“Don’t We Write Today?” Children’s Writing and Their Attitudes About Writing in the Looking Glass Neighborhood

Antonella Cortese

Children typically come to the classroom with a vast amount of knowledge about how to communicate thoughts and ideas. Classroom activities encourage them to use oral communication skills to explain and express feelings and opinions about their everyday lives, including events unique to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. And although children come to school knowing what writing is used for, what it looks like, and how it is used in different contexts, it is often taught in a way that does not acknowledge what children bring with them into the classroom. This study looks at the results of an attitude survey, a number of children’s writing samples collected over a two-year period, and transcripts of interviews with children exploring their feelings about writing and their writing abilities. Findings illustrate that children do know what it means to be a good writer and why it is important. Additionally, children have opinions about the writing they do both in school and after school. We hope that our results will add to the continuing discussion of the ways educators introduce writing to their students, as well as how they perceive their students as writers.

Transforming Teacher Practice and Facilitating ESL Students’ Learning of Mathematics: A Collaborative Project

Mae Lombos Wlazlinski

This paper describes a professional development model aimed at improving the language skills of English Language Learners (ELLs) while they acquire grade level appropriate mathematics skills specified by the state standards. A university professor, a Mathematics/ESL Lab teacher, and a middle grades Mathematics teacher worked as a team to specify teaching and learning outcomes and redesign their lesson plans to include language-building activities using mathematics core content. While students’ test scores and journal entries provide insight into their learning of both language and mathematics, teachers’ journal entries provide insight into the transformation of their practice and their new perception of their roles as both language and mathematics teachers.
ESL Students’ Attitudes Toward Native- and Nonnative-Speaking Instructors’ Accents

Ken Kelch and Eliana Santana-Williamson

In teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), different treatment may be given to native-speaking and nonnative-speaking instructors by administrators and students. This article explores the attitudes of ESL students toward native English teachers and nonnative English teachers. After listening to audiotaped passages read by three native English speakers and three nonnative English speakers, participants completed an attitude survey on each variety. The results indicate that student attitudes toward teachers with different varieties of English is not correlated with whether a speaker’s accent is native or nonnative, but instead is correlated with the perception of whether the speaker is native or not. The results also suggest that student familiarity with an accent may be a primary factor in its perception as native or nonnative. Implications for administrators, nonnative-speaking English language educators, and students are discussed.

Students’ Reading and Writing Strategies and Their WST Performance

Iris Dolores Thot-Johnson and Swathi Vanniarajan

The purpose of this study is multifold: (a) to describe the academic background of students enrolled in LLD 99 classes during the summer of 2001 at San José State University, (b) to study the kinds of reading and writing strategies these students use, (c) to assess their perceptions with regard to the validity of the Writing Skills Test (WST), and (d) to explore whether their background, their use of certain reading and writing strategies, and their perceptions with regard to the validity of the WST have any significant correlations with their test performance. A 48-item questionnaire was used to collect the data. Results showed that students preferred some strategies to others and that three strategies positively correlated with passing scores on the WST. There were also positive correlations between prior elementary and/or high school education in English and passing scores.

THEME ARTICLES: GENERATION 1.5

Generation 1.5

Sugie Goen, Patricia Porter, Deborah Swanson, and Deborah VanDommelen

California’s Generation 1.5 Immigrants: What Experiences, Characteristics, and Needs do They Bring to our English Classes?

Mark Roberge

Over the past several decades, the number of generation 1.5 immigrants attending California’s elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools has increased dramatically. However, many teachers, curriculum developers, administrators, and educational policymakers are still unaware of the special experiences, characteristics, and needs that these students may bring to the classroom. This article provides an overview and synthesis of scholarship relevant to generation 1.5 immigrants, in order to help readers develop more appropriate pedagogies, policies, and programs to meet these students' needs. The following areas are addressed: (a) definitions of the generation 1.5 population; (b) the social, political, and economic context of post-1965 immigration; (c) adaptation, acculturation, and identity formation; (d) experiences in U.S. schools; (e) language acquisition and language practices; and (f) acquisition of academic literacy.
Working With Generation 1.5 Students and Their Teachers: ESL Meets Composition

Sugie Goen, Patricia Porter, Deborah Swanson, and Deborah VanDommelen

This article describes a research project conducted at San Francisco State University on “Generation 1.5” learners and their teachers. In addition to providing a detailed description of who these learners are, this article warns of the pervasive likelihood of these students falling somewhere between the traditional institutional tracks of “native speaker” Composition and ESL, neither of which appropriately meets their educational needs. The article describes efforts at SFSU to mitigate this dangerous trend by bringing together faculty from Composition and ESL to explore some of the tendencies, preconceptions, and assumptions that inform the ways ESL and Composition program faculty respond to the writing of Generation 1.5 students. The article concludes by identifying a number of successful instructional principles and practices for working with this population of students, and considers the effects on teacher training and institutional policy should such practices be implemented.

Charting New Territory: Creating an Interdepartmental Course for Generation 1.5 Writers

Christine Holten

This article describes a composition course for Generation 1.5 students offered collaboratively by a university’s English as a Second Language (ESL) and writing programs. The paper outlines the course curriculum and addresses challenges such a cross-disciplinary course presents in terms of assessment, placement, awarding course credit, and designing curriculum to meaningfully and appropriately address students’ needs and backgrounds.

At What Price Success?: The Academic Writing Development of a Generation 1.5 “Latecomer”

Jan Frodesen

This article examines the special academic language challenges of second language (L2) learners who enter U.S. schools as adolescents through a case study of a female Taiwanese immigrant. It describes her English language learning history, her performance on a university writing placement test, and her subsequent writing development and academic progress at a four-year university. The study considers social and educational contexts of learning that may hinder literacy development, both oral and written. It underscores the importance of providing English language learners ample opportunities for meaningful, negotiated interaction and extended discourse production in secondary classrooms, both English as a Second Language (ESL) and mainstream.

Promoting Generation 1.5 Learners’ Academic Literacy and Autonomy: Contributions from the Learning Center

Nathalie Destandau and Margi Wald

This article explores the ways in which learning centers contribute to the development of Generation 1.5 students’ academic literacy beyond the classroom. Using specific examples of tutoring sessions and tutor training activities, the authors demonstrate how Generation 1.5 students can benefit from an articulated learning center pedagogy that promotes skill development, metacognitive awareness, and student autonomy.
Communication Strategies for Generation 1.5 Students in the Vocational Area

Frank Noji

This paper discusses the strategies used to develop a “professional register” in three Generation 1.5 students at Kapi‘olani Community College in Hawaii who were having difficulty with the practicum, or clinical which was required for the AS degree in the Allied Health field. These three students were referred to the ESOL instructor by their department chairs. The ESOL instructor agreed to work with these three students for a semester. The instructor had five goals: (1) to convince the students of the need for developing a professional register; (2) to develop appropriate pronunciation; (3) to develop appropriate discourse; (4) to train the students to use a rehearsal technique; (5) to encourage the students to listen for and recognize discourse patterns used in their professions. This paper describes how the instructor attempted to attain these goals.

CATESOL EXCHANGE

Introducing Writing Prompts: A Resource for Teaching, Evaluating, and Researching Children’s Writing

Jungok Bae and Hyesug Lee

Empowering Students by Teaching the Language of the Classroom

Peg Sarosy and Kathy Sherak

The Trouble with Cross-Cultural Oversensitivity

Stefan Frazier

REVIEWS

Grammar Express: For Self-Study and Classroom Use
by Marjorie Fuchs and Margaret Bonner

Focus on Grammar: An Intermediate Course for Reference and Practice (2nd ed.)
by Marjorie Fuchs, Margaret Bonner, and Miriam Westheimer

Reviewed by Holly C. Davatz

Talk It Up: Listening, Speaking and Pronunciation (2nd ed.)
by Joan Rishel Kozyrev

Reviewed by Rosane Silveira

English in Today’s Research World: A Writing Guide
by John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak

Reviewed by Barbara Z. Komlos

I Read It, But I Don’t Get It
by Chris Tovani

Reviewed by Timbre Beck-Murphy

Educating New Americans: Immigrant Lives and Learning
by Donald F. Hones and Cher Shou Cha

Reviewed by Andrea Withers
Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition: Issues in the Teaching of Writing to U.S.-Educated Learners of ESL
Edited by Linda Harklau, Kay M. Losey, and Meryl Siegal

Guidelines for Submission