

Written Discourse Across Cultures I: Towards an Integrated Approach to EL2 Composition Pedagogy

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1. Introduction

The first serious attempt by applied linguists to explain second language writing was the field of study known as contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1996), which was based on the assumption that language learners will transfer the rhetorical features of their native language to the target language, causing interference in second language writing. Contrastive studies up to that time had been limited to the formal analysis of language at the sentence level, but research in contrastive rhetoric suggested that linguistic and cultural factors beyond the level of the sentence influenced L2 learners' writing abilities. Initially, it was thought that differences within the internal logics of languages resulted in the development of different rhetorics, and that linguistically and culturally defined interpretations of rhetorical organization caused difficulties in writing for L2 students. Later studies shifted the focus "to deeper levels of discourse meaning in context, assuming that L2 writing displays preferred conventions of the L1 language and culture rather than reflects L1 thought patterns" (Allaei & Connor, 1990, p. 23; cf. Sapir, 1921; Whorf, 1956; and Gumperz & Levinson, 1996). Contemporary theories of contrastive rhetoric are based on a new conceptualization of the nature of writing itself, not as a skill, but as a culturally-determined, cognitive activity which brings into play a complex body of knowledge: semantic, formal, and social (Purves & Purves, 1986). As a consequence, the investigation of written discourse across cultures has moved beyond a purely linguistic framework concerned with the structural analysis of text to encompass cognitive and sociocultural variables of writing, including the cultural and educational contexts in which text is produced. Today, the notion of L1 rhetorical transfer has been expanded to include linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions of language, comprising not only lexical, grammatical, and syntactic elements, but also discourse structures and stylistic choices, based on culturally-determined rhetorical preferences and

conventions. Moreover, recent studies also suggest that in addition to interference caused by L1 rhetorical transfer, L2 developmental issues and L1 writing ability are also significant factors affecting L2 writing performance. For example, as Holyoak and Piper (1997, p. 128) maintain, developmental factors in the L2 can be just as relevant as L1 rhetorical transfer if the management of lower level linguistic concerns has not reached threshold levels; i.e., morphosyntactic competence is a prerequisite for writing, requiring more than a minimal control of syntactic and lexical items in the target language. Friedlander (1990, p. 109) also notes that not only will L2 learners “transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second language [but] students who have not developed good strategies for writing in their first language will not have appropriate strategies to transfer to their second language.”

In orientation, contrastive rhetoric is essentially pragmatic and pedagogical, not in a methodological sense, but in providing teachers and students with knowledge of the links between culture and writing, and how discourse structures and stylistic choices are reflected in written products. As Swales (1990, pp. 64–65) points out, contrastive rhetoric is “an investigative area that is directly relevant to a pedagogically-oriented study of academic English” because of the insights it offers into differences between languages at the discursal level. This knowledge can be applied to L2 writing pedagogy by informing and educating L2 students about the rhetorical traditions of both their native and target languages (Leki, 1991), teaching them to appreciate their own native rhetorical traditions, to identify cross-cultural differences, and to make the transition to the organizational patterns of the target language (Mok, 1993). According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 200), “contrastive rhetoric focuses attention on seven types of knowledge in the teaching of writing”: (1) knowledge of rhetorical patterns of arrangement and the relative frequency of various patterns (e.g. exposition/argument: classification, definition, etc.); (2) knowledge of composing conventions and strategies needed to generate text (e.g. pre-writing, data-collection, revision, etc.); (3) knowledge of the morphosyntax of the target language, particularly as it applies to the intersentential level; (4) knowledge of the coherence-creating mechanisms of the target language; (5) knowledge of the writing conventions of the target language in the sense of both frequency and distribution of types and text appearance (e.g. letter, essay, report); (6) knowledge of the audience characteristics and expectations in the target culture; and (7) knowledge of the subject to be discussed, including both “what everyone knows” in the target culture and specialist knowledge (*ibid.*).

Nevertheless, as Purves (1988, p. 15) observes, although a teaching methodology for contrastive rhetoric is beginning to emerge, it is still very much in its “formative stages.” Research in contrastive rhetoric has proven effective in establishing correlations between culture and writing, but its “immediate practical uses...for ESL teachers are not altogether clear” (Leki, 1991, p. 137), and its “applications to classroom instruction have not developed correspondingly” (Raimes, 1991, p. 417), especially in terms of strategies for intervention and remediation. In fact, as Oi (1999, p. 85) points out, there have been few systematic attempts

to apply the findings of contrastive rhetoric to L2 composition pedagogy:

While expecting that logical patterns of organization differ cross-culturally and cross-linguistically, the writing teachers should find a way to present logical patterns and audience expectations of English academia, and should come up with an effective pedagogy to teach those notions to ESL students. However, because of the complexity of this issue, there have not been many presentations of ways that reflect the fruit of contrastive rhetoric research.

One of the principal goals of this paper is to redress this imbalance in a proposal of pedagogic action which offers solutions to the writing problems of Japanese EL2 students based on an integrated approach to composition instruction. Building on research findings in contrastive rhetoric, this approach combines general pedagogic principles with applied linguistic theory in a set of academic writing specifications designed to contribute to an effective teaching methodology for English L2 composition instruction at the university level in Japan, where the term *methodology* is defined as follows:¹

[A] *syllabus* is a specification of what is to be included in a language course. Designing a syllabus involves examining needs analyses and establishing goals. It then entails the selection, grading and sequencing of the language and other content into units of manageable material. The *methodology* employed in implementing the syllabus will include materials selection and development, and will involve a selection of the learning tasks, activities and exercise types, and how they are to be presented, in a particular environment, for teaching and learning; it will conclude with assessment and evaluation. (Jordan, 1997, p. 56)

In keeping with this characterization, the academic writing specifications proposed here will include (1) “materials selection and development”; (2) “a selection of learning tasks, activities, and exercise types”; (3) suggestions for “how they are to be presented” in the classroom; and (4) “assessment and evaluation” in the form of an empirical study designed to test the proposed methodology, which will appear in a second article in this series.

2. Review of the literature

In two previous studies (Davies, 2000b, 2001a), we described the principal characteristics of Japanese rhetoric from a sociohistorical perspective, identifying formative elements in the culture that influence rhetorical preferences and conventions, and assessing the educational environment in which writing skills are acquired in Japan. We determined that these issues are highly complex, and that the rhetorical models being taught in Japanese schools reflect a fundamental dichotomy in Japanese society, described by Kenzaburo Oe (1994) as a “split between two opposing poles of ambiguity,” between the forces of tradition and modernization, between the aesthetic and the utilitarian. As a consequence, two separate streams come together within the body of contemporary Japanese rhetoric, one defined in terms of aesthetic qualities and empathic forms of expression derived from Chinese influences on

native Japanese literary forms, the other characterized by the influence of the utilitarian rhetorical modes of modern English prose. The contradictions inherent in this dichotomy have created considerable confusion for both students and teachers which the authorities have done little to alleviate; as a result, many Japanese students have “mixed levels of awareness” concerning the rhetorical values of their own culture (Harder, 1984; Davies, 1999). In addition, because of the examination-oriented nature of the Japanese education system, Japanese students spend much less time learning to write in their L1 than young people in the West, and according to many experts, most do not receive any appreciable composition instruction after the sixth grade (Kimball, 1996, p. 57). In L2 contexts, most Japanese students will not have had much experience writing in English prior to entering university, nor will they have received much formal English writing instruction (Hirose, 1998, p. 51): “What they write in high school is mostly sentence-level translation from Japanese to English. In fact, translation at the sentence level is one of the most common writing practices not only in high schools but also in universities in Japan” (ibid.).

Nevertheless, as Oi (1999, p. 99) argues, the writing problems of Japanese EL2 students are “not inherent,” but are “the product of education,” resulting from “writing convention and educational tradition in Japan.” She maintains that “[t]hrough education, Japanese students will be able to learn the styles required by academic English” (ibid., p. 98). Many researchers would seem to agree with Oi’s assessment, and a variety of suggestions have been put forward to improve academic writing instruction in Japan, based on a wide range of perspectives on the nature of composition pedagogy itself:

All writing courses share a common goal: giving students enough guided practice in composing that they become more fluent, effective writers at the end of the course than they were at the beginning. To attain this goal we make pedagogical decisions based on what we know about how students learn to write. Our assumptions about composing, in turn, depend on theories, research, and classroom practices.... (Lindemann, 1995, p. 248)

Academic writing is so important for students of all kinds, and as it is such a wide umbrella term, it is hardly surprising that there is a range of approaches and types of practice for it. Sometimes these depend upon an underlying philosophy, sometimes upon the starting-point of the students, sometimes upon the purpose and type of writing... (Jordan, 1997, p. 164)

Kubota, for example, suggests that ideology should be placed at the philosophical center of classroom instruction in an approach to composition pedagogy known as critical literacy (1992), or critical multiculturalism (1999), which “aims at teaching and learning reading and writing with critical consciousness through posing questions about students’ perceptions of the world and liberating students from fixed forms of knowledge which legitimate unequal power relations and privilege certain groups of people while oppressing others (1992, pp. 130–131). As discussed previously (Davies, 2001b), however, there is a powerful school of thought within the ESL community which sees L2 composition instruction in essentially pragmatic terms, “as part of applied linguistics, accommodating itself to the prevailing

standards of inquiry and research in that field,” and adopting a research paradigm in which dominant studies are quantitative rather than ideological (Santos, 1992, p. 8). Moreover, although the primary frame of reference for critical theory and social constructionism is “American society [with] its inequalities, its exclusions, its power structures” (ibid.), teaching overseas “makes critical pedagogy much more problematic [as the] aims tend to be incompatible with explicit ideology in the classroom” (ibid., pp. 9–10). While the development of “critical consciousness” may certainly be a worthy goal in some contexts, it is difficult to see how Kubota’s approach to composition pedagogy is applicable to actual classroom conditions in Japan, where the best way to actually “empower” students would be to teach them effective written communication skills in both languages.

Another approach to solving the writing problems of Japanese EL2 students has been proposed by Kobayashi and Rinnert (1996), who suggest “[a] more flexible approach to permissible rhetorical patterns in EFL contexts [that] would recognize the importance of both L1 and L2 rhetorical organization, and would fit the findings of proponents of a more pluralistic rhetoric... (p. 425). Rhetorical pluralism, in this sense, can be defined as a form of cultural relativism applied to L2 writing contexts in which students are encouraged “to express their voices in their own cultural mode of expression” in the target language (Kubota, 1999, p. 26). In keeping with supporters of the process approach, Kobayashi and Rinnert (op. cit., p. 427) conclude that “teachers should attend to fostering students’ ability to discover meaning through their writing; this can be done within a flexible approach to permissible rhetorical organization.” Unfortunately, research suggests that these conclusions are misconceived. Although some “soft process” may certainly be useful at lower levels of L2 composition (Swales, 1990), and as Kobayashi and Rinnert rightly point out, “help[ing] students understand how the reader-writer relationship varies in different cultures” (p. 426), and “providing [them] with short sample essays that demonstrate contrasting L1 and L2 rhetorical features” (p. 427) can be beneficial in raising their awareness, at the very heart of Japanese EL2 students’ writing difficulties is the issue of rhetorical organization. Advocating the same lack of concern for organizational structure that students acquire in *kansōbun* models of Japanese composition will not enhance their ability to do writing of an academic nature (Davies & Ide, 1997; Davies, 1999, 2001a), and although it may be true that a strong emphasis on rhetorical patterns can initially lead to “artificial, mechanical-sounding writing,” providing students with knowledge of appropriate discourse-level organization will create the foundations necessary for them to develop their own individual writing styles at more advanced levels of study. As stated previously, an emphasis on rhetorical organization does not deny the importance of the creative impulse, nor the validity of individual variations from the norm, but the primary concern for composition pedagogy should be to isolate the norm itself so that its principal features can be taught to students. Furthermore, explicitly teaching the importance of English rhetorical structure does not suggest any *disrespect* for “social and cultural assumptions that underlie L2 students’ first language writing,” as Kobayashi and Rinnert seem to imply (pp. 425–426). As Oi and Kamimura (1997, p. 65)

argue, “teaching the norms of English writing does not...imply an intent to change the cognitive systems of the students, or to ‘anglicize’ the ESL students as might be feared” in some quarters.

In a contrasting approach to L2 composition pedagogy, based on contemporary theories of contrastive rhetoric and research in cognitive science and reading comprehension (Davies, 2000a), a number of writers have suggested teaching composition skills by focusing primarily on top-level rhetorical structures, also described as schemata, macrostructures, and superstructures (Nagasaka, 1992; Fister-Stoga, 1993; Yoshimura, 1996). According to Carrell (1987, p. 47), “teaching ESL writers about the top-level rhetorical organization..., teaching them how to choose the appropriate plan to accomplish specific communication goals, and teaching them how to signal a text’s organization through appropriate linguistic devices should all function to make ESL writing more effective.” In other words, explicitly teaching macrostructures in “the identification of text structure apart from content, as well as providing practice in using different text structures on a variety of topics, should provide benefits to ESL writers” (ibid., p. 52). Unfortunately, however, the “applications of these...discourse theories... have been few [and] empirical investigations offer conflicting evidence about the relationship between adequate and appropriate superstructure and a holistic quality score of an essay” (Connor, 1990, p. 170). Similarly, in the Japanese context, although “the insights of contrastive rhetoric have great pedagogical potential in the ESL writing classroom..., applicational studies of those findings in actual classroom teaching have...been scarce” (Oi & Kamimura, 1997, pp. 65–66). An exception is a recent investigation of argumentative writing by sophomore English majors at a Japanese university carried out by Oi and Kamimura (1997) in which participants wrote a pretest essay, were given one lesson on rhetorical differences between Japanese and English based on short writing samples in the two languages, and then wrote a posttest essay. The authors report considerable improvement in students’ writing skills along several dimensions as a result of “only one instructional session and within a short period of time” (p. 81), claiming that “their study is one of the first attempts to prove that contrastive rhetoric has great potential in the EFL writing classroom” (ibid.). However, although the findings obtained by Oi and Kamimura are promising and confirm the viability of conducting longer-term studies of a similar nature, the theoretical assumptions underlying their approach need to be clarified, since a single lesson is clearly inadequate to establish an effective teaching methodology, and a good deal more empirical evidence will have to be gathered on how the selection of specific teaching materials and pedagogical strategies affects student writing performance. The empirical study that follows offers an initial response in addressing these issues.

3. Identifying pedagogical solutions

In applying the results of research in contrastive rhetoric to the L2 composition classroom, the proposed pedagogy developed in the following investigation attempts to

integrate key concepts in ELT with applied linguistic theory and principles of composition instruction in a teaching methodology that offers solutions to the writing difficulties of Japanese EL2 students. In identifying these pedagogical solutions, the following fundamental issues in teaching L2 writing skills in English are addressed: (1) the importance of language awareness, consciousness raising, and explicitness in classroom instruction; (2) integrating process with product; (3) the relevance of form-focused instruction, including the theoretical assumptions underlying an emphasis on forms, models, and conventions; and (4) providing students with appropriate corrective feedback within a framework that encourages independent self-correction.

3.1 Language awareness, consciousness raising, and explicit classroom instruction

There are a number of basic concepts derived from research in cognitive science, psycholinguistics, and second language acquisition that play an important role in English language teaching, among which the most frequently cited in terms of the pedagogical applications of contrastive rhetoric are language awareness, consciousness raising, and explicit classroom instruction. "Raising students' consciousness" is commonly viewed as one of the most important goals of L2 composition instruction, because it is thought that by enhancing students' conscious awareness of the rhetorical traditions of both their native language and the target language, they will be able to identify cross-cultural differences, thereby making an easier transition to the rhetorical patterns of the target language (Leki, 1991; Raimes, 1991; Mok, 1993, Fister-Stoga, 1993). Because of the mixed levels of awareness Japanese EL2 students have for the rhetorical values of their own culture, providing lessons in which they examine L1 texts can be a most useful "consciousness-raising device," according to Fister-Stoga (1993, p. 153):

[A]fter exploring the *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* model with students, they often have what Leki (1991) calls 'instant enlightenment about their writing in English, as students become conscious of the implicit assumptions behind the way they construct written ideas and behind the way English does.' (Although this does not imply 'instant improvement.') ...That is, they understand that text organization is ultimately tied to cultural conventions.

Leki (1991; cited in Mok, 1993, p. 159) maintains that L1 and L2 readings should be used in tandem, however, so that students will have models for comparison and analysis: "In so doing, students will be able to discover and consider such rhetorical differences as use of logic, writers' attitudes, and writer-reader relationships between the two languages." Mok (*ibid.*, p. 157) claims that "[a]wareness of [these] differences is important because it makes students realize that to become part of the target language discourse community, they need to develop new attitudes, to meet certain criteria of the target language's traditions, and, in some cases, to put aside their native language habits."

In ELT contexts, language awareness is defined as "an interface mechanism to promote heightened awareness of language forms between the first language (L1) and the target

language (TL) and thereby assist second-language (L2) learning” (Masny, 1997, p. 105). In other words, it is considered an effective tool for language instruction which “draws upon metalanguage to help explain aspects of the language code in the language classroom” (ibid.), allowing teachers “to draw attention to similarities and differences between the...L1 and the TL” in order to raise students’ conscious awareness of these differences (ibid., p. 106). However, although language awareness and consciousness raising are sometimes used synonymously in the literature, there are important distinctions between them, described by James (1992, pp. 183–184) as follows:

[M]etacognition of language comes in two versions: awareness (usually collocated as *language awareness*) and consciousness (usually in the collocation *consciousness raising*). At times they are treated as synonyms, and even get hybridised as conscious awareness. At other times they are treated as unrelated. ...We can define (language) awareness as an ability to contemplate metacognitively a language over which one already has a degree of skilled control and about which one will therefore have developed a coherent set of intuitions..., [or] ‘implicit knowledge that has become explicit.’ ...Consciousness raising is by contrast for learners who are not yet in command of such skills.

Language awareness and consciousness raising are thus associated with the notions of explicit and implicit knowledge, although, as Schmidt (1990, p. 214) points out, the terms themselves remain problematic:

Our ordinary language use of words like *conscious*, *consciousness* and *consciously* is ambiguous. This is one reason why theorists in psychology and applied linguistics have preferred to use related technical terms such as *explicit* vs. *implicit* knowledge (Bialystok, 1979, 1981; Krashen 1981; Odlin 1986; Sharwood Smith 1981)...., [and] *declarative* vs. *procedural* knowledge (Anderson 1982; Ellis 1989a; Faerch & Kasper 1984; O’Malley, Chamot & Walker 1987).... Unfortunately, the use of technical terms does not by itself eliminate the ambiguities.

In composition pedagogy, the expressions *declarative knowledge* and *procedural knowledge* (i.e., knowledge of *what* and knowledge of *how*) are often used to describe how forms of knowledge are brought to bear on writing. Hillocks (1986, p. 72), for example, distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge that writers make use of: substantive and formal—the former denotes “knowledge of facts, opinions, beliefs, events, and so forth”; the latter signifies “knowledge of lexical, syntactic, rhetorical, and discourse forms used to express substantive knowledge (and perhaps to store it in memory).” Cognitive scientists, on the other hand, distinguish between two other types of knowledge: declarative and procedural—the former “allows us to identify phenomena and to name or recall information stored in memory”; the latter “comprises the ability to produce, transform, or instantiate that knowledge.” These two sets of knowledge are brought together in the act of writing (ibid., p. 73):²

Declarative knowledge of substance can be thought of as the data base of any piece of writing—the facts, opinions, beliefs, and images incorporated in the discourse, whatever its form and purpose may be. Procedural knowledge related to substance permits the recall, ordering, and transformation of substantive knowledge. ...At higher levels..., procedural knowledge includes such strategies as classifying data and generalizing about it. Declarative knowledge of form involves the ability to identify forms, then parts, and their relationships. Procedural knowledge of form is the ability to produce examples of particular forms.

Explicit classroom instruction generally contributes to declarative knowledge, whereas systematic practice by the individual generates procedural knowledge, and both of these forms of knowledge are important in any kind of skills training such as learning to write, playing a musical instrument, competing in sports, and so forth. In other words, the development of students' procedural knowledge requires that they have extensive practice in actually writing (hence the adage "you learn to write by writing, writing, and more writing"), while the kind of explicit instruction that will advance students' declarative knowledge depends largely on materials selection, development, and presentation, including learning tasks, activities, and exercises—in short, the teaching methodology.

Explicit instruction has also been the subject of extensive research in second language acquisition where it is assumed that "learners are surrounded by language from a variety of sources...known as *input*. Input which becomes part of the learning process is known as *intake*. In psycholinguistic research, there is a particular interest in the intake...as a result of learners paying conscious attention to the input: this kind of intake is known as *noticing* (Schmidt, 1991)" (Batstone, 1996, p. 273). It is thought that one way in which classroom instruction can encourage noticing, resulting in input being converted to intake, is through explicitness—for example, "by providing overt metalinguistic explanations" (*ibid.*), or through other forms of presentation such as modeling (see section 3.3.1):

Various SLA researchers hold that attention to input is necessary for input to become intake that is available for further mental processing (Long, 1991; R. Ellis, 1993; N. Ellis, 1994b, 1994d). Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1994) argues that the subjective experience of 'noticing' is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake.... [In other words], intake is the subset of input that is attended to and noticed.... (Ellis, 1995, p. 124)

In terms of L2 composition pedagogy, Kaplan (1987, p. 11) points out that native speakers generally recognize the circumstances in which rhetorical forms can be used, as well as the constraints that these choices place on the way the resulting texts can be written. However, non-native speakers do not possess "as complete an inventory of possible alternatives," do not recognize "the sociolinguistic constraints on those alternatives," and do not understand the limitations their choices impose on the texts that follow. Kaplan maintains that from a pedagogical point of view "it is the responsibility of the second-language teacher to increase the size of the inventory, to stipulate the sociolinguistic constraints, and to illustrate the ways in which a choice limits the potentially following text."

In attaining these goals, explicit classroom instruction can be particularly useful, as Mok (1993, p. 158) points out in the Japanese context:

[T]he Japanese seldom compose with an audience in mind except when writing letters. Furthermore, they assume a high degree of shared knowledge with their readers. These mismatches create barriers which make it difficult for Japanese writers to function effectively among native speakers of English. Hence, there is a need for the teacher to teach them audience analysis skills and the expectations of the English reader in the pre-writing stage. In an academic context, it is especially important for the teacher to explain *explicitly* to the students the widely accepted criteria used by academic audiences to evaluate their work. Such essential ingredients of good English expository writing as clarity, significance, support, unity, and conciseness are not necessarily taken for granted by Japanese learners. (italics added)

3.2 Integrating process with product

There are a variety of *approaches* to teaching English L2 composition, all of which are based on “theoretical positions and beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of language learning, and the applicability of both to pedagogical methods” (Brown, 1987, p. 51). For the past three decades, there has been a heated and sometimes vitriolic debate taking place about the way writing skills should be taught in the English-speaking world which centers on two basic approaches to the teaching of composition, most often described as process vs product (Davies, 2001b). At present, however, there is a growing consensus among writing experts that the “radical dichotomization” created by this polarity is counterproductive and misleading, and that effective teaching requires the integration of both points of view. As Kaszubski (1998, p. 173) observes, “a number of...authors have recently spoken in favour of keeping the balance between process and product, fluency and accuracy, and content and form.” Kaplan (1988, p. 296), for example, points out that a composition is “a product arrived at through a process,” while Purves and Purves (1986, p. 184) maintain that in “a cultural approach to writing we cannot disentangle ‘process’ from ‘product’” because in viewing writing as a culturally-determined, cognitive activity, the act itself becomes inextricably linked to its results. An increasing number of composition textbooks are being written from a similar standpoint, as Smalzer (1996, p. v) describes in the introduction to *Write to be Read*: “The methodology is a blend of both the process and product approaches to writing. The process approach encourages students to develop their thinking about a topic. The product approach, relying heavily on student essays as models, helps writing students meet the expectations of educated native speakers of English.” Textbooks designed for teacher training and development are also increasingly advocating that composition teachers maintain a balance between process and product, as well as between content and form, as illustrated by the following excerpt from *A Course in Language Teaching*:

The purpose of writing, in principle, is the expression of ideas, the conveying of a message to the reader; so the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of the writing. On the other hand, the writer needs also to pay some attention to formal aspects: neat handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation, as well as acceptable grammar and careful selection of vocabulary. This is because much higher standards of language are normally demanded in writing than in speech: more careful constructions, more precise and varied vocabulary, more correctness of expression in general. Also, the slow and reflective nature of the process of writing in itself enables the writer to devote time and attention to formal aspects during the process of production.... One of our problems in teaching writing is to maintain a fair balance between content and form when defining our requirements and assessing. (Ur, 1996, p. 163)

It would thus seem that the distinction between these two positions has been overstated, and that the process/product debate has produced a false and misleading dichotomy (Spack, 1988, p. 29), “a strawman which has been created by some composition researchers” that has little relevance to students’ actual writing needs (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996, p. 34).

Nevertheless, an appropriate balance between process and product perspectives is important in establishing an effective teaching methodology for students studying at the university level, where the development of academic writing skills is the primary objective. At this level, “composition instruction which concentrates on the academic essay provides the basis for all other forms of academic writing” (Smalzer, 1996, p. v), and as Kaszubski (1998, pp. 173–174) points out, “the academic approach, with its pragmatic emphasis on conventionality, has a lot to offer to advanced EFL learners, who, themselves, are often university students expected to comply with academic standards [in] essay writing.” In meeting these standards, Leki and Carson (1997, pp. 63–64) question whether writing that makes personal experience and individual self-expression the primary focus of composition instruction realistically prepares students for higher level academic work, arguing that expressivist modes of process writing deny students access to powerful writing genres and generate “solipsistic and self-referential” attitudes towards composing.³ In the Japanese context, the results of research in contrastive rhetoric suggest that caution should be exercised in adopting certain perspectives within the process approach, especially those associated with expressivist modes that stress the personal voice in writing, because they strongly resemble *kansōbun* models of Japanese composition pedagogy, which neglect organizational structure and promote a highly personalized approach to composing. Since *kansōbun* are the most frequently practiced compositions in Japanese schools, they are the form of writing that Japanese university students remember most clearly in relation to their earlier education; hence, they have a great influence in shaping students’ notions about writing in general. When applied to English academic writing, however, the *kansōbun* model can be extremely problematic, resulting in counterproductive writing habits that should not be reinforced. In examining the “disparity between language students writing on personal topics and writing for academic and professional purposes” in Japan, Kimball (1996, p. 57), for example, argues that “approaches are needed in which writers learn to fulfill the

contextual demands of the academic subject matter. Japanese college students...face the prospects of researching and reporting in English about their fields of study as they proceed to graduate school and assume their professional duties. For these students, the practicality of academic writing seems obvious.”

On the other hand, as Horowitz (1986, pp. 141) points out, although the process approach is not a full-fledged theory of writing, it does offer a useful collection of teaching techniques that have “undeniable merits” in certain contexts:

Multiple drafts? Of course. Too many of our students believe that once it is down on the page, their job is finished.... Group work? Certainly. Our students surely can teach each other as much as or more than we can teach them. Get it down on the page and then organize it? This will help some of our students prepare for some academic tasks. Choose topics of personal interest? This has always been an effective technique at the lower levels. Gentle peer evaluation? Since we are teaching a developmental skill, we certainly must walk the line between discouraging our students with low grades and giving them a false impression of their abilities. (ibid., p. 143)

For Japanese university students, the cognitivist view of process writing, which focuses on the intellectual processes a writer goes through while composing, can be especially useful in improving the quality of their written work in English. As Hinds (1987, p. 152) points out, “[a]s simplistic as this may sound, it will be instructive for some writers from Japan to be informed that even native speakers of English frequently go through several drafts of a paper before being satisfied that information is presented in the most effective way.” Explicit instruction concerning the steps involved in the writing process (i.e., planning, outlining, writing, editing, and rewriting) can be of great benefit to Japanese students, many of whom are accustomed to composing “exactly one draft which becomes the finished product” (ibid., p. 145). Hinds claims that teaching Japanese students to re-conceptualize the writing process can be an important step in improving their writing skills in English, and this can be accomplished by helping them become consciously aware of differences in attitude towards reader/writer responsibility in the two languages (ibid., pp. 151–152):

In addition to teaching students in ESL writing classes that there are differences in rhetorical styles between English and their native language, it may be necessary to take a further step and teach a new way to conceptualize the writing process. It may be necessary to instruct students from...Japan that the writing process in English involves a different set of assumptions from the ones they are accustomed to working with. It is not enough for them to write with the view that there is a sympathetic reader who believes a reader’s task is to ferret out whatever meaning the author has intended. Such non-native English writers will have to learn that effective written communication in English is the sole provenance of the writer.

Research in contrastive rhetoric suggests that by integrating these cognitive views of process writing with text-oriented (i.e., product) approaches to L2 composition instruction, an effective teaching methodology can be developed that will provide solutions to the academic

writing difficulties of Japanese EL2 students, especially at higher levels of academic study. In general, these text-oriented approaches emphasize linguistic features of text from a number of different perspectives that are “by no means discrete and sequential” (Raimes, 1991, p. 412). The most influential of these approaches include controlled composition, which stresses lexical and syntactic features in writing; current-traditional rhetoric, which emphasizes discourse-level text structures; and English for academic purposes (EAP), which focuses on the writer as a member of the academic discourse community (Davies, 2001b). Specific elements of each of these approaches can be of value in providing Japanese EL2 students with entry-level instruction in academic writing at the university level: controlled composition in terms of remediation related to lower-level linguistic features; current-traditional rhetoric because of its central concern for “the logical construction and arrangement of discourse forms” (Silva, 1990, p. 14), including an emphasis on modes of reasoning (i.e., illustration, definition, classification, etc.) and patterns of rhetorical organization (i.e., description, narration, exposition, and persuasion), a sequence of instruction that progresses from words to sentences to paragraphs to essays, and an insistence on the importance of the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis in paragraph development (Corbett, 1990, p. 572); and English for academic purposes (EAP) in terms of its focus on academic discourse genres and writing tasks designed to prepare students for integration into the academic discourse community. In brief, text-oriented approaches to academic writing are *form-focused*, emphasizing “principles, forms, and models” (Lindemann, 1995, p. 251); therefore, in order to understand how the diverse elements of text can be most effectively integrated and presented to students in the L2 classroom it is important to examine the theoretical assumptions underlying the use of forms in composition pedagogy.

3.3 Form-focused instruction

Winterowd claims that “the concept of form in discourse...concerns the way in which the mind perceives infinitely complex relationships. The way, indeed, in which the mind constructs discourse” (1975, p. 163). Coe agrees, stating that “the standard formal *patterns of development* (e.g., comparison and contrast, cause and effect, etc.), [for example], correspond with basic patterns of thought” (1987, p. 22). From the standpoint of composition pedagogy, *form* becomes *organization*, while in cognitive science and reading comprehension research, *form* underlies the concept of *schemata*, or mental representations of a text in the mind of a reader, also described in writing contexts as top-level rhetorical structures, macrostructures, and superstructures. As Coe (1987, p. 19) points out, recognizing culturally-accepted forms in reading and employing these forms appropriately in writing is essential for successful communication to take place:

Recognizing forms—both of the whole text (sonnet, editorial, term paper) and of parts within the text (definition, example, instructions)—is an important aspect of reading. Readers’ abilities to recognize—even (or perhaps especially) subliminally—various kinds of formal patterns of development allow them to ‘process’ text (i.e., to understand it) efficiently. Those who fail to

recognize forms, perhaps because they are from another culture or subculture, not part of the community, often misinterpret function, hence meaning. Writers' abilities to use formal patterns particular readers will recognize allow them to communicate accurately and effectively. In general, communication is most likely to succeed, to generate understanding rather than misunderstanding, when writer(s) and reader(s) know and use the same forms.

Forms that are used in reading and writing do not exist in a vacuum, however, but are embedded in culture as the result of the evolution of rhetorical traditions within linguistic communities over long periods of time. As such, "[f]orms are synchronic structures that function as generalized memories of diachronic processes," or put another way, "forms are attitudes frozen in synchronicity" (ibid.). In this sense, forms that are expressed as rhetorical structures function as a kind of social memory: "Like language, form is thus social. One function of discourse communities is to provide, prescribe, and prefer forms. Learning conventional forms, often by a tacit process of 'indwelling,' is a way of learning the community's discourse, gaining access, communicating with that community" (ibid.). In other words, not only are forms in discourse "culture-bound," but "[l]earning socially significant forms—and understanding how they function, how to use them appropriately—is a key to success (sometimes even to survival) in a discourse community" (ibid., p. 21). As Purves and Hawisher (1990, p. 183) argue, "'good writing' is a culturally defined phenomenon, and... good academic writing has a particular definition within the academic circles of a culture. ... The content that is written and the forms or structures used to encode that content constitute the surface manifestations of those cultural differences."

This does not mean, however, that forms in discourse are fixed and immutable, or that students should be asked to learn them by rote. In fact, as Coe argues, teachers should encourage students to "think critically about form" and allow them to experience both their "constraining and generative powers" (ibid.):

Like other rhetorical factors, form should be taught in context, in terms of appropriateness and effectiveness. When teaching such standard forms as the thesis paragraph (i.e., thesis statement + partition used to prefigure the argument), it matters that we explain the importance of this form in academic (and other professional) discourse, make clear why it predominates in certain types of discourse (academic, scientific, professional—and textbooks). We should validate...this form by showing that...information can be taken in more efficiently if one knows in advance the outline of what is to be learned. In this way, we should put whatever forms we teach in functional rhetorical context. (ibid., p. 22)

Moreover, providing students with detailed knowledge of the structure and function of forms in discourse allows them to focus their attention on generating the information they need to "fill" these forms, freeing them to concentrate on invention. In cognitive terms, giving students access to forms releases short-term processing capacity which can then be redirected to other components of writing such as content development or the management of lower-level linguistic features:

Behind the traditional conception of form lies a long-dead metaphor... In this metaphor, form is a *container* to be filled (hence the term *content*). ...Form is empty, an absence. But this emptiness has shape (i.e., form). In human beings, at least, this emptiness creates a desire to find what might fill it... Form, in its emptiness, is heuristic, for it guides a structured search. ... Form becomes, therefore, a motive for generating information. Like any heuristic, it motivates a search for information of a certain type...; by constraining the search, form directs attention. (Coe, 1987, pp. 15–18)

Thus, explicit instruction in discourse forms not only provides students with an effective heuristic, guiding their search for content, but it also enhances the creative process in writing. As students learn to manipulate these forms with increasing confidence, they will begin to develop their own personal voice in writing, not in the expressivist sense, but as an expression of individuality constructed on the foundations of culturally-prescribed notions of rhetorical structure. In L2 composition contexts, where students do not possess native-speaker intuitions about writing and often do not recognize the circumstances in which rhetorical structures can be used, the “form as container” metaphor can be of particular value for teachers in developing models of these forms which will allow them to present information to L2 students in a clear and comprehensible manner.

3.3.1 Modeling

As pointed out earlier, research in psycholinguistics reveals that one of the ways in which teachers can most effectively encourage *noticing* in the classroom (i.e., intake resulting from learners paying conscious attention to input) is through explicit instruction—for example, by providing students with “overt metalinguistic explanations” (Batstone, 1996, p. 273). However, in L2 composition classes taught by native-speaking teachers, such explanations generally take place in the target language, resulting in potential problems for students who may not fully comprehend all the information being provided. Therefore, it is often necessary for NSTs to develop specialized teaching materials and presentation techniques to clarify and reinforce their explanations, many of which are based on the use of modeling.

Models come in many different forms and are used for a variety of purposes, although, as Tharp and Gallimore (1988, p. 48) state, the basic modeling process is the same regardless of whether meaning is conveyed through pictures, words, or physical actions. Graphic representations are generally considered the most powerful type of model in terms of commanding learners’ attention, since it is often difficult to convey through words the amount of information contained in images. As a result, written descriptions or metalinguistic explanations will sometimes be “transformed into images and symbols” which are particularly useful in encouraging noticing and enhancing learner comprehension in the L2 classroom because they function to *illustrate* the information carried in texts, presenting their contents in a different medium, one that is “maximally transparent,” and thus “maximally understandable” (ibid., p. 46). Indeed, according to Tharp and Gallimore (ibid., p. 48), “research has

shown that the active coding of modeled descriptions increases learning and retention of complex skills [since] that which is modeled is internalized and represented by the learner as an image, a paradigm-icon, for self-guidance.”

By far the most common type of model used in the composition classroom, however, involves written text rather than graphic representations, and this practice is known as prose modeling (Stolarek, 1994, p. 155). In a recent survey of American university-level composition instructors, for example, 76% reported using “prose modeling on a regular basis in their classes, with the largest number of respondents believing modeling was most effective in giving students stylistic models for their writing and in teaching rhetorical modes” (ibid.). According to Charney and Carlson (1995, p. 90), prose models represent “a text written by a specific writer in a specific situation that is subsequently reused to exemplify a genre.... Such models are often used to supplement explicit guidelines or ‘rules’...for spelling out some of the conventional features of the genre....” Stolarek (1994, p. 154) agrees, describing prose modeling as “the act of determining the defining characteristics of a model text, that is, a text which is seen as being exemplary of its kind, and developing methods of duplicating these defining characteristics using different content.”

Some critics caution that not enough is known about the effects of prose modeling in language learning and that students can “misuse models, imitating their weaknesses as well as their strengths, or applying the model inappropriately or too literally...” (Charney & Carlson, 1995, p. 90). Purves and Hawisher (1990, p. 187) concur, stating that although “[j]udgments of texts based on mental models have informed rhetoric...and continue to inform writing pedagogy and the various rhetorical communities of the world..., [t]he use of these models can have a beneficial or a deleterious effect...[as] they are imperfectly understood.”

Nevertheless, the use of prose models in composition pedagogy appears to have widespread support among writing experts: Rodrigues (1985, p. 26), for example, argues that students “need structure [and] they need models to practice,” while Hairston (1982) insists that teachers “need to continue giving students models of excellence to imitate” (cited in Stolarek, 1994, p. 154). According to Hillocks (1986, p. 87), providing students with detailed criteria about the features that make a model exemplary, as well as giving them extensive practice in applying these criteria in order to internalize them in guiding their own production, results in compositions of much higher quality. Stolarek (1994, pp. 154–155) also points out that the use of prose modeling can be beneficial in improving students’ compositions:

Those who support modeling assert that style can be improved through the modification of classical imitation exercises (Corbett, 1965, 1971), that models acquaint students with complicated structural conventions and patterns they have not previously used in their writing, thus enhancing creativity (McC Campbell, 1966), or that creative imitation promotes originality in student writing by providing students with stylistic options, thus freeing them to concentrate on invention (D’Angelo, 1973). Others, such as Purves and Purves (1986), consider knowledge of models one of the three forms of knowledge (the others being semantic and pragmatic knowledge)

imperative in learning how to write within the context of a particular culture.

Although the number of empirical studies analyzing prose modeling is “surprisingly small” and “little research is available on the specific effects of models on the writing process or on the effects of various kinds of models” (Charney & Carlson, 1995, p. 91), the findings of two recent investigations strongly support the use of models in the composition classroom.

Stolarek’s (1994) study examined the differences in response between expert and novice writers who were asked to write essays in an unfamiliar prose form after being given different sets of instructions, some of which included a model of the unfamiliar prose form and some of which did not. The results indicate that students write more successful products and use more active and evaluative strategies when given models in conjunction with standard instructions than when given models or guidelines alone, and that modeling enhances metacognitive functioning during the writing process. Metacognitive skill (i.e., the knowledge and conscious control of one’s own thinking processes) has long been recognized “as a feature of expert response to problem-solving in general...as well as expert writing... Expert writers are more consciously aware of what they write, they make more decisions about planning and monitoring as they write, and they are more likely to evaluate their writing as they write than are novices” (ibid., p. 156). As Stolarek points out, student writers “need to be actively aware of the rhetorical goals behind a writing strategy” and develop “self-conscious awareness of writing methods in an effort to produce more expert responses...” (ibid., p. 157). This study reveals that students “who engaged in prose modelling the most, that is, who most consciously modeled their work on the characteristics of the provided model, were also the most likely to engage in metacognitive thought during writing, and were most successful in completing [their writing tasks]” (ibid.). Stolarek (ibid., p. 168) concludes that “in modeling formal characteristics, conscious imitation of the form being modeled leads to success in achieving that form,” and that the ability “to consciously criticize [one’s] own text and its similarity to a prose model” during the process of writing facilitates metacognitive thinking and results in texts of higher quality.

In a similar study, Charney and Carlson (1995) investigated the effects of using prose models on the quality of research texts written by university students, since “[a] common technique for teaching genres such as the experimental research report is to present students with model texts that can be imitated or drawn on while students are writing their own texts” (p. 90). In this investigation, participants were divided into two groups: a control group who were not provided with models, and an experimental group who were given three different models of varying quality. The results indicate that the use of models increases the salience of the topical information provided by students and improves the overall organization of their research texts; in addition, there were significant benefits for students in “seeing several good models and observing the range of variation among them,” as well as in “seeing counterexamples, examples of unsuccessful or wrongheaded efforts. Charney and Carlson (1995, p. 92) conclude that “comparing models of different quality may

help students identify the strengths of the models and avoid the weaknesses,” and that “model texts are a rich resource that may prove useful to writers in different ways at different stages of their development.” These results also suggest that “early experience in evaluating and drawing from models will be of lasting value,” and that models can be effective tools for student writers in learning “the more enduring conventional forms or for understanding those that apply most broadly across the discipline” (ibid., p. 116).

3.3.2 Conventions

The conclusions drawn from research on modeling suggest that it is important for composition teachers to ensure that students “both within and without the culture” are aware of “the nature of the models held by the culture, to show that they are conventional and human and not divine, and that they may be violated with some attendant risk” (Purves & Hawisher, 1990, p. 197). As Purves (1986, pp. 50 & 39) notes, “[w]ith organization, style, and argumentation [i.e., rhetoric], one is dealing with *convention*”; as a consequence, “instruction in any discipline is acculturation, or the bringing of the student into the ‘interpretive community’ of the discipline, [which is also] a ‘rhetorical community,’ a field with certain norms, expectations, and conventions with respect to writing.”

Purves and Hawisher (1990, p. 197) also point out that although most L2 students are aware to some extent of the conventions that apply in English to spelling, neatness, and grammar, many of them “seem to think these are the only conventions that exist, [and] that by attending to them, they will be good writers. Such is not the case in the world of writing, and the higher up in the system one goes, the more discourse conventions become important.” In the Japanese case, although most L2 composition students have learned a good deal of the grammar and lexicon of English, they have rarely been taught the patterns of organization and style expected in academic writing, even at higher levels of education; as a result, most Japanese EL2 students have a great deal to both learn and unlearn when writing in their second language and in a new cultural context. However, as Purves (1986, p. 49) observes, “[s]tudents have learned to become members of the rhetorical community that dominates their educational system; that is a part of their survival in that system. When they enter another system, they are asked to participate as full-fledged members of the second system without fully knowing what its rules and conditions might be.” Therefore, “it is important for teachers to be honest with students about the nature of the conventions of writing that abound in the academic and non-academic world” (Purves & Hawisher, 1990, p. 197). In other words, it is not of any value to try to do away with these conventions as some writers have suggested,⁴ nor to deal with them in a “cynical” way. Conventions should be taught as conventions, and it should be acknowledged that they are created by humans “with all their wisdom and folly.” As Purves (1986, p. 50) argues, “[s]uch an attitude combined with an eye that can analyze differences in writing without passing judgment on those who are not the same as us is the best way for the teacher to deal with the non-native student—in a basic writing class or in any writing class.”

3.4 Corrective feedback

Current controversies regarding corrective feedback notwithstanding, a chronic dilemma that all composition instructors face is how much to emphasize structural and mechanical correctness as opposed to content and organization in student writing. Ur (1996, p. 170) addresses this problem as follows: “We should, I think, correct language mistakes; our problem is how to do so without conveying the message that these are the only, or main, basis for evaluation of a piece of writing”:

When a student submits a piece of original writing, the most important thing about it is, arguably, its content: whether the ideas or events that were written about were significant and interesting. Then there is the organization and presentation: whether the ideas were arranged in a way that was easy to follow and pleasing to read. Finally, there is the question of language forms: whether the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation were of an acceptable standard of accuracy. Many teachers are aware that content and organization are important, but find themselves relating mainly to language forms in their feedback, conveying the implicit message that these are what matters. [However], [s]tudents also want their language mistakes to be corrected. (Ask them!). (ibid.)

Providing L2 students with systematic corrective feedback on their writing has three main functions: it establishes objective criteria by which they can evaluate their own writing skills, it focuses their attention on specific areas of their writing that may require improvement, and most importantly, it encourages independent self-correction. According to Jordan (1997, p. 175), the principal objective of corrective feedback is “to help students develop writer autonomy as quickly as possible; consequently, they ‘have to be able to accept responsibility for editing, correcting and proof-reading their own texts.’”

In order to achieve these goals, students should be required to submit two drafts of their writing assignments. The first draft is proofread by the instructor and errors are identified by means of proofreading symbols. As Jordan points out, “[t]here is evidence...that shows that the use of teacher cues [i.e., the use of proofreading, or correcting codes] assists students to engage actively in the process of self-correction...” (ibid., p. 172). Students should be expected to correct their mistakes independently, following the cues provided by the correcting codes, and should keep a cumulative record of their errors on an assessment form designed to help them to identify specific aspects of their writing that need attention (i.e., in terms of grammar, usage, and mechanics).

The final draft is submitted after students make revisions, and according to Ur (1996, p. 171), this “rewriting is very important: not only because it reinforces learning, but also because rewriting is an integral part of the writing process as a whole.” She argues that “it makes sense to see the first version as provisional, and to regard the rewritten, final version as ‘the’ assignment, the one that is submitted for formal assessment” (ibid.). The rewritten version is corrected by the instructor⁵ by means of reformulation, which “consists, basically, of a native speaker rewriting a student’s text, as far as possible retaining the intended meaning. Reformulation provides the student with information on how a native speaker

would have written the same thing, i.e. a kind of model” (Jordan, 1997, p. 175). Finally, the composition is evaluated and a grade assigned in accordance with the assessment tool being used; i.e., holistic or analytic. Holistic scoring requires assigning a single grade based on the instructor’s subjective evaluation of the composition as a whole, while analytic assessment involves the separation of the various features of the composition (i.e., organization, content, vocabulary, etc.) into components for scoring purposes—scores are numerical in nature and the final grade is derived from the sum of the ratings for each component.

3.5 Conclusions

Building on insights provided by research in contrastive rhetoric, the pedagogical approach proposed in this paper integrates general pedagogic principles with applied linguistic theory in a set of academic writing specifications designed to contribute to an effective teaching methodology for English L2 composition instruction at the university level in Japan. This approach synthesizes a number of important aspects of L2 composition pedagogy, including the concepts of language awareness, consciousness raising, and explicit classroom instruction; integrating process with product; form-focused instruction, especially in terms of models and conventions; and corrective feedback that encourages independent self-correction among students.

Based on these principles, an approach to teaching academic writing to Japanese students of English was developed in which the following main elements were emphasized: (1) the identification of rhetorical features distinguishing Japanese and English, (2) the steps involved in the writing process in English (i.e., planning, outlining, writing, editing, and rewriting), (3) the description of macrostructures in English expository and argumentative writing, (4) the isolation of grammatical features such as cohesive ties functioning at lower levels of discourse, and (5) the implementation of a system for self-monitoring by students at the morphosyntactic level. The basic premise underlying these specifications is that by stressing lower level morphosyntactic features and model sentences, current methods of teaching English composition in Japan have the wrong orientation. Sentence-level instruction is certainly not unimportant—in fact, it has to be attended to—but university students can be trained to develop a sufficient degree of learner awareness to be able to self-monitor lower level linguistic concerns, allowing teachers to focus on other aspects of writing such as the composing process and discourse level features such as organizational structure, intersentential textual relationships, and stylistic choices, which lie at the heart of Japanese EL2 students’ writing difficulties.

This approach to teaching English composition skills in Japan was tested in an empirical study of student writing, which is the subject of a forthcoming article in this series, to determine whether the implementation of the teaching methodology proposed in this investigation would result in significant improvements to the academic writing skills of Japanese EL2 students. The results of this teaching experiment should provide important

insights into ways in which Japanese university students can be helped to function more effectively in the international academic community in terms of their individual writing goals.

Notes

1. Brown, (1987, p. 51) offers a similar set of guidelines:
 - Methodology: The study of pedagogical practices in general (including theoretical underpinnings and related research). Whatever considerations are involved in “how to teach” are methodological.
 - Approach: Theoretical positions and beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of language learning, the applicability of both to pedagogical methods.
 - Method: A generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives. Methods tend to be primarily concerned with teacher and student roles and behaviors and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials. Methods are thought of as being broadly applicable to a variety of audiences in a variety of contexts.
 - Curriculum / Syllabus: Designs for carrying out a particular language program. Features include a primary concern with the specification of linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials to meet the needs of a designated group of learners in a defined context (syllabus is used more often in the UK; curriculum is more popular in the USA).
 - Technique (sometimes also called task, procedure, activity, and exercise): Any of a wide variety of exercises, activities, or devices used in the language classroom for realizing lesson objectives.
2. Hillocks (1986, pp. 73–83) also provides the following extended definitions of each of the four types of knowledge that have a bearing on writing:
 - Procedural knowledge of substance:

By procedures for the analysis of substance, I mean those procedures that writers appear to bring to bear on substantive knowledge which permit the recall of data, the formulation of new generalizations, the development of criteria necessary to contrast, and so on. Research has not provided a clear analysis of such procedures as they relate to text production. Available research, however, strongly indicates that such skills are important to effective writing.
 - Declarative knowledge of substance:

[Theories of] reading comprehension have recognized the importance of prior knowledge in the comprehension of texts [distinguishing] between world knowledge of the kind that comes with increasing experience and domain-specific knowledge that comes with levels of expertise within content areas. ...Current theory...hypothesizes that successful comprehension involves an amalgam of retrieving meaning by decoding (bottom-up processing) and by bringing prior knowledge to bear even on the decoding process as well as on inference making (top-down processing). For skilled reader these act as complements. ...Schema theories of cognition elaborate these ideas and provide plausible explanations of how prior knowledge is activated and how it operates on the emerging interpretation of texts.
 - Declarative knowledge of form:

By declarative knowledge of form I mean the kind of knowledge which permits the identification or recall of forms and their parts, whether those be syntactic, generic, or rhetorical forms. Traditionally, instruction in composition...has focused on form. ...Books on writing have provided model compositions such as the model paragraph with its topic sentence and development by illustration, detail, and up to nine or ten more methods of development. The conception of learning to writing underlying this kind of instruction is that if one knows the appropriate forms, one can use them and that knowing them is largely the ability to identify their parts.
 - Procedural knowledge of form:

By procedural knowledge of the use of form I mean that knowledge which permits writers to manipulate forms and their parts. Declarative knowledge of form allows their identification and perhaps their definition. A person may have declarative knowledge of a musical instrument, its parts, and how it works but may lack the procedural knowledge to play it effectively. In composition this distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge is still hypothetical, but considerable evidence suggests that the distinction is real.

3. Leki and Carson (1997) also point out that “what is valued in writing for writing classes is different from what is valued in writing for other academic courses” (p. 64). They report that even in EAP classes 52% of the writing assigned were personal “in the sense that the source of information for these assignments was personal experience and knowledge. Only 7% of the writing topics assigned in other courses were primarily personal; these topics drew instead upon information students were to gather from some source text external to their personal experience and knowledge” (p. 42).
4. Purves and Hawisher (1990, p. 197), for example, state that it “has been our experience that some of those who have attacked the idea of “product” and called for process, in fact have substituted a modified set of discourse conventions for those we have listed above. Often they have masked these with terms like ‘honest writing,’ and ‘your own voice,’ or ‘expressive writing.’ These get translated into specific conventions such as opening with a personal anecdote. The teachers are sometimes unaware that they have these conventional criteria, but students...seem to be aware of them.”
5. As Ur (1996, pp. 171–172) observes, “[c]orrecting written work is very time-consuming, particularly if we have large classes. One possible solution is to let students correct and edit each other’s writing. ...The problem is: will students feel comfortable correcting, or being corrected by, their peers? ...In general, yes, peer-correction can be a time-saving and useful technique; also, critical reading for style, content and language accuracy is a valuable exercise in itself. This does not release us from the duty of checking and evaluating student writing; but it can be a substitute for first-draft reading.

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