their language learning strategies and their

study abroad experiences (Leaver, Ehrman, and Shekhtman, 2005, Pellegrino Aveni, 2005). These are books I might consider in a future term, but for this term I chose, *Learning New Languages* by Tom Scovel, a text about the theory of acquisition. I felt that such a text would better ensure our opportunities to read and analyze academic text. This book has a mix of genres (journal entries, author experiences and stories, theory) and is organized in a basic format with 5 spheres of influence on SLA. I decided on this text, as opposed to other SLA texts, because I felt the students, while challenged by the content, would not be overwhelmed by the detail. It is not an ideal text for this audience, mainly because it was meant for language students who are also pursuing language-teaching degrees, thus much of the focus is on teaching. I think most students were able to look at the examples from the student perspective, but sometimes it caused them some confusion.

I also felt a textbook to inform them of the writing process was needed. There are some texts that are meant for this purpose, and I chose *A Troubleshooting Guide for Writers: Strategies and Process* by Barbara Fine Clouse. The chapters are organized by questions writers might have about various aspects of the writing process, including grammar and citations. This text is mainly focused on the writing of essays, but with relevance to longer papers. This text can be confusing for students, however, if clear connections are not made between the readings and the assignments they are working on.

The course was structured to complete the content text and a series of essays related to those readings over the first half of the semester. By writing an essay each week, using some peer review techniques in class, and using teacher feedback to inform the writing of subsequent essays, the students' progressed rapidly in their sentence, paragraph, and essay structure during the 8 weeks. The second half of the semester focused on the research process. Students read and

responded to a primary research study, planned and collected data to analyze, gave a presentation of their data to the class for feedback, and wrote (in stages) a full-length research paper. This process gave them step-by-step help from identifying a personally interesting problem for investigation to editing a 7-12 page paper.

During class, students were daily engaged in activities to enhance their understanding of the reading, encourage reflection on their own learning process and strategy use, and engage them in the writing process. Rather than focusing on rules of English grammar, which the students have already studied in their home countries, they were given activities that guided them in conducting linguistic analysis of both learner errors and published genres. We explored how meaning is construed differently by the choice of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure in main claims, assignment instructions, journal entries, theory explanations, and explication of research findings. Students also engaged in activities that allowed them to transform writing from one genre to another.

The students were also immersed in the techniques of process writing. They worked with a partner to revise a single aspect of each essay during class on the day it was due, depending on problems members of the class were experiencing, such as aspects of the thesis statement, essay parts, paragraph structure, qualification of evidence, etc. Every essay was designed to lead into the next essay, so that students could improve on their writing, but not be expected to submit multiple drafts of each essay. This allowed for more original writing and problem recognition by the students. The research paper was written in sections and the last half of the semester was organized as a series of presentations, discussions, consultations, peer tasks, and writing workshops to develop their research study and their paper with feedback from either the

instructor or a peer at each step. Student work was evaluated using a series of rubrics found in Appendix B.

Student Feedback from Fall Semester, 2006

Overall the students rated the course highly, with only three students providing written comments. In the section about what part of the course was most beneficial to them, the three reported that they appreciated the writing assignments and the knowledge of second-language learning.

There were many times during the term when the students seemed to be frustrated with their progress or understanding. I interpreted that as a sign that they were being pushed to stretch themselves, confirming to me that the content and assignments were challenging for them. While there were a few students who appeared disengaged, there was a core set of students that were prepared and enthusiastic and I think this brought the whole class along the path that I had set for them. I cannot be sure that the content contributed to the overall level of engagement, but it is likely that the content was a supporting factor.

Student Outcomes

Two evaluations of student outcomes will be made, one based on course grades and one based on the analysis of a writing sample. As far as course grades, the students in the fall semester did very well. Only one student in that section did not make satisfactory progress during the semester and was recommended to take further ESL courses. During the second semester the grades were less indicative of the students' writing abilities and more indicative of their level of participation, so the difference between the two courses may not be that significant. Table 1 gives the grades.

Table 1 – Student Grades

Grade	Fall (n=17)	Percentage	Spring (n=14)	Percentage
A	10	59%	6	43%
B	5	29%	4	29%
C	1	6%	3	21%
D	1	6%	0	0%
F	0	0%	1	7%

One interesting piece of data is that in the fall semester only 4 of the 17 students did not access my feedback left for them in the D2L drop box on their final project, while in the spring semester only one of 14 students accessed their feedback. This may indicate the students' desire to engage in the process of writing; students in the fall semester were still working to improve even after the course was completed, while the spring semester students were not.

I did not have an exact control group receiving traditional instruction at the same with which to compare student outcomes in the content-based course, so I compared outcomes from a similar class I had taught previously using a traditional ESL composition text. I chose to analyze the work of one student from each course. Both students are males in their early 20s on exchange programs from their home institutions in Europe and it was their first semester studying in the U.S. One student's first language is French and the other's is Spanish. The Spanish speaker was more advanced in English when he came to the U.S. in comparison to the French speaker, but both were required to take ESL composition at the same level. I selected two paragraphs (see Appendix C) from each student's work, one from the first essay of the semester and one from their final project. I tried to find paragraphs of a similar nature; the Spanish-speaking student's work was on American culture and the French-speaking student's work was on childhood bilingualism.

I chose to carry out a functional linguistic analysis of their work, in order to see if they gained a more academic style of writing over the course of the semester. I looked at lexical

density, complexity of sentence and rheme, function of the verb types, how information was connected within the paragraph, and forms of reference. There will be discrepancies in the analysis, because the paragraphs are not of the exact same genre. While the French-speaker's paragraphs both describe his observations of a bilingual child and his mother, the Spanish-speaker's paragraphs differ. The first paragraph is of his personal reactions to American culture, while the second paragraph is naturally more academic, defining aspects of physical culture in the United States. Tables 2 and 3 show the comparison of the two students' writing.

Table 2 – French-Speaking Student – Reporting Observations (2006)

	September	December
Number of Words	40	194
No. of Sentences	5	11
No. of Compound/Complex Sentences	1	8
No. of Words per Sentence	8	17.6
No. of Connecting Words	1	16
Internal vs. External Conj.	1 internal	2 external, 2 internal
No. of Themes including: Single noun or pronoun Det + noun (Det/Quant +) adj + noun PP + NP Conj +NP + (adv) Clause	2 I, It 2 my cousin/observation 1 my little cousin	8 we/it/everything/he/Marc 2 my first observation 2 for example we 2 so he always 2
Verb Processes	Mental: observe Verbal: speak Relational: be, take place Behavioral: fed	Mental: decide, mean Verbal: ask, speak, talk, say, communicate Relational: be, have, react, put, come Material: made

Table 2 shows an increase in the amount of the student's writing, as well as the lexical density of the work. The words per sentence more than doubled and the majority of his sentences became more complex, involving multiple clauses. In the first paragraph he only connected the ideas using one conjunction, while in the second paragraph he used numerous conjunctions and

adverbial phrases to connect his ideas together. All of these 16 connectors were connecting complex elements of the paragraph, with none of them connecting two equal parts of speech such as nouns or noun phrases. While he continues to use a majority of simple sentence themes in the second paragraph, he does add more complex elements such as the 2 clauses, one of which acts as the subject of the sentence. He also continues to use many of the same verb types, but the paragraphs are reporting observations of verbal activity so this requires more use of these than another selection might. The relational verbs increase, however, which is more common in academic writing.

Table 3 - Spanish-Speaking Student – Defining Culture (2003)

	September	December
Number of Words	151	135
No. of Sentences	8	5
No. of Compound/Complex Sentences	5	4
No. of Words per Sentence	18.9	27
No. of Connecting Words	16	16
Internal vs. External Conj.	7 external, 1 internal	2 external, 6 internal
No. of Themes including: Single noun or pronoun (Det/Quant +) adj + noun NP + PP (Conj) AdvP + N Clause	3 That/I 1 First of all what... 4 Here I/you/everybody 1	1 It 1 Physical culture 1 With this we... 2
Verb Processes	Mental: mean, find, refer, see, used to Verbal: ask, allow Relational: be, have, get, go Behavioral: eat, drink, vote, buy	Mental: think, explain, understand, answer Relational: is, take

Table 3 shows that the Spanish-speaking student's writing changed less dramatically than that of the French speaker's. The lexical density of this work increased by a third, which is still significant, but the number of complex sentences and idea connectors did not increase. Indicating

more academic appropriate writing, however, is his use of pronouns. Pronouns referring to external, real world items or ideas in the first paragraph were replaced by pronouns referring to ideas elsewhere in the text. His themes seem similarly complex in both paragraphs, but his verb processes increase in the relational and mental categories, with no other categories being present, another indication of improved academic writing.

While the Spanish speaker seems to improve less dramatically than the French speaker the fact remains that his first paragraph is much more complex in nature than the first paragraph by the French speaker. The final two paragraphs tend to be more on a par. Two causes other than the mode of instruction could be at work here. First the Spanish-speaker, being more advanced at the beginning of the course may have had less room for improvement over the short period of one semester, and the more academic structures he does exhibit may be due to the change in genre of the paragraph rather than to actual improvement. While the comparison between these two students does not help to promote the use of CBI over more traditional approaches, the student in the CBI class does show marked improvement over the course of one semester. Further analysis of other students' writing in both classes, and further data collection would be needed in order to make any general conclusion.

Reflection on the Course

Overall I think this was a successful experiment and I continued to further develop this course during the Spring Semester, 2007. The first semester, I was very pleased with the course due to student outcomes, student engagement, my rapport with my students, and the continued rapport I had with them after the course was over. Students got their work done on time, participated fully in the activities, and made considerable progress in their writing and class interaction throughout the semester.

In the spring, I was much less satisfied with the way the course progressed, and with some of the outcomes. Students in the spring semester were much more resistant to taking the course in the first place, so this may have affected their attitude throughout the whole course. They often did not have their work completed on time, so that they could not engage effectively in class activities, and they were much more distracted during class no matter what the activity seemed to be: student and teacher presentations, whole-class discussion, pair work, and individual work. Since everything was the same in both semesters (the room, scheduled time, texts, activities, assignments) I can only assume that the configuration of personalities and the students' outside distractions were the cause of these differences, at least in the beginning. My enthusiasm waned over time and that may have led to less motivation on the students' part as well. One issue that may have been different on my part was the amount of explanation provided for why we engaged in the content and the activities. I feel that the first semester, I was more thorough in this area because it was new and because I was invested in a positive outcome. Once the course appeared to *work*, however, I may have been less attentive to aspects that helped them understand the objectives and the importance of the content. I believe that I still had good rapport with my students, however, there seemed to be a lot more pushing on my part and resistance on the students' part to moving forward with the class. Many students made parallel improvements to those in the first semester despite this atmosphere, but there were more students that did not make adequate progress.

If I were to teach this course again, I think I would try one of the other texts I mentioned above. It may be more obvious to students why they are studying the content if the text is meant for language learners, rather than pre-service teachers. I would also be able to be more organized in my planning of activities and articulation between them, now that I have been through the

process a couple of times. I would also discuss more clearly and often with the students the course expectations and positive aspects of the curriculum for their future at the university. I was more relaxed the second term and I think that made students feel that there was more flexibility in the course than I wanted. I think one thing I learned from the entire CETL experience though is that you can do your best work, use cutting edge methodology, create engaging activities for the class, provide a nurturing atmosphere, etc. and still the stresses young students experience, influence their choices in ways we cannot control. We, as instructors, can only provide optimal learning opportunities and hold them accountable for their choices that affect our classes, hoping that they learn not only the academic content and skills, but important life lessons as well.

References

Fine Close, B. (2005). *A troubleshooting guide for writers: Strategies and process*. McGraw Hill.

Leaver, B. L., Ehrman, M., Shekhtman, B. (2005). *Achieving success in second language acquisition*. Cambridge.

Pellegrino Aveni, V. (2005). *Study abroad and second language use: Constructing the self*. Cambridge

Scovel, T. (2001). *Learning new languages: A guide to second language acquisition*. Heinle & Heinle.

Appendix A – Syllabus

Advanced Composition for Non-Native Speakers English as a Second Language 202 – Spring 2007

Dr. Karen Lybeck
Department of English
Minnesota State University - Mankato
Office: Armstrong Hall 212D
Phone: 389-5509

Class Hours: 14:00 – 15:50, T H
Office Hours: 16:00, T H or by appointment
(not available Fridays)
Classroom: ML 47-Global Learning Lab
Email: karen.lybeck@mnsu.edu

Course Objectives:

This composition course will be based on the academic content of second-language learning. As second-language learners, you all have personal background and goals that can be enhanced through understanding more about the research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). In addition to applying this knowledge to your own experiences, it will provide us with the opportunity to tackle understanding academic texts and the process of academic writing.

Required Reading Materials:

- Scoval, T. (2001) *Learning new languages: A guide to second language acquisition*. Heinle & Heinle.
- Fine Close, B. (2005). *A troubleshooting guide for writers: Strategies & process*, 4th Ed. McGraw Hill.

Policies:

- *Due Dates:* Assignments are due on the assigned date. I do not accept late work.
- *Attendance:* It is expected that everyone will attend every meeting. In-class work cannot be made up.
- *Participation:* Everyone is expected to participate in the discussion and activities of this class. Any outside distractions during class time will be eliminated (turn off cell phones and pagers, exit computer applications that are not directly relevant to the current discussion, plan appropriate lead time for preparing for and getting to class, etc.). Food and drink are prohibited in the Global Learning Lab.
- *Communication:* I will be using D2L and email to communicate about the business of class, the topics of class, and to receive and hand back homework. Be sure to understand how to use D2L and make sure you check your MNSU accounts often.
- *Special Accommodations:* If you need accommodations due to a disability, please bring notification to me from Disability Services as soon as possible, x2825.

- Plagiarism in this class may result in failure of the course and referral for further disciplinary action. Plagiarism is defined by the University as follows:
 “*Plagiarism* is the submission of an academic assignment as one’s own work, which includes critical ideas or written narrative that are taken from another author without the proper citation. This does not apply only to direct quotes, but also to critical ideas that are paraphrased by the student. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:
 - submitting the work of others as your own
 - submitting others’ work as your own with only minor changes
 - submitting others’ work as your own without adequate footnotes, quotations, and other reference forms
 - multiple submission of the same work, written or oral, for more than one course without both instructor’s permission making minor revisions on work which has received credit and submitting it again as new work.”
 (*Academic Honesty in University Policies and Procedures* at www.mnsu.edu/acadaf/Resources/Policies.html)

Grading: The undergraduate bulletin states, “A student’s work in any course will be evaluated in accordance with the following system of letter grades: A, B, C, D, F…”

- "A" represents work of definitely superior quality.
- "B" represents a better-than-average level of performance.
- "C" represents an average level of performance.
- "D" represents a below-average level of performance.
- "F" represents an unacceptable level of performance.”

Not every assignment will be graded, but you will get credit for satisfactorily completing each assignment and responding to the feedback given to you by your peers and the instructor. Rubrics for the various types of writing can be found on our class D2L site. In this course your final grade will be comprised of the following:

Attendance and Participation	20%
Weekly Essays	50%
Final Project	20%
Final Project Presentation	10%

Assignments:

1. *Class Time/Participation/Homework*
 - You are expected to be prepared in advance of each meeting so that we can discuss the topic and work on aspects of the writing process during class. Pay close attention to the calendar below. Before each meeting, complete all tasks with a preceding them. All **bolded items** will be handed into a drop box on D2L.
 - All responses to the activities in the textbook should take the form of a 5-paragraph **essay**. You are not expected to answer each individual question in the activities, rather use them to guide the content of your essay. Make a claim about the topic in the introduction and then support your claim in at least three paragraphs.
 - Additional assignments pertaining to writing and grammar may be given during the semester depending on class and individual developmental needs.

- You may occasionally be tested on the reading material by essay exam or quiz. Clouse, Appendix B can help you to prepare for such an exam.

2. *Final Project* - You will select a topic within the field of SLA, conduct library research, collect field data, and write and present a research paper including citations. Further information on this assignment will be given as we progress through the semester.

DATES	Tuesdays	Thursdays
1 1/16 & 1/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations & Introductions Second Chance Placement Essay 	<input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, Ch. 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Introduction <input type="checkbox"/> Activity 1.1 – Good Lang Learner
2 1/23 & 1/25	First Language Acquisition Academic Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, pp. 13 - 23	Audience and Revision <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 9, 10, 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Your goals for English & Writing
3 1/30 & 2/1	Social Aspects of SLA <input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, pp. 23 – 42	<input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 2 & 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Activity 2.1- Argumentation
4 2/6 & 2/8	Emotion <input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, Ch. 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 17 <input type="checkbox"/> Activity 6.1 – Description
5 2/13 & 2/15	Cognitive – Styles & Strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, Ch. 5	Library Overview w/Librarian <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 28 <input type="checkbox"/> Activity 5.2 - Analysis
6 2/20 & 2/22	Linguistic Aspects of SLA <input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, Ch. 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Error Analysis – Data provided <input type="checkbox"/> Text Analysis
7 2/27 & 3/1	Attention Models <input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, pp. 71 – 82 <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Activity 4.1 - Explanation	Research Tools w/ Librarian <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm Research Topic Idea <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 1
8 3/6 & 3/8	Memory and Input <input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, pp. 82 – 90 <input type="checkbox"/> Activity 4.3 - Analysis	Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 24 & 29 <input type="checkbox"/> Bring an Academic Article
9 3/13 & 3/15	Spring Break No Class	Spring Break No Class
10 3/20 & 3/22	SLA Review <input type="checkbox"/> Scovel, Ch. 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Revisit Goals/Self Assessment	Develop Research Question & Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 30 <input type="checkbox"/> Article Response Due
11 3/27 & 3/29	Data Collection Instruments Methodology	Project Data Collection Sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 4
12 4/3 & 4/5	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Paper Introduction <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Project Outline <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 3
13 4/10 & 4/12	Consultation with Instructor	Consultation with Instructor
14 4/17 & 4/19	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Paper Conclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Clouse, Ch. 7	Peer Review, Use Clouse, Part III <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Project Draft Due Hand in written peer review
15 4/24 & 4/26	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentations	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentations

16 5/1 & 5/3	Student Evaluations & Content Review	Editing - Use Clouse, Part IV <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Draft Due
17 – 5/8	Final Papers Due – 12:30 p.m.	

Appendix B – Grading Rubrics

Essay Feedback

Name _____ Topic _____ Grade _____

Topic/Essay structure - Outline

- _____ Writer skillfully completed the assignment as discussed in class.
- _____ Writer completed the assignment as discussed in class.
- _____ Writer strays from the assignment to some extent.
- _____ Writer did not clearly understand the assignment.

Introduction

- _____ Effectively utilized all elements required.
- _____ Includes all the elements required.
- _____ Includes some of the elements required.
- _____ Does not conform to the purpose of the introduction.

Thesis Statement

- _____ Writer makes a claim about their topic and proceeds to defend this claim.
- _____ Writer clearly states the thesis at the end of the first paragraph.
- _____ The point of the essay is clear, but the structure of the thesis is lacking.
- _____ Thesis is unclear/unstated.

Paragraph Structure

- _____ Writer clearly states the topic in the first sentence/all information pertains to it.
- _____ Writer tends to have too few or too many paragraph transitions.
- _____ There is no topic sentence or not all information is relevant to the topic.
- _____ Paragraph structure is confusing.

Evidence and Analysis

- _____ Writer clearly analyzes/supports their ideas with convincing evidence.
- _____ Writer gives some support, but it is often general or only partially convincing.
- _____ Writer gives some support, but the connections are not always clear.
- _____ Writer gave little or no support for their ideas.

Conclusion

- _____ Effectively utilized all elements required.
- _____ Includes all the elements required.
- _____ Includes some of the elements required.
- _____ Does not conform to the purpose of the conclusion.

Editing

- _____ Writer has errors that do not disturb the reading.

_____ Writer has some unpatterned errors.
_____ Writer has patterned errors such as:
_____ Writer has numerous patterned errors such as:

Presentation Feedback

Name _____

Topic _____

Grade _____

Presence

- _____ Engages the class, at ease with material, uses notes appropriately.
- _____ Struggles with one of these issues.
- _____ Struggles with multiple issues.
- _____ Doesn't engage the class, basically reads the material.

Language

- _____ Clear, easily understandable, terms and concepts well defined, well paced.
- _____ Easily understandable for a well read member of this class.
- _____ Somewhat unclear, language occasionally difficult, somewhat fast paced.
- _____ Speaker mumbles or talks too softly, does not make ideas clear, too fast.

Visual Aids / Handouts

- _____ Uses clear aids to enhance the presentation.
- _____ Materials did not always aid understanding.
- _____ Materials are unclear / did not enhance the presentation.
- _____ Uses no materials.

Overall Organization

- _____ Well organized, listeners know where the speaker is headed.
- _____ Occasionally unsure of the next step, but still understandable.
- _____ Somewhat unclear where the speaker is taking us.
- _____ Organization is confusing making understanding difficult.

Introduction

- _____ The speaker clearly states the problem under investigation/grabs our attention.
- _____ The listener understands the problem, but it is not clearly stated.
- _____ The central problem / significance are unclear.
- _____ The central problem is unstated/why is this important to us?

Conclusion

- _____ The speaker answers the research questions and pulls issues together.
- _____ The speaker gives the findings, but is not able to answer the RQs.
- _____ The speaker loosely pulls it together, conclusion partially deals with the problem.
- _____ The audience is left hanging. The research questions are not directly addressed.

Timing

- _____ The speaker presented for twenty minutes, allowed adequate time for feedback.
- _____ The presentation was too short or too long but speaker was able to deal with this (short: enhanced discussion, long: was able to cut it without too much trouble).
- _____ Did not fulfill the time requirements.

Other comments:

ESL Composition – Research Project Feedback

Name _____ Topic _____ Grade _____

Content

Scope

- _____ The author gives an in-depth analysis of the topic/materials chosen.
- _____ The author gives a sufficient analysis of the topic/materials chosen.
- _____ The author's analysis is cursory.
- _____ The author gives only a broad overview/no analysis.

Knowledge of the subject

- _____ Writer clearly understood the material chosen.
- _____ Writer was not clear on some details, but understood the main points.
- _____ Writer was not clear on some of the more important issues.
- _____ Writer did not sufficiently understand the material chosen.

Use of Appropriate Linguistic Terminology

- _____ Uses the terminology and phrasing for this topic deftly.
- _____ Uses the terminology and phrasing for this topic appropriately.
- _____ Confuses some terms/relies on lay language to explain phenomena.
- _____ Does not show an understanding of the terminology.

Data Collection and Presentation

- _____ Collected useful and sufficient data and presented it with care.
- _____ Collected and presented an adequate amount of data for this assignment.
- _____ Collection and/or presentation of the data is problematic.
- _____ Inadequate data collection / incomplete presentation of the data.

Process of Analysis

- _____ Systematically discusses the data/issues in light of material read and discussed.
- _____ Shows independent process of analysis, but is not well connected to readings.
- _____ Shows some process of analysis, little or no connection to readings.
- _____ Little or no process of analysis shown.

Presentation of Conclusions

- _____ Shows definite understanding of the phenomena / clear argument/implications.
- _____ Generally good understanding of data/implications, but with some analysis gaps.
- _____ Struggles at understanding data or implications, weak or missing argument.
- _____ Shows little understanding of the linguistic phenomena.

Writing

Statement of purpose/Research Question(s)

- _____ The author clearly states the problem under investigation/central claim.
- _____ The reader understands what the problem/claim is, but it is not clearly stated.
- _____ The author has a purpose but the reader has to work to understand what it is.
- _____ The central claim/problem for investigation is unclear/unstated.

Overall organization

- _____ Well organized, sections include all relevant information.
- _____ Outline is clear, but the sections are not always complete.
- _____ Some problems with the outline / information is not always relevant.
- _____ Organization is confusing. Information is often not relevant to topic.

Paragraph structure

- _____ Paragraphs have clear topic sentences with relevant additional information.
- _____ Transitions may be unclear at times, some inconsistencies.
- _____ Information in each paragraph generally relates to the topic, which is not always clearly stated.
- _____ Paragraphs lack topic statements, contain unrelated material.

Voice

- _____ Achieves a balance between writer's analysis and support from sources.
- _____ Both the writer's voice and sources are present, but not balanced.
- _____ The writer's analysis has limited scholarly foundation or limited analysis.
- _____ The writer's analysis has no scholarly foundation and/or writer's own analysis is missing.

Resources/Citations

- _____ Used sufficient and appropriate scholarly resources, appropriate format.
- _____ Used too few resources though appropriate or problems with formatting detail.
- _____ Used limited resources though appropriate and problems with formatting detail.
- _____ Used questionable resources, significant problems with citations.

Appendix C – Student Paragraphs

French-Speaker:

09/07/06

I observe my cousin Jennifer with her son Marc. My little cousin is 16 months old. My cousin speaks French to her child. It was interesting to observe them. My observation took place when Jennifer gave to eat to Marc.

12/12/06

My first observation was with Marc and his mother Jennifer along the Michigan Lake. We decided to make a picnic on the beach of the Michigan Lake. It was a little bit cold but we put a coat to Marc and everything was fine. So my first observation was when Marc is with Jennifer he always communicated in French. He does not talk very well yet but the few words he is trying to say are in French. For example we had sandwiches for the picnic and he asks for bread in French (pain) the same for drinking he asks for “jus d’orange” and no orange juice. So he always talked in French during this lunch. Something interesting was when I spoke with her mother in French he reacts that means he understood what we are talking about. For example we talked about the mother of Jennifer who is my aunt; Marc said “mami” which is grand mother in French. When we came back home he said “on va voir daddy” which means “we going to see daddy”. It was funny because he made a mix; it is the influence of his bilingual parents.

Spanish-Speaker

10/03/03

First of all, what refers to culture. That means people, places, food and drinks, ... almost everything. Here I have seen a lot of changes in what I am used to. For example:

what has been a big change for me is the food and the drink. I am used to have lunch and dinner with more people (if it is not with my family with friends), sitting on the table all together, but here everybody eats when he or she is hungry, anywhere! And in Spain you can drink beer or wine if you are 16 (here you have to be 21!). I find it ridiculous when a 20 year old man (that can go to the army, can have a gun, can vote and can get married) asks me, on the sly, if I can buy him some beer because he is not allowed to do it by himself!

12/17/03

Physical culture is known as the original term for Sport, Physical Activity, and Physical Education Sciences. It is a fact that the actual image of a good looking body is directly related with the sport body image. So to understand how the actual good looking body image was built, I think we have to explain first how physical culture was introduced in American society. Once we have understood this, we will be able to discuss if the actual “good looking body”, the sport looking one, is really a healthy one. With this, we will also be able to understand the possible risks and threats to health that going after this image of the body can take with it, and to answer the question if it is worth to take sport supplements to reach this goal.