

ARTICLES

**Potential Problems with Peer Responding in ESL Writing Classes..... 5**

Ilona Leki

Many native speaker composition classes and increasing numbers of ESL composition classes use small group work and peer responding to improve writing. Teachers who have used peer responding are generally convinced of its usefulness, but many are unaware of the special problems ESL writers and readers face when asked to comment on a classmate's writing. These problems stem partly from ESL students' lack of experience in using techniques like peer responding and partly from the varying rhetorical expectations that readers from other cultures bring to a text. This paper discusses the issues surrounding the attempt to bring ESL writers into the American academic discourse community through the use of peer responding in ESL writing classes.

**The Effects of Peer and Self-Feedback..... 21**

Virginia Berger

Recent studies of the writing process have confirmed the pervasiveness of revision and the complexity of skills required to revise successfully. Teachers and researchers, looking for ways to improve revisions, have examined the effects of feedback from teachers, peers, or self on this process, but studies juxtaposing these feedback sources have not determined conclusively which is the most effective. This study, conducted by a community college classroom teacher, was implemented to examine the effects of peer versus self-feedback on (a) the number and kind of revisions ESL students make and (b) their attitudes toward feedback and revision processes. The subjects of this study were 54 multilingual ESL students at Grossmont College, San Diego. Data for the research were collected from drafts of two student essays, writing questionnaires, and feedback evaluation forms. The results suggest that peer feedback is more effective than self-feedback in number and types of revisions students make and that more students prefer peer feedback.

**ESL Instruction in the Workplace.....37**

Diane L. Andrews

The teaching of English to foreign-born vocational and professional workers at their place of work is an unexplored possibility for many ESL instructors in California. Yet the increasing number of these workers and their need for advanced language skills on the job combine to create a viable market for instructor services. This paper explores what it is like to teach in the workplace based on interviews with 10 San Francisco Bay Area ESL professionals. Class structure, learner needs, instructional considerations, and the need for relevant, flexible materials are discussed. Practical recommendations are made to interested instructors: network, establish a reputation in the field, know compensation norms, focus on professional workers, use a business approach with companies, project a professional image, be aware of company attitude toward instruction, involve management, adapt teaching theory to meet specific needs, encourage learner independence, and stay current.

**A Critical Hermeneutic Analysis of Foreign Language Teaching:  
Implications for Teachers in the People's Republic of China.....49**

Ellen A. Herda

Interpersonal relationships are established among teachers and students in education settings. This phenomenon takes on special meaning in a foreign language classroom, particularly for overseas teachers. Learning a new language brings new knowledge and new possibilities into students' lives. Understandings experienced and gained in these classrooms go beyond linguistic comprehension and social activity to the very being of the person. Understanding is not something grasped or possessed. Rather it is a mode of our existence in the world. This dynamic aspect of foreign language teaching is of critical importance when Western teachers work in a country that follows a very different ideology from their own. The students in China bring their own history and worldview to the learning of English. It is the foreign teacher's responsibility to not only help a student learn new concepts and language but also learn how to live out a meaningful life in a country that places expectations on students arising from very different political beliefs.

**The Comparative Effectiveness of Word Lists  
and Video-Graphic Cues on University Level ESL Students’  
Vocabulary in Context Learning..... 63**  
Raymond Devenney

Using a posttest-only control group design, this study evaluated the role of instruction and compared the effectiveness of two methods of presentation—word lists and video-graphic cues—on the university-level second language students’ (N = 64) ability to guess the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items contained in a videotape of an academic lecture. Subjects were randomly assigned to four treatment groups and told they would be tested after viewing the lecture on vocabulary items only. The first experimental group (VIDEO-GRAPHIC) saw a version of the tape on which computer-generated textual cues appeared. These video-graphic cues resembled closed captioning. Vocabulary items appeared on the videotape as the lecturer said the word and remained visible while the speaker gave the contextual clue to the word’s meaning. The second experimental group (WORD LIST) saw the same lecture without the visual cues. Both experimental groups received a list of the vocabulary items on which they would be tested after viewing the lecture. These words were listed in the order they would come up during the lecture. The subjects in both experimental groups also received instruction in guessing word meanings from context. The third treatment group (INSTRUCTION) received only this instruction in guessing; they did not see the video-graphic cues nor receive a word list of vocabulary items. The last group (CONTROL) saw the videotape without text and received neither a word list nor instruction in guessing. After viewing the lecture, the subjects were tested on the vocabulary in context items contained in the academic lecture. A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Tukey’s Honestly Significant Difference Test (HSD) indicated that the subjects in the video-graphic group scored significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) on the vocabulary test than the students in the word list group and that both groups scored significantly higher than the instruction-only and control groups ( $p < .05$ ).

**Extensive Reading through Sustained Silent Reading:  
Developing Comprehension in Adult Learners..... 75**  
Ellen Lipp

This article discusses an adjunct Sustained Silent Reading Program (SSR) in which getting satisfaction from reading and developing a better attitude toward reading are the goals. When doing SSR, student self-select books from a collection and read them. They also write journal entries, prepare oral and written book reports, and talk about books that they are reading. They receive recognition for the books they finish. While it is the student’s task to read and read a lot, it is the ESL program’s task to provide a variety of interesting books that students can understand.

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