UNDERSTANDING ESL WRITING:

A TEACHER-RESEARCHER CASE STUDY OF TWO UNIVERSITY WRITERS

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Abstract

The purpose of this teacher-researcher case study was to learn more about ESL writing in general by looking at two particular writers in my own university ESL Writing class. The participants were two serious students, but there was a noticeable difference in the quality of their writing. To understand this difference, I investigated the characteristics of each as a writer, her writing, and her comments about the process of writing. The findings for both participants were then analysed in order to identify those features that distinguished the proficient writer and her writing from the nonproficient. The data for the study included all the writing both participants completed for the Writing class during one semester, transcripts of peer response groups, student-teacher conferences, student-researcher conversations, and researcher notes.

Both writers were considered serious students because they attended all ESL Writing classes, completed assignments, and participated in class activities. The texts of the proficient writer, however, were characterized by a greater number and variety of discourse features. The findings indicate that the differences in the two students' approaches to writing and their characteristics as writers resulted in different quality writing. The proficient writer had extensive contact with native speakers of English and she participated in a variety of Canadian cultural activities. Before writing, she planned the content and organization of her texts whenever they were evaluated; she was primarily concerned with the content, but she also attended to grammar, spelling, organization and vocabulary, and she revised her writing extensively and frequently. Response to her work in progress improved the subsequent revisions as her voice became stronger, her awareness of audience increased, and her language became more powerful. Pedagogical suggestions are offered to help ESL writers improve the quality of their written texts.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

There is a growing recognition of the importance of writing in the development of second language proficiency. This can be seen in the increasing number of presentations about English as Second Language (ESL) writing at conferences and papers in professional journals, as well as the number of ESL writing courses offered at North American universities and colleges (Silva, 1995). Silva (1990) cautions, however, that to be effective, ESL writing teachers must understand what is involved in second language writing. He suggests ESL writing teachers "need coherent perspectives, principles, models--tools for thinking about second language writing in general and ESL composition in particular, and for analysing and evaluating competing views" (1990, p. 11). The following discussion of four of the approaches to the teaching of ESL writing used during the past 50 years is intended to provide a framework for the identification and development of the "tools" Silva (1990) claims writing teachers need to understand what is involved in second language writing.

Historical Approaches to the Teaching of ESL Writing

Numerous approaches to the teaching of ESL writing have evolved as writing theorists, researchers, and teachers attempted to understand and explain the phenomenon of second language writing. There are no comprehensive theories of second language writing (Johns, 1990; Silva, 1990) but, according to Raimes (1991), four historical approaches, or theories of second language writing instruction, have emerged and each historical approach highlights one of the four elements of writing identified by Raimes: form, writer, content, and reader. Aspects of each approach continue to be used to teach ESL university writing.

Prior to 1970, the focus of the teaching of ESL writing was on the rhetorical and linguistic form of the text. Learners practised preselected, presequenced grammar structures, orally, one at a time, until they were internalized. Writing was used to practice the grammar needed to improve oral skills (Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Raimes, 1991; Reid, 1993). In the early 1970s, however, writing specialists began to regard writing as a language skill in its own right. They believed that ESL students would write well if they followed a set of discrete steps and prescriptive principles to manipulate language (Zamel, 1987). When the focus of writing is on rhetorical form, assignments require learners to combine sentences, complete paragraphs, identify and write topic sentences, use examples to support ideas, reorder scrambled paragraphs, or write from an outline. Writers imitate model paragraphs and essays that introduce several organizational patterns such as cause/effect and comparison/contrast (Reid, 1993). It is assumed that when students internalize the organizational framework, they will use the patterns appropriately in academic writing (Shih, 1986). When the focus is on form, the purpose of writing is to practice and display grammatical and rhetorical form, rather than to express ideas (Raimes, 1991)

By the late 1970s, attention turned to the writer and the expression of ideas. Writing specialists looked to the work of second language theorists investigating the nature of communication (Canale, 1983) and to the work of first language composition specialists who were investigating the act of writing itself in order to determine what writers do as they write (Krapels, 1990; Raimes, 1985). According to Raimes, experienced writers

> consider purpose and audience. They consult their own background knowledge. They let ideas incubate. They plan. As they write, they read back over what they have written to

> keep in touch with their 'conceptual blueprint' . . . which helps them plan what to write next . . . . Writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, organizing, writing, and then revising. (p. 229)

Because the very nature of composing is "complex, recursive, and nonlinear" (Zamel, 1987, p. 698), the composing process of each writer is unique. Writers do different things at different points during writing, and different strategies are required to complete the variety of tasks required to write.

The focus on the language learner as writer and creator of text led to a "process approach" to the teaching of writing. The process approach encourages students to select their own topics, to explore topics through writing, to revise in order to clarify what the writer really wants to say, and to share drafts with peers and their teacher during the writing process. To communicate their message successfully, students are taught to organize their ideas in order to fulfill the expectations of that audience (Raimes, 1991; Reid, 1993, Susser, 1994; Zamel, 1982). Because the study of grammar has little to do with composing (Zamel, 1982), process writers are encouraged to focus on language concerns during the last stage of composing. According to Zamel (1982),

> Syntax, vocabulary, and rhetorical form are important features of writing, but they need to be taught not as ends in and of themselves, but as the means with which to better express one's meaning. Otherwise, students may never understand why these features are important. (p. 207)

In a process approach, composing is seen as an exploratory and generative process where "writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (Zamel, 1983, p. 165). Using personal experience and previous knowledge, students often begin with only a vague idea of what they want to write, but as they write and rewrite, ideas are refined,

developed, and transformed (Nunan, 1989; Susser, 1994; Zamel, 1982). Form is determined by content, ideas, and the need to communicate (Silva, 1990). Students are encouraged "to write with honesty, for themselves" (Johns, 1990, p. 30) and to develop their own unique and authentic voice in writing (Santos, 1992).

The process approach, however, was criticized in the 1980s for failing to prepare ESL students for the types of academic writing assignments they will be expected to complete in university courses (Shih, 1986). Horowitz (1986) condemned the process approach for "its almost exclusive concern with psycholinguistic, cognitive, and affective variables" and asserted that writers must learn to look beyond their own "mental processes" to the demands of the environment "which define, shape, and ultimately judge a piece of writing" (p. 446). According to Horowitz, the aim of ESL writing instruction should be to recreate the conditions of actual university writing by assigning specific issues or questions whose answers require the selection and study of source materials, the evaluation, synthesis, and organization of relevant data, and the presentation of the data in acceptable academic English. For Horowitz and other social constructionists, learning to write acceptable academic prose is necessary to becoming a member of the academic community. Social constructionists suggest that the language, focus, and form of a text are determined by the community for which it is written; from this perspective, writing is considered a social act "that can take place only within and for a specific context and audience" (Johns, 1990, p. 27). According to Santos (1992), newcomers to the community need "to be initiated into the particular discourse prevailing within it" (p. 4). For social constructionists, the focus of writing shifted from the writer to the content and the expectations of the reader (Raimes, 1991; Silva, 1990).

When the instructional focus is on the reader, writers are taught to read and reread their own work in ways that help them write and rewrite with their readers in mind (Reid, 1993). According to Nelson (1993), a reading-writing approach recognizes that "reading and writing are inextricably and reflectively connected, that a written text is a reading text, that we read to write and write to be read, and that reading and writing are similar processes of making meaning" (p. 328). Reading in the ESL writing class is considered appropriate input for the acquisition of writing skills because it is a major source of new ideas, a stimulant for discussion and interpretation, and a model of the type of writing students will be expected to produce (Eisterhold, 1990; Reid, 1993). Reading builds knowledge of various kinds to be used in writing, and writing consolidates knowledge in a way that builds schemata for reading (Leki, 1993). According to Leki, the approach to the teaching of ESL writing that has gained momentum in the 1990s is the approach based on the reading-writing connection.

The history of ESL composition instruction in the last 50 years has involved a succession of approaches to writing, and Silva (1990) suggests that these historical developments indicate a move toward a more complete understanding of the phenomenon of second language writing. Silva maintains, however, that viable approaches to the teaching of ESL writing must not only be guided by realistic theories and convincing research, but must also be based on a comprehensive idea of what second language writing involves.

The Basic Elements of Writing

Silva (1990) characterizes second language writing "as purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction, which involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge" (p. 18). According to Silva, the basic elements of second language writing include

> (1) the L2 [second language] writer (the person--in terms of personal knowledge, attitudes, and characteristics; cultural orientation; language proficiency; motivation, etc.--as well as the process); (2) the L1 [first language] reader--perhaps the primary audience for academically oriented, college-level ESL writers . . . ; (3) the L2 text (in terms of genre, aims, modes, discourse structures, intersentential phenomena, syntax, lexis, and print-code features); (4) the contexts for L2 writing (cultural, political, social, economic, situational, physical); and (5) the interaction of these elements in a variety of authentic ESL settings. (p. 18)

In order to gain a more comprehensive idea of what is involved in second language writing, this teacher-researcher case study looked at two ESL writers, the texts they wrote, and comments they made about those texts during one semester of an 8-week, intensive, ESL course at the University of Regina. The four elements of writing that Silva (1990) identified (the writer, reader, text, and contexts for writing) and their interaction were described as they appeared in an authentic setting, my own university ESL Writing class. Through the process of studying two students learning to write in a second language, I hoped to gain deeper insight into what is involved in learning to write purposefully and communicatively in a second language. My ultimate goal, of course, was to become a more effective teacher.

Purpose of the Study

A major concern of all teachers is how to bring about student learning most effectively. Zamel (1987) has challenged classroom teachers to engage in their own research and to investigate the relationship between teaching practice and writing development in the classroom in order to develop their own approach to the teaching of writing. Yagelski (1990) claims that the purpose of teacher research is to challenge our assumptions and enrich our understanding of how our students learn in order that we might be more effective teachers.

Research often originates in everyday experience. A lack of understanding about something arouses curiosity that provides the stimulus for questioning, and that, in turn, may lead to the development of original research (Lauer & Asher, 1988; Merriam, 1991; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). This case study grew from my own concerns and curiosity about what I was observing in the writing of my students. ESL students at the University of Regina are assigned to courses based on the results of a placement test held on the first day of classes. It is assumed that the level of second language proficiency of each student in the same course is comparable to that of his or her classmates. Furthermore, students are in class for the same amount of time, are exposed to the same teaching practices, and are expected to complete the same assignments. However, in every class, the quality of writing varies from one student to another.

To understand student writing, I investigated writer characteristics and practices that seem to be related to the quality of the text. To do this, I studied two writers and their writing. One of the participants was a proficient writer; the other was not. The findings for each participant were then compared and contrasted with the other in order to analyse the similarities and differences and to determine the distinguishing features of the two writers and their writing.

Zamel (1990) argues that it is critical that research explore the experiences of writers in natural, classroom settings in order to ascertain how situation specific factors affect the behaviours, strategies, and difficulties of ESL writers. Such research, she stresses, will ideally be undertaken by teachers in their own classes. According to Zamel,

> Teacher-generated research, because it is connected with the web of factors and circumstances of their specific situations, and because it allows them "to reclaim the classroom" is likely to have a far greater impact on their teaching than the reported findings of others. By looking closely at their students and raising questions about why they seem to write they way they do, by paying attention to students' reactions to tasks

> and assignments, by considering students' own intentions and purposes for writing in relationship to their own agendas and goals, teachers are likely to discover the picture of the classroom, as seen through students' eyes. And, as is the case with all learning, this new perspective is what ultimately might compel these teachers to revise, to see again, with new eyes. (p. 96)

This study was undertaken so that I could see "with new eyes" how two of my own students were learning to write in English.

Significance of the Study

Case study research allows researchers to undertake an in-depth investigation of the work of a limited number of individuals and observe the way they function in a naturalistic environment (Gay, 1992). The case study approach can provide rich information about an individual learner and those aspects of the environment that pertain to the case. According to Nunan (1992), a researcher can learn a great deal about her students in general through a detailed study of one particular student. While Raimes (1985) cautions that the limited number of cases studied makes it difficult to form conclusive generalizations about all ESL writers, she notes that patterns emerge when this approach is used. Lauer and Asher (1988), too, emphasize that case study conclusions can be made only about the participants studied, but they suggest that when the findings of a case study are related to the research of others, it helps "to increase their [the researchers'] ability to generalize from their study" (p. 33).

Researching and writing this case study have been valuable to me as a classroom teacher because they have allowed me to gain a richer understanding of the behaviours, strategies, and difficulties of two remarkably different writers. From what these two particular students said and did throughout the eight weeks of the semester, I gained a new awareness of ESL writers and writing in general. My observations and conclusions have caused me to reflect on and improve

my own classroom teaching practices and, therefore, grow as a professional. I believe that my approach to the teaching of ESL writing has developed with consideration for the four elements of writing, namely, the writer, reader, text, contexts for second language writing, and the interaction of those elements in the writing class. As a consequence of undertaking the research, my approach has been guided by credible research and is grounded in appropriate theory. In addition to adding to my own professional development, the findings of this study may, ideally, provide useful insights about writing in a second language for other teachers. According to Nunan (1992), case study research and data are usually more accessible than conventional research to many audiences, including instructors who may be able to identify with the issues and concerns raised. Teachers may be motivated to reflect on their personal views and practices and, by doing so, find support for their own practice or take action to alter it.

The case study may also contribute to the development of a comprehensive theory of second language writing because it describes fully two ESL writers and their writing. The description may, or may not, support emerging patterns found in other second language case studies. Krapels (1990) suggests that we have already learned a great deal about second language writing, but that there is much more waiting to be discovered. She concludes that, "As a field of research, . . . the second language composing process is rich with potential and full of vitality" (p. 53).

Definitions of Terms

The following are the definitions for terms used in the study.

Audience: someone other than writer who reads and understands the message of a composition

English as a Second Language (ESL): the study of English by non-native speakers of English in an English-speaking country

Metadiscourse features: "those facets of a text which make the organization of the text explicit, provide information about the writer's attitude toward the text content, and engage the reader in the interaction" (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995, p. 253)

Peer response group: a group of four students in which members read and respond to each other's work in progress

Planning: thinking about the content and/or organization of the composition before beginning to write and/or writing an outline before writing the composition

Qualitative case study: "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1991, p. 21)

Response journals: writing completed during class and/or for homework to help students generate and explore ideas for writing, to develop writing skills, and to increase fluency

Revision: written changes made by the writer to the form or content of the text at the word, phrase, clause, sentence or paragraph level involving addition, deletion, substitution or rearrangement

Student-teacher conference: a meeting between the teacher and individual students to discuss writing concerns and problems raised by the writer or the teacher

Teacher research: "an investigation carried out by a classroom practitioner in his or her own professional context" (Nunan, 1992, p. 78)

Voice: "the imprint of ourselves on our writing" (Graves cited in Urzua, 1987, p. 289)

Writing: "purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction, which involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge" (Silva, 1990, p. 18)

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is intended to provide the foundation to the research problem. In the review, the research interprets and synthesizes work previously researched and published in the interest area (Merriam, 1991). Familiarity with previous research and theory helps the researcher to conceptualize the problem, conduct the study, and interpret the findings. According to Merriam,

> The literature review can help in the formulation of the problem, in the selection of methodology, and in the interpretation of research results. The findings of a study are best interpreted in light of what was previously known about the topic. Linking specific findings to previous work demonstrates to the reader just how this study contributes to the developing knowledge base of the field. (p. 63)

This literature review begins with a review of qualitative case study, the research paradigm "that undergirds the study" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 34). Qualitative case studies are often used by teacher-researchers to solve problems they face in their own classrooms. Seven qualitative case studies completed in North American university ESL writing classes are reviewed; four of the studies were undertaken by teachers with their own students. These studies explore issues that arise in the classroom, such as the nature of composing in a second language and the composing perspectives, behaviour, strategies, and difficulties of ESL student writers.

Qualitative Case Study

Classroom teachers conducting research often use the case study design (Nunan, 1992). It is well suited for research studies where the purpose is to help teachers enrich their understanding of and solve problems related to their teaching. According to Merriam (1991), case study research, particularly qualitative case study, is "an ideal design for understanding and interpreting

observations of educational phenomena" (p. 2). It can provide a means to understand, inform, and improve practice. Merriam defines qualitative case study as, "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). Four essential features of a qualitative case study are that it is particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive (Merriam, 1991).

Particularistic research focuses on a single, or particular, instance, phenomenon, or social unit in order to understand the complexity and dynamic nature of that entity, and "to discover systematic connections among experiences, behaviours, and relevant features of the context" (Johnson, 1992, p. 84). The case is chosen because it is an example of a phenomenon, not because it is representative of that phenomenon. In educational research, the unit may be a student, a teacher, a classroom, a school, or a community. While researchers often choose one case for study, they may instead choose to examine a small number of cases and compare them. The essence of the case study design is a careful and holistic examination of a particular case or cases. Conclusions from the study cannot be generalized; they apply only to the particular case. It is an especially good design for understanding and/or finding solutions to practical problems that arise from everyday practice because the focus of the design is so specific (Bissex, 1990; Johnson, 1992; Lauer & Asher, 1988; Merriam, 1991).

Descriptive case studies describe and explain phenomena. The descriptive researcher has no control over the phenomena, but records and studies behaviour as it normally occurs (Gay, 1992). In fact, because they are concerned with context, researchers observe the phenomenon in its natural setting. There is no manipulation of naturally occurring phenomena or little intrusion from the researcher. The data collected are "rich" in description of people, places, and

conversations. The descriptions are "thick;" that is, the phenomenon under study is described completely and literally (Merriam, 1991). Statistical procedures and numbers cannot easily handle such data which are collected through words and pictures, not numbers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The written word is important not only to record the findings collected through data such as interview transcripts, field notes, and official records, but also to disseminate the findings. Descriptive studies need to provide enough detail and description for the reader to make sense of the author's conclusion (Merriam, 1991), and to draw conclusions other than those presented directly by the writer (Nunan, 1992). Direct quotations and samples from the data illustrate and substantiate the findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Case study investigations may be conducted in a short span of time, or they may be "longitudinal," that is, conducted over a lengthy time period.

Qualitative case study research is heuristic. It is used when the available theory is inadequate or inappropriate to explain a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 1991). The objective of heuristic research is "the discovery or description of patterns of relationships, yet to be identified" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 256). The researcher makes few decisions regarding research questions or data prior to undertaking the research. Once the data, including as much contextual information as possible, are collected, the researcher sifts through them to discover underlying patterns or relationships emerging from the research. According to Seliger and Shohamy, when the research objective is heuristic, the researcher is enabled to discover patterns, behaviours, explanations, and to generate questions or actual hypotheses about the phenomena for further research. According to Bissex (1990), case study research is designed to provide a way of learning, not a method of proving. Merriam (1991) claims case studies are heuristic

because they "illuminate the reader's understanding" of the phenomenon studied (p. 13). She suggests that, as readers think about the phenomena, their relationships, and variables, they may gain insights which can lead to their own discovery of new meaning, an extension of their experience, or a confirmation of their beliefs.

The design of qualitative case study research is inductive. An inductive hypothesis is one that is based on the observation of a limited number of specific cases (Gay, 1992). Researchers do not set out to prove or disprove hypotheses; instead, they build abstractions, concepts, theories, or hypotheses as the particulars of the study are grouped together (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1991). Theory is developed from the bottom up, not from the top down. The data collected in the study are used to determine what are the important questions. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), "The study itself structures the research, not preconceived ideas or any precise research design" (p. 58). They compare such a research process to constructing a picture that takes shape after the parts have been collected and examined, as opposed to the assembling of a puzzle whose picture is already known.

According to Bissex (1990), case study is a most effective type of research for understanding human beings, most suitable for studying the acts of composing and of interpreting literature, and most appropriate for teachers of English. She writes,

> It seems altogether fitting, then, that teachers who know the ways of interpretation should interpret the texts of their own classrooms, and that teachers who understand the value of story should see and tell the stories of themselves and of their students. If any mode of inquiry speaks from and to the heart and soul and mind of our profession, it is surely case study. (p. 75)

Teacher Research

One type of case study research is teacher or action research. According to Nunan (1992), action research is "an investigation carried out by a classroom practitioner in his or her professional context" (p. 78). When the research is initiated by a question, is supported by data and interpretation, and is conducted by a teacher investigating aspects of her own context and situation, change of some sort usually occurs. Using research methods to identify the characteristics of their own students as learners, teacher-researchers have the potential to bring about worthwhile change in the classroom (Berlin, 1990). Such research enables teachers to "build a richer understanding of their work lives and gain the confidence, knowledge, and support" required for change (Johnson & Chen, 1992, p. 212).

Teacher research can be an effective method to bridge the gaps between research and teaching and between theory and practice (Johnson & Chen, 1992; Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Inquiry conducted by professional researchers in universities or other research institutions is often irrelevant to or inaccessible by teachers. It may be irrelevant because it does not address the issues that perplex classroom teachers; it may be inaccessible because it is written for other researchers, not teachers. When teachers initiate and conduct research, inconsistencies between what they know and believe, and what they would like to do and what they actually do, may be addressed. For example, Ray (1990), an ESL teacher-researcher, suggests that her own teaching was less affected by the reported findings of others than it was by her own classroom research. She writes, "This research [of others] was not real to me in a way that affected my teaching. My growth and change as both scholar and teacher occurred when I conducted my own research and discovered for myself" (p. 321). She concludes that while the issues she addresses have been

researched by others, "they did not affect my own thinking or teaching until I made the issues 'mine'--until I became a researcher myself" (p. 335).

Teacher research can make important contributions to knowledge about teaching and learning because of the unique perspective teachers, who are in close contract with their students, bring to the inquiry. Implicit in teacher research is a "deep respect for the everyday practical knowledge of teachers and its role in building new understandings" (Johnson & Chen, 1992, p. 213) that help to improve second language classes and programs. Such research results have been shown to change the attitudes of teachers towards their students and have led to the implementation of more sensitive and effective teaching strategies. Johnson and Chen suggest that both teaching and research are enriched when inquiry is based on teachers' questions and insights that are grounded in their professional experience.

Context of the Inquiry: University ESL Writing Classes

The majority of students enrolled in university ESL programmes intend to further their academic studies in an English-speaking environment. Accordingly, ESL teachers are expected to prepare those students for the academic mainstream. Blanton (1994) discusses the nature of the discourse used in the academic mainstream and the demands that higher education places on the language and literacy capabilities of second language learners. She suggests it is not enough for ESL students to speak fluently and be literate in English. They must be able to participate in the academic discourse community which she defines as "a social group that shares certain behaviours and assumptions about language and its use, one of them being the valuing of written language over oral language" (p. 3).

To prepare ESL students for the academic mainstream, ESL teachers often require them to read and write in subject specific areas such as engineering. Blanton (1994), however, argues that preparing students to write for discipline specific audiences is the responsibility of teachers in those disciplines because they have access to the subject matter and are familiar with the particular linguistic characteristics and forms. Instead, Blanton advises ESL teachers to examine the actions of academic readers and writers, how they use language to conduct their daily and professional affairs. When academic discourse is seen as an activity, teachers need to guide learners into engaging in the activity. According to Blanton, "By focusing on behaviors, language takes its rightful place as a medium and a means of executing certain tasks, formed and shaped by the need to complete the task at hand" (p. 7).

Literate behaviours involve interacting with texts (Blanton, 1994). For example, academics talk and write about texts, link them to other texts, connect them to their readers' own lives and experience, and use "their experience to illuminate the text and the text to illuminate their experience" (p. 10). They talk "reading and writing." They know that reading involves more than decoding the words of a text; they understand that they can and should use their own thoughts and experiences to create a reading of their own. For academics, writing, like talking, becomes a mode of learning. In the process of talking and writing about something new, they refine and extend what they already know. According to Blanton, talking and writing help students to understand their own experience "by bringing others' ideas and experience to bear on it . . . [and] by connecting it to the world outside" (p. 11).

Proficient academics speak and write with authority. A student who behaves as an academic reader is able to "talk" to the text and talk about it, to agree or disagree with the author,

and to relate her individual response to the text and write about it. Through developing individual response to a text, a learner acquires her own voice. The development of an individual voice empowers the learner so she can speak with authority.

Case Studies: University ESL Writers

Using case study design, Zamel (1983) investigated the composing processes of ESL students in order to evaluate the appropriateness of composition teaching methods and approaches in ESL. The six participants in Zamel's 1983 study were university students in her own intermediate composition class. She chose them for two reasons. First, case study research calls for the same kind of trust and rapport that comes from daily interaction with students, and second, because she knew what they were studying, she could assign a course-related writing task for them to complete as part of the research. Participants wrote under "normal circumstances" (p. 169) to avoid the constraints of more conventional experiments. Zamel characterizes the participants as "advanced" because they had previously completed two semesters of freshman composition although they were still experiencing problems composing in a second language.

The participants of Zamel's 1983 study were observed while they composed, their writing behaviours were recorded, the written work each completed for one essay was analysed, and each participant was interviewed at the end of the study. One major finding of the study was that advanced ESL writers understand that "composing involves the constant interplay of thinking, writing, and rewriting" (p. 172). These writers did not follow a linear process of pre-writing, writing, and revising. All the writers thought about the essay before they began to write and they planned; however, ideas shifted or were expanded or discarded during the process of writing. All interacted with their texts by reading and rereading what they had written in order to explore their

ideas and the form in which to express those ideas. As well, students revised; at times, students rewrote as they wrote, and at other times, they clarified their ideas after the initial draft was written. According to Zamel, global changes were often made during revision. She notes,

> sentences were deleted and added to clarify ideas and make them more concrete; sentences were rewritten until they expressed the writer's intention more accurately; paragraphs or parts of paragraphs were shifted around when writers realized that they were related to ideas presented elsewhere in their texts; new paragraphs were formed as thoughts were developed and expanded. (1983, p. 174)

The holistic assessment of several pieces of their writing categorized four participants as skilled writers and two as unskilled. Zamel (1983) concludes that the six participants appear to have been aware of the recursive nature of writing, but the skilled writers spent more time on the essays and used a greater variety of and more effective means to develop ideas and to assess and revise their writing. They appear to have been much less concerned with surface level features and changes which were usually addressed toward the end of the process, and instead, focussed on the discovery and exploration of their ideas; they were concerned first with making meaning, then ordering it, and finally expressing it. Zamel suggests they were able to distance themselves from the text in order to take the reader's expectations into account. In contrast, the least skilled writer was anxious throughout the writing process about using correct vocabulary and grammar. She appeared to have been distracted from the beginning by surface level problems that involved changing words or phrases; however, these changes rarely affected meaning. Although the writer herself indicated that there were problems with the clarity of her essay and that it needed further work, she merely recopied the original draft. Both times she failed to address the problems she knew existed; she did not appear to appreciate the purpose of revision.

Seeking to refine the definition of the term "unskilled," Raimes (1985) undertook a study of the composing processes of university ESL students. The eight writers were her own students in a developmental ESL composition course. They were identified as "unskilled" on the basis of their performance on a holistically scored university placement writing test, not according to an assessment of their language proficiency. The study was undertaken during regular class time in the language laboratory. Using a think-aloud protocol, the eight participants composed a timed, on-the-spot writing assignment, a procedure with which they were familiar. The data included Michigan English Language Proficiency Test scores, holistic scores on the essays, responses to a questionnaire about students' "background, education, and experience with and attitude toward English and writing" (p. 235), and audiotapes from the think-aloud protocols.

Raimes' (1985) study shows that all of the participants used similar composing behaviours. They wrote a great deal and all exhibited commitment to the writing task. Moreover, they were not preoccupied with error or with editing, perhaps, Raimes suggests, because, as second language learners, they expected to make mistakes when they wrote. For all of her subjects, the language needed to express ideas and to discover new ideas was generated by the act of writing itself. The writers' challenge was finding the right words and sentences to express their meanings. However, numerous anomalies in their writing behaviour led Raimes to conclude that "no clear profile of the unskilled writer emerged" (p. 249). The variation in language proficiency test scores did not correspond with demonstrated language ability or with exposure to the second language. Writing behaviour varied during pre-writing activities, planning, reading, rehearsing, writing, revising and editing. Raimes concludes that such variety among unskilled ESL writers is due to a number of variables, such as language proficiency, the

quality of written products, self-evaluation of first and second language writing, knowledge of writing in first and second language, and writing behaviour. Raimes suggests that these writers, compared to more proficient ESL writers and compared to unskilled first language writers, need

> more of everything: more time; more opportunity to talk, listen, read, and write in order to marshal the vocabulary they need to make their own background knowledge accessible to them in their L2; more instruction and practice in generating, organizing, and revising ideas; more attention to the rhetorical options available to them; and more emphasis on editing for linguistic form and style. (p. 250)

Raimes (1985) concludes that writing is a valuable language learning tool because it provides students with the opportunity to experiment with language, with the time to find appropriate words and sentences, analyse a text, and change their minds, and with response from a reader.

A case study undertaken by Vann and Abraham (1990) sought to probe the strategies of two unsuccessful learners in an academically oriented intensive English program. The university students were considered to be unsuccessful because of the length of time each required to complete the language program and to receive passing TOEFL scores. The data, collected under experimental conditions, included test scores, teacher reports, interview comments about language learning experiences and strategies, think-aloud protocol discussions, and performance on four typical classroom activities. The activities included an exercise requiring the addition of correct definite or indefinite articles, an exercise involving the use of the appropriate form of verbs, a cloze passage, and the writing of a composition. The participants, two Arabic-speaking women, Mona and Shida, were apparently similar language learners. Both had studied English throughout secondary school in Saudi Arabia and both were serious about their schooling. Moreover, their repertoires of strategies were remarkably similar to those of

successful learners. For example, strategies used by both writers included identifying the meaning of key vocabulary, clarification/verification of meaning, comprehension checks, clarifying task demands, and understanding content. However, while they appeared to be active strategy-users, they often failed to apply appropriate strategies necessary to complete the task successfully.

Mona carefully applied rules and monitored errors on simple tasks. A good composition for her was written neatly in clear, legible handwriting and was grammatically correct. Her monitoring strategies focused on form rather than meaning. Shida, on the other hand, often failed to attend sufficiently to form after she had determined the meaning. The meaning of her composition was clear and coherent, but her written work "with its sloppy script" (Vann & Abraham, 1990, p. 189) contained numerous mechanical and grammatical errors. According to Vann and Abraham, Mona interpreted the composition assignment, "as a linear problem with a single correct solution," whereas for Shida, "understanding of meaning was fundamental" (p. 190) as she attempted to understand the demands of the task and the requirements of the content. Vann and Abraham conclude that case studies such as this one are essential if researchers are to advance assumptions about second language learning. They suggest that only by microanalysis of learner behaviour on a variety of writing activities, as completed in this case study, is it possible for researchers to determine the significant differences in learners' fundamental approaches to problem solving.

In a four-year case study of one ESL writer, Ray (1990) concludes that there were significant differences between her own approach to language and literacy and that of her student and that these differences had a considerable effect on the student's learning. Because so many

second language writers were failing her university's English Proficiency Exam, Ray investigated "the context of NN [non-native English-speaking] students' writing--the thinking, learning, and living that students bring to the task" (p. 322). For several semesters, Ray followed students originally enrolled in her own basic writing class until they wrote the Proficiency Exam. Her data included interviews with the students and their English teachers, writing samples, transcripts of students' classes, and a teaching journal in which Ray recorded students' progress, as well as her own questions and reflections. The findings reveal that one student writer made no improvement as she proceeded through six required English courses; in fact, Fida, an Arabic-speaking premed student, and her writing remained essentially unchanged throughout fours years of undergraduate study.

Fida's assumptions about language and literacy differed from those of her English teachers who believe that "written language is intrinsically valuable" (Ray, 1990, p. 321) and that writing develops thinking and learning. Fida, however,

> thinks of language solely in terms of correctness; if her language is grammatical and understandable, she is satisfied. She thinks of writing as a school requirement to be completed for teachers; it is something that she neither understands nor controls. In order to meet this requirement, she needs a teacher to tell her exactly what to do and how to do it. (p. 324)

Ray (1990) contends that the writing strategy Fida developed was to make every new writing task an old task; over a period of several semesters, Fida approached each writing task in the same way and wrote about the same topics using the same language. At times, she even took parts of essays written in a previous class and repeated them in the following classes. Fida was confident her writing would receive a passing mark when she submitted the same piece with only slight variations. She treated writing as an object to be memorized and duplicated. Although Fida

passed writing assignments submitted to English teachers, she failed the university's English Proficiency Exam four times. Comments on the Proficiency Exam indicate readers found her language simplistic and her writing underdeveloped, superficial, and unrelated to the topic.

Ray (1990) concludes that Fida was unsuccessful because "she had failed to think and write in the way English teachers value" (p. 332). According to Ray, case study research conducted by teachers is particularly useful for teachers to understand the nature of student learning and the effect teachers have on learning. The findings led Ray to conclude that teachers and students do not always share the same perspective on language and literacy, and that English teachers do not always teach according to their own perspective of using language for thinking and learning. She notes that for the English teachers in this study, including herself, academic literacy meant the use of correct language, and that, rather than encouraging second language writers to become independent, creative thinkers, the teachers, in fact, encouraged dependence.

The findings of Zamel's 1990 case study of three ESL university student writers also reveal mismatches between the perspectives of students and their teacher. Like Ray (1990), Zamel (1990) concludes that the students' own perspectives, experiences, and responses are critical components of the instructional context in the ESL writing class. In order to determine the extent to which context affects students, Zamel undertook a case study of three ESL student writers and their experiences in two different classrooms. The data included transcripts of eight open-ended interviews with each student collected during the two semesters, interviews with the students' teachers and tutors, and classroom observations. The students, Carlos, Mohammed, and Nham, were from the same ESL precomposition course and were chosen for the study because each represented a different level of writing proficiency.

Zamel (1990) observed that in the precomposition teacher's class, student contributions were acknowledged, validated, and extended. Writing tasks engaged students in a rich variety of language experiences, and writing was viewed as a means of generating ideas that evolved through collaboration and negotiation. The writers were seen as participants in the process of their own meaning-making through writing. Although each of the participants represented significantly different educational and cultural experiences, each felt acknowledged for his contribution to his own development as a writer and language user. Their teacher believed the three diligent and consistent workers had made excellent progress.

However, their progress during the second course, a freshman composition course taught in two sections by two different teachers, was less than satisfactory and the students were discouraged. It appears the instructional focus of the composition class was to practice and produce academic texts that reflected fixed conventions and forms. The most proficient of the three writers, Carlos, had extensive reading and writing experience in high school in Columbia and was anxious to explore his own interests in writing, but he was frustrated in this class by the limited amount of writing. As well, he felt pressured to write a research paper that met the requirements of the course, but one in which he had no involvement or interest.

Similarly, Mohammed found it difficult to write papers on topics that were uninteresting to him. Prior to attending university, Mohammed, from Somalia, had taken several grammar courses, but his writing experience was limited to writing summaries and practising paragraphs on artificial topics that conformed to prescribed organizational formats. He was frustrated when, in the second writing course, his returned papers indicated organizational and grammatical problems, but no credit was given for his ideas. He was confused by the uniform structure the

teacher expected in his papers, but did not specify. The least proficient writer, Nham from Cambodia, also experienced conflict between the composition teacher's expectations and his own interpretations. Nham was primarily concerned with "getting things right" and producing "what the teacher wants" (Zamel, 1990, p. 92). The composition course left Nham "feeling disillusioned and defeated" (p. 93) because he had not been able to write correctly.

Zamel (1990) concludes that teachers need to examine the constraints of their instructional models, the expectations of their practices, and their decisions about students. Carlos, Mohammed, and Nham experienced difficulty in their composition classes because of the discrepancies between the teachers' intentions and goals and the students' beliefs, expectations, and perspectives. This conflict, according to Zamel, had "serious repercussions" (p. 94) for the students.

Another case study that focussed on the experiences and emotions of an ESL university student was undertaken by Swain and Miccoli (1994) to ascertain the outcome of collaborative learning and the effect of the powerful emotions involved. Hiroko, a Japanese-speaking, intermediate level ESL graduate student in Education, was a participant in Swain's content-based, collaboratively organized course, "Collaborative Learning in Second Language Classrooms." The research data included audiotapes and videotapes of several of the groups in which Hiroko worked in class, Miccoli's observations and field notes taken during the taped sessions, the journal Hiroko was required to write for the class, and transcripts of Miccoli's eight interviews with Hiroko held throughout the 13-week course. In the interviews and while listening to tapes or watching videos of the groups in which she participated, Hiroko was asked to reflect on her own experiences as a language learner and to consider how her language

learning was influenced by her perceptions. According to Hiroko, her involvement in the research benefitted her as a second language learner because this conscious reflection led to such an awareness of her emotions and their sources that she was able to deal constructively with them. The three emotional phases Hiroko passed through include feelings of anxiety, depression, and happiness.

Hiroko's adaption to the collaborative format of the course and her learning were affected in two different ways by her cultural background. Accustomed to working individually in school and on classroom assignments, Hiroko felt unprepared to participate in small group discussions; she said that most Japanese "just sit and get some information from the professor" (Swain & Miccoli, 1994, p. 20). As well, she believed that learning, a goal-oriented activity, is highly dependent on the teacher; she remarked that, in Japan, students do not go to class to chat or to speak with their peers. Throughout the semester, Hiroko struggled not only with the cultural adjustments she had to make in order to participate in a collaborative learning environment, but also with learning the language. According to Swain and Miccoli, as a result of her awareness of the social aspect of collaboration and second language learning, Hiroko began to be responsible for her own learning. They indicate that, as the semester proceeded,

> [Hiroko] became more assertive in interacting with her peers, consciously trying to gain entry to conversations and to express her ideas and opinions. As a consequence she became active in noting the ways her peers accomplished these linguistic functions and tried them out herself. (p. 26)

Swain and Miccoli argue that successful second language learning may depend on teachers helping ESL learners recognize and deal with the social, as well as the cognitive dimensions of second language learning.

The Homes and Moulton (1995) case study of a university ESL student also concludes that students' perspectives must be addressed when employing nontraditional teaching approaches. Dang was one of the twenty-one participants in an ethnographical study of dialogue journal writing in one university ESL class. Typically, the purpose of dialogue journals is to increase students' self-confidence and willingness to write. The focus of journal writing is on the genuine interactive communication of ideas, rather than on linguistic accuracy. In the ethnographic study, only the views and experiences of one participant, Dang, failed to support the research findings regarding the benefits of dialogue journals for developing written communication skills.

Dang was a student in an intermediate ESL composition course where students wrote paragraphs according to a variety of rhetorical forms, such as description and compare/contrast, that were edited by peers, corrected and evaluated by the teacher, revised by the writer, and resubmitted for a final grade. Students also wrote weekly dialogue journals outside of class about ideas initiated by the students. The teacher did not correct or evaluate the journals, but her responses did model correct structures. The data for the ethnographic study included transcripts of four 1-hour open-ended interviews and dialogue journals that included entries by the teacher as well as by the students. Dang's perspective about journal writing was contrary to those held by the other students.

Dang, from Taiwan, had lived in the United States for five years and blamed the American school system for not providing him with adequate language instruction to enroll in university courses. A conscientious student who never missed a class or an assignment, Dang wrote lengthier entries, on a variety of more complex and sophisticated topics, than many of his

classmates. Both Dang and his teacher saw noticeable improvement in Dang's paragraph and journal writing, but Dang remained ambivalent about the benefits of journal writing. While he appreciated the opportunity to share his thoughts in writing, thoughts he admitted he would not discuss in a face-to-face conversation, he did not believe that writing as communication helped him to learn English. He realized that journal writing increased his fluency and he felt that choosing his own topics was a factor, but he did not feel it was "the right way" (Homes & Moulton, 1995, p. 235) to promote linguistic growth. He was particularly critical of the policy of not correcting journals, believing this hindered his language development. Repeatedly, in his journal and during the interviews, Dang asked for correction of all his written work, not only the formal paragraphs he completed in class.

Holmes and Moulton (1995) suggest that teachers need to ask students about their perceptions regarding the effects and benefits of dialogue journal writing. Students, like Dang, who do not believe that journal writing contributes to successful language learning, will not invest effort in writing journals and, therefore, will have "little sense of accomplishment or satisfaction" (p. 242). Holmes and Moulton conclude that teachers need to accept "that dialogue journal writing is not for everyone all the time" (p. 242).

Conclusion

The case studies discussed above support Merriam's (1991) claim that qualitative case study is "an ideal design" for understanding and interpreting problems related to teaching and learning. Each of the studies focussed on problems that were derived from the experiences and questions of teachers and students present in the classroom, and the majority were conducted by teacher-researchers. The review of these case studies relates to the area of knowledge this case

study intends to expand, the area of writing and writing development in an ESL university classroom. In addition, the review of qualitative case study design provides the framework for the research of this case study. The following chapter, "Research Methodology," presents a description of the context of the study, the two participants involved, data sources and collection procedures, and the procedures for analysing the data.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The case study approach to research has been widely used to trace the language development of first and second language learners (Krapels, 1990; Nunan, 1992; Raimes, 1985) and to examine writing processes in first (Lauer & Asher, 1988) and second language writing (Homes & Moulton, 1995; Urzua, 1987; Vann & Abraham, 1990; Zamel, 1983). Its key features are that it is particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive (Merriam, 1991). According to Johnson (1992), the essence of case study research is a careful and holistic look at individual cases in the context of the bounded system chosen for study. With this principle for case study in mind, I chose to examine the writing and writing experiences of ESL students enrolled in my own Writing class.

As a researcher, I wanted to observe and get to know the participants not only as writers and learners, but also as individuals. This was possible because, as their teacher, I was with the students in the Writing classroom for 2 hours, 4 days a week, for 8 weeks, and I attended several ESL Programme activities with them. As the Writing class teacher, I knew what the participants were studying and what they were writing. By choosing my own classroom as the "bounded system" for study, I hoped to be able to answer my research question by describing and analysing the findings from a perspective that makes this qualitative case study thorough.

The Research Question

The context for this case study is the 040 ESL Writing class I taught at the University of Regina during the spring semester, 1993, and the individual cases are two university students

enrolled in that class, Mariko and Esther.[1] To learn more about ESL writing in general, I looked at two particular ESL writers, and compared and contrasted their characteristics as writers and their writing during the semester. The participants chosen were both serious students, but there was a substantial difference in the quality of their writing. The research question that I sought to answer in this qualitative case study was, "What features distinguish proficient and nonproficient ESL writers and their writing?"

The Context: The 040B Writing Class

The English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme offered by the English as a Second Language (ESL) Department at the University of Regina was designed for people who want to pursue their studies in English. During the 1993, 8-week spring semester, two EAP levels were taught: 050 for advanced level ESL students and 040 for higher intermediate students. The suggested entrance requirement for 040 students was either a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 450-524 or a Regina Proficiency Test score of 60-72. Students in 040 attended three courses: Listening/Speaking, Reading/Vocabulary, and Writing. Each course was taught by a different teacher.

The 040 class was divided into two groups, 040A and 040B. I taught the 040B Writing class. The eight 040B students (four female and four male) came from four different countries: four were from Hong Kong, two from Taiwan, one from Japan and one from Pakistan. One student was an immigrant; the others were foreign students who planned to return to their own countries. One student had been in Canada only four days prior to the beginning of the course; four had completed at least one year of high school in Saskatchewan, and two students had been

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[1]Both names, Mariko and Esther, are pseudonyms.

in the ESL 030 class at the University of Regina during the winter semester. All had been in Canada less than two years.

During the spring semester, the 040 students attended 62 hours of Writing classes as part of the 212-hour EAP programme. Writing classes were held for 2 hours on each of 4 days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) during the 8 weeks of the semester. The 040B Writing class was organized according to three activities: journal writing, composition, and language study. During the first half hour of each class, students wrote in journals. This activity was intended to help them generate and explore ideas, as well as to develop "speed, automaticity, and confidence" (MacGowan-Gilhooly, 1991, p. 39). Students chose their own writing topics because research shows that when they do, they write "quantitatively more and qualitatively better" (Zamel, 1982, p. 204); however, they were encouraged to select topics relevant to the course itself (Spack & Sadow, 1983), such as the process of writing, the ESL programme and activities, class readings, or responses to other students' ideas.

During the composition activity, students read and analysed model paragraphs to learn what is expected in academic prose according to the criteria set out in their Writing textbook, The Process of Paragraph Writing (Reid & Lindstrom, 1985). According to the authors, the goal of this book is to teach ESL students how to communicate their ideas successfully in the kinds of paragraphs that American college and university students write and that American college or university professors expect to read. It emphasises one organizational framework claiming it is favoured in academic assignments, and it separates writing into three processes: pre-writing, writing, and re-writing.

The academic paragraphs that 040B students wrote involved the processes of pre-writing, writing and re-writing. As well, writers were expected to follow, to varying degrees, the form of organization outlined in the textbook. That is, paragraphs were to be about a single idea and the controlling idea of the topic sentence was to be supported through explanation, description or illustration. Each paragraph was to include specific detail and a concluding sentence. However, 040 writers were not limited to the textbook's three lockstep processes or the three-point paragraph outline. In fact, students were expected to revise their "writing assignment" pieces at least three times prior to submitting them for evaluation.

Four writing assignments were completed during the 8-week semester. Each assignment included an original journal entry plus three subsequent revisions. All 040B students chose four of their journal entries to revise according to the academic style outlined in the textbook. The journal revisions, called Draft #1, were read and analysed in a peer response group. Following the peer response group, students revised their text for discussion in a student-teacher conference. The second revision was called Draft #2. Following the student-teacher conference, texts were again revised and then submitted for evaluation; the third revision was called the Final Draft. Most 040B students revised their original journal entries a minimum of three times; several students revised more often. Each of the four journal entries and the three subsequent revisions was referred to as a "Writing Assignment."

Peer response groups were organized in two groups of four so that students could read and respond to each other's work in progress. Students made up their own groups; membership changed for each assignment in order to provide writers with a wide audience of readers. Conference procedure was based on the Bell (1991) model. Writers provided each reader with a

photocopy of the text. Prior to reading, writers identified a problem they had with their work and asked for help solving it. Writers read their work aloud, not only to make their reading more comprehensible, but also to learn to recognize for themselves what kinds of revisions may be needed. The group discussed solutions to the writer's problem and readers identified strengths and weaknesses of the piece. Peer feedback was provided in oral and written form. This approach is intended to shift responsibility for and control of writing and learning from the teacher to the student (Bell, 1991; Zamel, 1987).

Students were expected to revise their texts following the peer response group. The revision, Draft #2, was then discussed with me, the teacher, during a student-teacher conference. Conferences were held with each writer to discuss content, organization, discourse, or surface level concerns identified by the writer. Individual conferences also provided an opportunity for me to individualize language instruction based on problems and concerns I selected for discussion. According to MacGowan-Gilhooly (1991), individualized instruction is particularly important in an ESL university programme because students come from a variety of linguistic, educational, and cultural backgrounds. Such diversity creates a wide variation in students' reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities, levels of maturity, time available for study, motivation, experiences, and knowledge.

The third Writing class activity of 040B involved language study, or grammar. This activity centred on common language problems that arose in students' pieces and that were identified by either the students or by me when I analysed their work. To address problems related to sentence structure, students were assigned exercises from the textbook, The Process of Paragraph Writing (Reid & Lindstrom, 1985). Other problems, such as subject-verb agreement,

pronoun-antecedent agreement, verb tense, and punctuation, were addressed, either as a class or individually, by reading and completing relevant exercises from the writing skills textbook, The Bare Essentials (Norton & Green, 1990).

These three activities, journal writing, composition, and language study, were intended to fulfill the curriculum goal as set out in the "English for Academic Purposes Curricula" (ESL Department, University of Regina, 1992), namely the writing of well-organized, coherent, academic paragraphs.

Individual Cases: The Participants

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), the strategy for selecting case study participants "rests on the multiple purposes of illuminating, interpreting, and understanding--and on the researcher's own imagination and judgement" (p. 27). I chose the participants for this study during the third week of classes. As I came to know the 040 students and their writing, I looked for participants who, I judged, would help me understand ESL writing.

I chose Mariko and Esther because each appeared to be a serious student interested in developing her writing skills. Mariko had shown herself to be highly motivated and hard working, and she was certainly the most proficient writer in the class. Esther, too, worked conscientiously, but her writing skills were weak. I decided to compare and contrast the characteristics and writing of two hard working and motivated students, one of whom was a more successful writer than the other. I wanted to observe the ways the two writers approached similar writing tasks (journal writing and revision) and writing activities (peer response groups and student teacher conferences) to see if their approaches would explain the difference in the quality of their writing.

Mariko

Mariko, 29 years old, had been in Canada for one year prior to registering in the ESL program. She came to Canada as a participant in the International Internship Program, a Japanese program that, according to Mariko, introduces Japan to other countries. Mariko was not a teacher, but a "Japanese cultural ambassador" (MJournal, 23/4).[2] She was placed by the Program in three junior high schools in Medicine Hat, Alberta and two schools in Regina, Saskatchewan. In the schools, she introduced Canadian students to Japan and its "language, culture, tradition, life style and so on." In her journal, Mariko wrote, "I hope they learned something from me" because she learned "lots from them." According to Mariko, "This will be the most important experience in my life."

Mariko chose to participate in the Internship Program to gain practical teaching experience, as well as to improve her English. When she returns to Japan, Mariko wants to teach Japanese to foreign adults. Prior to coming to Canada, Mariko graduated from a private Japanese language school that teaches Japanese instructional methods; however, these graduates did not earn a teaching certificate and they had no opportunity for practice teaching. Mariko felt that graduates "don't know how to teach Japanese. They know just history. They learn by the textbook. So it doesn't work" (MSTC4).[3] To gain practical teaching experience, Mariko travelled to Canada. Although she had no previous teaching experience, Mariko did teach

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[2]The coding system used to identify the data is explained in the "Data Sources and Collection Procedures" section of this chapter (see p. 42 for the explanation).

[3]The excerpts of Mariko and Esther's conversations throughout this case study are reproduced in their original form. Three ellipsis points (. . .) within a quotation indicate a pause of less than 10 seconds.

Canadian students about Japan. She said the teachers in Medicine Hat "always helped me . . . but it was tough" (MSTC3).

Mariko explained that the International Internship Program is operated by the same people who manage the teaching program she attended in Japan. Her experience teaching in Canada will earn her credits that may help her find a job teaching Japanese in Japan; however, because there are not many of these teaching jobs in Japan, Mariko expected she will have to earn a teaching certificate from the same company before she can teach for them. Examinations for the certificate are held annually, and she intends to study independently to earn the additional credits needed to enhance her resume.

Mariko does not need to know English to teach Japanese in Japan because there are not many "white people" (MSTC4), that is, English speakers, who want to learn Japanese. When English-speaking people need to speak with Japanese people, they usually speak in English because most Japanese people have learned some English at school. For the most part, the people who do want to learn Japanese in Japan are non-Japanese workers from other Asian countries who do not know English. According to Mariko, "I can't use any other language; I just have to use Japanese. The direct method."

Although Mariko's primary reason for coming to Canada was to develop her language teaching skills, she also wanted to learn English. Mariko had studied English in junior and high school; for the three years that she was in junior high school, she also attended a private English school two evenings a week. After high school and before attending the language teaching school, Mariko worked in an office where she did not need to know English. She said that when she came to Canada in April 1992, her English was very poor, but since September, she has had

to listen and speak in English because of her assignment in Medicine Hat. However, she did not have to read or write in English so that her listening and speaking skills progressed, but her skills in reading and writing did not. Because she did not make the language improvement she wanted, Mariko enrolled for one semester in the ESL program at the University of Regina.

Esther

Esther was a 23-year-old Mandarin speaker from Taiwan. She had studied English at school in Taiwan and came to Regina in January 1993 to study in the ESL Department at the University of Regina so that she could go to university in Canada. During the previous semester, Esther was a student in the Department's 030 class. On April 21, she wrote in her journal, "Our [040] class began yesterday. I was so excited and happy because I can get together with my last semester classmates and I can also study again" (EJournal, 21/4). Esther planned to live in Regina for five years, during which time she intends to study ESL and earn a university degree in either Education or Business. She wanted to improve her English because English is spoken in Taiwan. She chose to study in Canada because, according to Esther, "Canada is a lovely country" (EFinal). In Taiwan, she learned that Canada is a "nice country and the air is clean. No pollution." In Regina, Esther lives in an apartment with another Mandarin speaker, Amy, a student at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology.

Esther is the youngest child in her family, the only one to study abroad. She told me that she was a good student in elementary school, but "not good" in high school (EFinal). Esther said, "In my country, all students have to study hard. That is our tradition." In fact, Esther did work hard. For example, to complete Reading/Vocabulary class assignments, she looked up every unknown word in the assigned articles from the local newspaper. She used a Chinese-

English dictionary, "Because if I don't know the meaning of that word, I couldn't understand what it [article] is talking about." She then translated the article into Mandarin. Esther said, "So it was very hard for me."

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

The Research Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, University of Regina, granted approval on April 19, 1993 for me to proceed with the proposed research (see Appendix A for letter of permission to proceed).

On April 27, during the fourth Writing class, I discussed my proposed research with the students of 040B. By this time, the class list had been finalised and students were familiar with the class and with me. I explained I was studying the writing of second language learners, and I asked for their permission to audiotape group discussions, to photocopy their papers, and to use their work in the study. All students volunteered to participate and each signed a written consent form (see Appendix B for Letter of Permission).

Case study research usually draws on several sources of data. When multiple data collection methods are used, the data is more trustworthy and more believable (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The data collection techniques for this study included participant observation, interviewing, and document collection. Data collection took place in a natural environment, the 040 Writing classroom. As the course instructor, I participated fully in the "ordinary life" of the class (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). I do not believe that my role as a researcher altered what and how the lessons were taught, nor do I think the student-teacher relationship with each class member was affected. In fact, it was not until the semester ended and students had received their final marks that I spoke individually with each participant, and not all class members.

Because I was the Writing class teacher, it was natural for me to question students throughout the study about their work, their opinions, and their experiences with writing and in the Writing class. Participants were observed as they worked independently at their desks and as they took part in class activities. Questions and observations took place informally before, during, and after class, as well as during breaks and departmental activities. More formal interviews occurred during individual student-teacher conferences that were audiotaped. I made notes regarding my observations and discussions during and after class and following staff meetings. These notes were expanded into fieldnotes in which I attempted to describe and analyse what I read, heard, and saw in the context of this study. As a member of the teaching staff, I had access to department records and was able to speak to the other 040 teachers.

I collected data from the participants throughout the semester. All the writing they completed as part of their four writing assignments was gathered and photocopied for use in the study. All writing tests and the final examination were collected. Texts written by the participants were typed for analysis. In addition, their journals were photocopied. Their peer response groups and student-teacher conferences were audiotaped; audiotapes were transcribed.

There are three parts to the coding system used to identify the data collected in this study; first the data are classified according to the participant ("M" for Mariko and "E" for Esther), second according to the activity (journal, peer response group, student-teacher conference, final conversation), and then according to the date or the number of the activity. That is, the code "MJournal, 23/4" refers to the journal entry Mariko wrote on April 23; "EPRG3" refers to comments made during the third peer response group (PRG) in which Esther participated and her text was the focus of discussion; "MSTC4" refers to what Mariko said during the fourth student-

teacher conference (STC) between Mariko and her teacher. "MFinal" and "EFinal" refer to the final conversations that took place in the week following the final examination between each of the participants and me in my role as researcher.

During the study, both participants completed four writing assignments; they are distinguished by codes. For example, the code "MA3" refers to the third writing assignment written by Mariko. Each writing assignment was composed of four parts: (1) the original journal entry; (2) "Draft #1," the revised journal entry used in the peer response group; (3) "Draft #2," the second revision, revised following the peer response group for the student-teacher conference; and (4) "Final Draft," the revision written after the student-teacher conference and submitted for evaluation.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), data analysis in qualitative research involves organizing what the researcher has seen, heard, and read in order to make sense of what has been learned. To accomplish this, Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggest it is necessary to read, read again, and once more read through the data; they maintain it is necessary to become intimately familiar with the data in order to bring order, structure and meaning to them. Sifting through the data, the researcher looks for recurring patterns emerging from them. Bogdan and Bilken (1992) maintain that, by grouping together the "many disparate pieces of collected evidence that are interconnected," it is possible to build generalizations or theories (p. 31). In qualitative research, "plans evolve" (p. 58) as the researcher examines the setting, participants, and other sources of data. Qualitative researchers do not undertake a study with specific questions to answer or hypotheses to test. Instead, they believe that one of the products of data collection is finding the

questions to ask as themes emerge from the data collection. The data "speaks to" the researcher.

What the researcher sees, hears, and reads in a particular case study will be guided by her theoretical perspective. This perspective not only filters what and how data are collected and analysed, but also influences the nature of the questions raised, the research design, and the conclusions drawn (Merriam, 1991). Throughout this study, I was aware that my theoretical perspective reflected my experience (Lauer & Asher, 1988; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989) as a teacher and as a researcher. I was cognizant of Bogdan and Bilken's (1992) assertion that, "Qualitative researchers try to acknowledge and take into account their own biases as a method of dealing with them" (p. 47).

In my dual roles of teacher and researcher, I collected as much information as possible, consciously trying to avoid any manipulation of or interference with the data. For each participant of this study, Mariko and Esther, the data included her completed journal, four writing assignment packages, writing tests and final examination, transcripts of the four peer response groups each attended, transcripts of four student-teacher conferences, and a final student-researcher conversation, as well as my own fieldnotes and department records. I looked for patterns in their writing and in their talk about writing. I looked first for recurring patterns and variations for each participant, and then I compared the data of both students. An analysis of Mariko's data was completed before Esther's data was examined.

Prior to answering the research question of this study, "What features distinguish proficient and nonproficient ESL writers and their writing?" I sought to understand the reasons why I considered the work of Mariko to be better than Esther's. To do this, I used a set of categories developed by Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) in a study of metadiscourse in

writing. Metadiscourse, according to Intaraprawat and Steffensen, provides one way for a writer to talk effectively to the reader. They identify seven features of metadiscourse that permit the writer to address the reader and engage her in a developing dialogue and that increase the cohesiveness of the text by making explicit the relationships between sentences, paragraphs, and other textual units. The features are connectives, code glosses, illocutionary markers, validity markers, narrators, attitude markers, and commentaries.

I analysed the journals of Mariko and Esther to determine whether their writing contained these metadiscourse features and whether the features were used to the same extent and in the same way by both participants. I chose to examine their journals because journal writing is first draft writing; other texts completed in 040B were revisions that had been discussed with peers and the teacher. Moreover, the journals were not written for the purpose of evaluation but to help the writers generate and explore ideas and to develop writing skills and confidence in using English. As well, Mariko completed 36 journal entries and Esther wrote 32 entries; therefore, there was a sizable data base available for analysis.

Having looked for the distinguishing features of good ESL writing in the journals of Mariko and Esther, I sought to explore the writer characteristics that seem to be related to the quality of ESL writing. To identify the writing characteristics of Mariko and Esther, I examined each of the four drafts of the four writing assignments that both writers completed during the course, and I analysed the oral comments each made about their writing during the four audiotaped peer response groups, four student-teacher conferences, and final conversation with me. Information from the written texts and oral comments was then compared with the characteristics identified by Hirose and Sasaki (1994) as determinants of good ESL writing.

The Hirose and Sasaki (1994) study explored the relationship between the English expository writing of 19 Japanese university students in Japan and several factors that might influence the quality of a text written in English, their second language. Factors investigated include the general English proficiency of the students, writing ability in Japanese, writing processes in both languages, meta-knowledge of English expository writing, past writing experiences, and instructional background. The quantitative findings indicate that much of the variety in second language writing quality was due to the students' first language writing ability and their second language proficiency. The qualitative analysis suggests the composing competence of the students was related to the use of several good writers' strategies, as well as writing fluency and confidence in writing. I did not look quantitatively at the writing ability of Mariko and Esther in either their first or second language, but I drew on the Hirose and Sasaki study to investigate those characteristics of both writers that may account for the differences in the quality of their writing.

Following the investigation of the writing characteristics of Mariko and Esther, I further analysed one of the writer characteristics that distinguishes proficient and nonproficient writers, the use of revision. I looked at the ways each writer used reader response to a work in progress to revise subsequent drafts of her assignment. To do this, I looked at the changes each writer made to her fourth writing assignment as a result of the Writing class activities, peer response groups and student-teacher conferences. Transcripts of peer response groups and student-teacher conferences were analysed, and drafts written before and after each of the conferences were compared to determine if and where revisions were made. I then attempted to connect these changes to comments made during the conferences.

Peer response groups have been found to provide effective feedback for adult ESL writers, as well as for children (Long & Porter, 1985). For example, Bell (1991) used groups successfully with his upper-intermediate and advanced ESL college writers, and Swain (Swain & Miccoli, 1994) found that group response helped one ESL learner in her graduate university class to "experience success as a second language learner" (p. 15). Because response has been shown to be effective for developing the second language writing skills of adults and children alike, I looked to Urzua's (1987) study of four ESL children to determine whether or not the writing of Mariko and Esther, two adults, demonstrated similar development as a result of peer and teacher response to their pieces.

In order to learn more about the ways ESL children develop their writing, Urzua (1987) undertook a six-month observational study of four Southeast Asian children learning English in the United States. To demonstrate the ways in which writing was developed, Urzua's study focussed on the dialogue journals students wrote with their teachers and comments made during peer response group sessions. Because the goal of these two practices is effective written communication, Urzua concludes that the children's writing developed "as a result of their growing sense of a divergent audience and their conscious awareness of the means by which they could manipulate language as they developed their own voice" (p. 283). In Urzua's study, reader response affected three areas of growth: a sense of audience, a sense of voice, and a sense of power in language. Thus, to learn more about the differences between the two participants of this study, I looked at the ways each did or did not incorporate peer or teacher response in their subsequent drafts. I looked to see whether or not the revised writing drafts of Mariko and Esther

reflected comments made by their readers and whether or not their writing was affected in the three areas identified by Urzua.

A discussion of the distinguishing features of good ESL writing and the findings to research question of this study regarding the differences between proficient and nonproficient ESL writers and their writing are addressed in the following chapter, "Findings and Discussion."

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected and analysed in this case study yielded a wealth of information about two ESL university writers and the writing each completed during one 8-week semester. The participants were chosen during the third week of the semester. Mariko was selected because I considered her writing to be the best in the class. I wanted to learn more about successful writers and their work. Esther, on the other hand, was a less proficient writer, but because she, like Mariko, was a serious student, I was interested in comparing and contrasting her approach to writing and her work with Mariko's.

Two Serious Students

In 040, Mariko was a serious student. She attended all ESL classes and was always on time. On only two occasions did she come to Writing class without her homework completed. Both times, she explained, she felt inundated with newspaper assignments required for another class and had worked until the early morning hours; otherwise, Mariko completed all Writing assignments. She participated fully in all Writing class activities, including journal writing, peer response groups, and student-teacher conferences. In fact, she completed 36 journal entries, 17 of which were written in class and 19 completed for homework. She completed more entries than any other student in the class, and those she wrote were lengthier and focussed on more complex topics than those written by her classmates.

Esther was also a serious student. She attended all but two hours of the 212-hour ESL course. During Writing class she sat in the front row, centre, directly in front of the teacher's desk, between Mariko and Carrie. In her first journal entry, Esther wrote that she was excited

and happy to be studying English. Her positive attitude is reflected in her April 21 journal when she wrote, "I will do my best in any situation" (EJournal, 21/4).

Esther attended all Writing classes and participated in all class activities. She completed 33 journal entries; 21 were written during class time and 12 were completed for homework. Like Mariko, Esther invested a great amount of time reading and translating newspaper articles for another class. She said, "I try to improve my Leader-Post reading . . . but so many vocabulary I don't know. How can I guess it? It's very difficult to me" (EFinal). Both Mariko and Esther often worked late into the night preparing for the newspaper tests. Esther wrote, "Sometime we [040 classmates] complain because we have to do a lot of homework and prepare exam every night. And we did not go to bed until midnight" (EJournal, 26/4). Similarly, Mariko wrote in her journal, "I feel like [we] go to school every day [just] to get homework" (MJournal, 4/5). Reading the newspaper articles, according to Mariko, "takes a lot of times [sic] and works [sic]" (MJournal 19/5). Because both students were conscientious, they tried to complete their newspaper reading, regardless of the amount of time required, often at the expense of time required for assignments in their other two courses.

Features of Good Writing

Although both Mariko and Esther were serious students, there was a difference in the quality of their writing. In an attempt to determine why I considered Mariko's writing better than Esther's, I looked in their writing for the metadiscourse features identified in the Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) study as being indicators of good essays. Metadiscourse features, according to Intaraprawat and Steffensen, are "those facets of a text which make the organization of the text explicit, provide information about the writer's attitude toward the text content, and

engage the reader in the interaction" (p. 253). Such features increase the clarity and readability of a text so that the reader is more likely to understand the intended message. Metadiscourse features examined in the 1995 study included connectives, code glosses, illocutionary markers, validity markers, narrators, attitude markers, and commentaries.

The Intaraprawat and Steffensen Study

The Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) study of essays written by ESL university students analysed the metadiscourse features of the six best and six worst essays written by 47 students as part of an American university placement examination given to new, international students. The participants in the study were upper level undergraduates and first-year graduate students from ten different countries. The students had 45 minutes to plan and write a persuasive essay on an assigned topic in which they were to argue whether or not all new foreign students whose first language is not English need an English proficiency course. The holistically graded essays were given a score of between 1 and 5 by five raters; the average score of the six best essays was 5 and the average of the six worst essays was 1.2.

The Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) study asked two questions: "(1) Were there quantitative differences in the frequency of metadiscourse features in essays that received good or poor ratings? (2) Were there qualitative differences in the use of metadiscourse in good and poor essays?" (p. 255). The 12 essays were read and the metadiscourse features identified and categorized by three researchers. They found that the best essays were longer than the poor essays and included more and longer T-units, a T-unit being defined as an independent clause and its dependent clauses. The good essays contained proportionally more total metadiscourse in every category than the poor essays, more correct metadiscourse, and a greater variety of

metadiscourse features. In fact, the good essays included almost double the proportion of correctly used hedges, attitude markers, and narrators, more than twice the proportion of code glosses and emphatics, and three times the proportion of illocutionary markers and commentaries. There was the least difference in frequency for connectives, the most frequently used category in the good and poor essays. Intaraprawat and Steffensen point out that because connectives are considered to be an important textual feature, they are usually taught in ESL classes. The study concludes that "metadiscourse is a facet of written text that varies with the overall quality of the essays. Better essays include a wider range of forms and more of them" (p. 268).

Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) suggest that the differences in the density and variety of metadiscourse features "reveal important differences in the writers' awareness of audience, particularly the cognitive demands on the reader" (p. 256). Skilled writers are able to make their texts more considerate and accessible to the reader because they have an awareness of their readers' needs. They recognize that writing is not merely an opportunity to express themselves, but is also a transaction between the writer and reader. According to Intaraprawat and Steffensen, mature second language writers need explicit knowledge of discourse forms; however, they point out that ESL textbooks include only a limited range of metadiscourse features and little attention is given to writing considerate texts. They recommend that metadiscourse forms and functions be taught in a way "that the outcome focuses on writing as interaction" (p. 270).

The Journals of Mariko and Esther

I examined the journals of Esther and Mariko to determine if there was a difference in the range and number of metadiscourse features in their texts. Like the good essays in the 1995 study, Mariko's journal entries were longer than Esther's entries. The average number of words in each of the entries revised for the four writing assignments was 154 words per entry in Mariko's work and 126 words per entry in Esther's journal. Although Mariko wrote 36 journal entries and Esther wrote 32, Mariko's journal was 24 pages in length and the majority of the entries were single spaced and covered the full page. In contrast, Esther's 32 entries were double spaced and written on 29 pages, but almost half of each page was left blank because each entry began at the top of a different page.

Connectives.

Mariko used each of the seven categories of metadiscourse at least once, and Esther used six of the features; however, Mariko's journal included metadiscourse more often. The category used most frequently in both journals is connectives. Connectives are words or phrases that encode information about the text's organization and the relationship of the different parts of the text (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995). They provide cohesion to a text by explicitly linking ideas. For example, both 040 writers used the coordinators "and" and "but" to join independent clauses, as well as adverbs and adverbial phrases as connectors. On May 4, Mariko wrote, "This semester is only for 8 weeks, but we have to do same amount of study as students do in 12 weeks semester" (MJournal, 4/5). On May 19, Esther wrote, "I like listening music--especial [sic] classical music when I have free time, but I don't like listening to pop music" (EJournal, 19/5). On May 12, Mariko wrote, "On the other hand, more people live alone, single, widow, divorced"

(MJournal, 12/5). On April 21, Esther wrote, "I have to study very hard everyday. However, I will do my best in any situation" (EJournal, 21/4).

In some entries, however, the connectives used by Esther result in aberrant reading. For example, two adverbial phrases, "on the other hand" and "in short" are misused in several different entries. In one entry, a description of Taiwan, Esther wrote,

> I don't like rainy day because it let [sic] me feel very uncomfortable and not convenient. On the other hand, I don't like the ground is wet. If I go out in the rainy day that [sic] my shoes will be muddily [sic] and I sometimes catch a cold. (EJournal, 6/5)

Esther used an adverbial phrase, "on the other hand," a phrase indicating contrast when, in fact, she provided an additional reason to explain why she did not like rainy days.

When Esther used the adverbial phrase "in short" in one concluding sentence, it appears she intended to summarize her text, "In short, you can enjoy yourself in my country" (EJournal, 7/5). However, the entry is about shopping in Taiwan (7/5) and the variety of products at reasonable prices available there. The conclusion does not refer to the main idea of the text, but introduces a new idea. The misuse of these two phrases, "on the other hand" and "in short," illustrates how connectives used incorrectly may confuse the reader.

In contrast, Mariko correctly used a greater variety of connectives, more often. For example, on April 21, she accurately wrote, "I don't need to take this class. But on the other hand I'm thinking if I do my best and achieve the level to get into the university, that will be wonderful" (MJournal, 21/4). Other connectives Mariko used correctly include "first of all" (24/4), "therefore" (26/4), "besides" (28/4), "anyway" (30/4), "actually" (10/5), "finally" (17/5), and "for these reasons" (24/5). Connectives used successfully increase the clarity and readability of Mariko's texts.

Attitude markers.

The second metadiscourse feature is the attitude marker. Attitude markers "allow writers to voice their affective responses to the content of the text . . . and are intended to engage the reader more directly in the transaction" (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995, p. 259). Both 040 participants used attitude markers throughout their journals. In various entries, Esther indicated she was excited, happy, worried, hopeful, busy, nervous, afraid, troubled, or surprised. She wrote she liked learning (EJournal, 22/4), but hated newspaper quizzes (28/4); she liked the signs of Spring (28/4), but she did not like rainy days (6/5). On May 28, she expressed her feelings about an ESL activity at St. Mary's School.

> Today I was so tired after I finished teaching the children of Mary school. But I feel happy because this is the first time I teaching [sic] children at school.
>
> I think this is a good beginning for me learning how to teach the children. I am [sic] really enjoy them. And I can find what subject do children like best or what subject do children like least.
>
> But my greatest pity is that I can't express my meaning very well in English. If next time has the similar activity like this, I hope I can do better than this time. (EJournal, 28/5)

Like Esther, Mariko wrote that, at different times, she was nervous, hopeful, sorry, surprised, amazed, feeling good, or having difficulty. She liked Medicine Hat (MJournal, 22/5), enjoyed hyacinths (26/4), didn't mind journal writing (27/5), but didn't like typhoon season in Japan (27/4). On May 28, Mariko also wrote about the visit to St. Mary's School.

> We went to St. Mary school to share our countries. For two weeks, we practiced [sic] story telling and planed [sic] what were we going to do and how we could interest children. (Actually I myself enjoyed the different culture when my classmate demonstrated in class.) Most of us didn't know very well how to deal with children and besides we had to do everything in English. We were all nervous, but we didn't have to be. Children were very curious and asked us lots of questions. They learned lots of

> things from us and we were satisfied. (I could tell when I saw everybody's face in the bus after we finished classes. But they were very tired.) I think we did very good job. (MJournal, 28/5)

It is not surprising that the journals of both participants contain numerous attitude markers. The instructions in the 040 Writing textbook were to write in their journals "about what interests you and to express your thoughts and opinions about a variety of topics" (Reid & Lindstrom, 1985, p. 232). Both Esther and Mariko wrote their journals in such a way that the reader is aware of their feelings concerning the content about which they chose to write.

Validity markers.

Another discourse category used throughout both journals is the validity marker. There are two subcategories of validity markers: hedges and emphatics. They signify the writers' dedication to the truth of the text and demonstrate the writers' "sincerity and intention to produce an ethical text by accurately indicating what they believe, what they know, and what they assume" (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995, p. 258). Esther used hedges to express her reservations about the truth of what she wrote: "I find the lesson of 040 is so heavy because we have a lot of homework to do every night" (EJournal, 26/4); "I think it is a good opportunity for us to practice our speaking ability" (5/5); "May be [sic] those good ideas are very useful for us in our daily life" (20/5); "I think it is a difficult program to [sic] us" (27/5); and "I think this a good beginning for me learning how to teach the children" (28/5). Hedges allowed Esther to reveal her feelings about the assertions, but they also make the text more courteous by providing an opportunity for readers to make their own judgments and by avoiding absolute statements.

Mariko included hedges in her pieces. For example, she wrote, "I think ESL is wonderful" (MJournal, 24/4); "I'm sure they are right" (28/4); "I think Canadian [sic] are better

at celebrating special days than Japanese." (10/5); "I cannot say this is [sic] smart idea." (23/5); and "I think we did [sic] very good job" (28/5).

As well, Mariko often used emphatics in order to strengthen her commitment to what she was writing. Emphatics are used when a writer is challenging a statement or expecting a challenge. For example, in Mariko's May 4 entry, she expressed concern about the amount of homework assigned each day. Mariko preferred to study in class so that she could review and prepare for the next class at home. She wrote, "I'm always doing homework, of course homework is a kind of review" (MJournal, 4/5). Because Mariko was challenging the teachers' practice of assigning homework, she included the emphatic, "of course." In the same entry, she wrote, "I know, if teachers didn't give homework, we wouldn't study at home." It appears that Mariko was anticipating the reader's response, particularly when the reader was a teacher who assigned homework. The fact that Mariko's writing included emphatics indicates she foresaw a potential challenge to her comments. Esther, on the other hand, may have been less aware of the reader's reaction to the content of her text because she used this category only once in her journal when she wrote, "But we know it [sic] very important to reserve the locally [sic] language" (EJournal, 1/5).

Code glosses, illocutionary markers, and narrators.

Both Esther and Mariko used code glosses to help their readers understand their intended message when they elaborated on a term or concept. Esther used it once: "This semester I made a purpose that is to improve my poor subject on last semester" (EJournal, 21/4). The phrase, "that is" specified Esther's goal for the spring semester. Mariko used this category four times. For example, she used code glosses to explain expressions she predicts her Canadian readers do

not know. She defined a "futon" as, "Japanese traditional bedding which consists of a thick Futon and a light Futon for cover yourself" (MJournal, 6/6), and she explained the May 5 Japanese holiday, "This is called 'Boy's Day or children's Day' which celebrates boy's growth and happiness" (18/5).

Illocutionary markers state the speech act the writer is performing. Like code glosses, illocutionary markers "serve to downgrade the information in the text, making it more appropriate for the intended audience" (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995, p. 258). Both participants used illocutionary markers. Mariko used them twice and Esther included four illocutionary markers, the only discourse feature she used more often than Mariko. Mariko wrote, "I was talking about spring yesterday" (MJournal, 27/4), and "We [ESL and St. Mary's students] talked about ourselves" (5/5). Esther wrote, "I tell myself" (EJournal, 22/4); "So I always tell myself" (27/4); "Every day I just tell myself" (17/5); and "Sometime [sic] we complain" (26/4).

Esther did not use the discourse feature, narrator, in her journal, but twice Mariko used one. A narrator is an authoritative source used to convince the reader that what the writer is writing is based on evidence. In the May 13 journal entry, Mariko used the dictionary to define a word, "According to dictionary, living together as husband and wife is marriage" (MJournal, 13/5). In another entry, she credits a teacher with an idea, "I have to think in English, not in Japanese, as a teacher taught me" (19/5). By referencing an authority, Mariko increased the likelihood that her reader would agree with her comments. However, it is the seventh feature, commentaries, where there is the greatest difference between the journals of Mariko and Esther.

Commentaries

According to Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995), "commentaries comprise expressions which address the reader, . . . elicit a specific response from the reader, . . . or anticipate the reader's response to the text" (p. 259). In Esther's journal, there are two entries where the reader is addressed, but, on both occasions, it does not appear Esther was writing for a specific reader. On April 27, she wrote, "But remember, don't cheat you [sic] friends and don't say lie to them. Treat them with your really feeling and they will treat you so" (EJournal, 27/4). On May 7, she wrote, "If you go to Taiwan to travel that [sic] you don't worry about hungry" (7/5).

In contrast, Mariko used commentaries throughout her journal. Frequently, she addressed the reader; for example, she wrote, "I would like to introduce my favorite Japanese band 'Tube' . . . As you know from the band [sic] name, they love summer" (MJournal, 29/5). In several entries, Mariko addressed me directly. She asked, "You like spring, don't you Mary?" (MJournal, 26/4). Concerned about her language learning progress, she questioned, "Do you think adults can do that? Don't you think it's too late?" (29/4). In an explanation of three kinds of Japanese writing, Kanji, Hiragana, and Katakana, she wrote my name and asked, "Here is your name in Japanese. Did you know that?"(24/5). Asking direct questions was one strategy used by Mariko to engage the reader in her writing. Another successful strategy involved anticipating the reader's response to her text. In an entry about herself as an ESL student, she wrote, "I know you [the teacher] want to say, 'Be strict with yourself!'" (21/4); and when she wrote about Japanese students learning English in Japan, she said, "They [Japanese students] seem to learn English unwillingly. (I don't say everybody.)" (24/4). Commentaries, like attitude markers, engage the reader more directly in the text and by doing so, they make the text more

acceptable to the reader. Mariko used commentaries successfully throughout her journal to involve her reader in her text.

According to the 1995 study (Intaraprawat & Steffensen), better essays contain proportionally more metadiscourse and a greater variety of features. The following complete journal entry demonstrates how Mariko made use of several different metadiscourse features to write a good piece. A beautiful spring day in Regina was her inspiration.

> Because of this so beautiful weather, I thought I could air dry futon if I were in Japan. Futon is a Japanese traditional bedding which consists of a thick futon spread on the floor and a light futon for cover yourself. Most young people use beds these days, but still lots of Japanese love futon. What are the good points of futon? Because spread them on the floor directly, they are not too soft, so good for your back. In the morning, we fold them away in a closet so that the bedroom can be used for other purposes. We can have time to talk at night because we spread futons and put them together so all family can sleep together. (Only when children are little.) On the other hand, there are demerits. It is troublesome to spread and put away every day. Sometimes you have to air dry them. I'm lazy so I'm using a bed now. But sometimes I want to sleep on futon. It is so comfortable especially after they are aired and have a company. When I go back to Japan, I would like to sleep on futon at first. (Oh oh! I forgot about going back in June. That's rainy season. That might not be a good idea.) (MJournal, 6/5)

In this one entry, Mariko included connectives, a code gloss, validity markers, attitude markers, and commentaries to involve the reader. In addition, her clear sense of audience is apparent in her choice of detail; she included details she predicted are unfamiliar to her Canadian reader. As a result, her piece is easy to understand and engaging for her reader.

The Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) study concludes that "skilled writers have an awareness of the needs of their readers and control the strategies for making their texts more considerate and accessible to the reader. Poor writers, on the other hand, are not able to generate considerate texts" (p. 253). Similarly in the 040 study, it appears that Mariko, the more skilled writer, was more aware of the needs of her audience and employed effective strategies to involve

the reader with her text than was Esther, the less skilled writer. Mariko's writing is compelling to read, in large part, because of her use of metadiscourse forms and functions reflecting her awareness of audience, which in turn, made her writing more accessible to the reader. The number and range of appropriately used discourse features identified by Intaraprawat and Steffensen are distinguishing features of Mariko's proficient writing.

Writer Characteristics

The analysis of the journals of Mariko and Esther provided specific reasons to help me understand why I considered Mariko's writing to be better than Esther's. Having explored what differentiated the quality of their writing, I looked at the writing characteristics of each writer and the ways in which each approached writing to determine additional differences that might be related to the variation in the quality of their writing. To do this, I looked to the research studies of Hirose and Sasaki (1994) and Urzua (1987). I drew on both studies to develop a focus for answering my research question: What features distinguish proficient and nonproficient ESL writers and their writing?

The Hirose and Sasaki Study

The Hirose and Sasaki (1994) study investigated several factors that influence the quality of Japanese university students' writing in English. The study was conducted with 19 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who had studied English in Japan for an average of 8 years and were considered intermediate level language students. For each participant, the data included a standardized English proficiency test, a questionnaire about the students' instructional and personal writing backgrounds, a retrospective self-report of writing processes, a test of meta-knowledge of English expository writing, and two writing tasks, one in English and one in

Japanese. Both timed, 20-minute writing tasks required participants to write a composition arguing whether or not women should work after they are married. The participants wrote on the same topic, first in English, and one week later in Japanese. The English compositions were scored by two English second language writing specialists using the ESL Composition Profile, and the Japanese compositions were evaluated by two Japanese first language writing specialists according to a Japanese profile comparable to the ESL profile. Six writers were considered to be "good" writers because their English composition scores were more than 1 standard deviation above the mean; five writers were considered "poor" because their scores were 1 standard deviation below the mean. Data from the questionnaires on the participants' writing backgrounds and writing processes were analysed qualitatively.

The research question of the Hirose and Sasaki (1994) study that is relevant to this case study was addressed qualitatively; it asked, "Which writer characteristics (e.g., instructional background, past writing experiences, and writing processes) determine the good and poor expository writers of English as a foreign language" (p. 206). Hirose and Sasaki found that the good writers were older than the poor writers, five of the six were female, and three of them had been in an English-speaking country for more than 9 months. The postwriting questionnaires indicated that good writers use a greater variety of writing strategies, such as planning, attending to a variety of aspects of writing, and revising. Good writers planned content, paid attention to content and overall organization while writing, and revised at the discourse level. The poor writers, on the other hand, did not use many of these strategies. They gave no particular attention to content, mechanics, or grammar; furthermore, Hirose and Sasaki point out, the poor writers were not concerned with these aspects of writing whether they were writing in their first or

second language. They speculate that this lack of concern may be related to their overall attitude toward writing; perhaps "they were simply not motivated to write" (p. 218).

The study found that the proficient writers used good writers' strategies and wrote more fluently with little pausing or mental translation. Hirose and Sasaki (1994) suggest that this difference may be related to differences in second language proficiency, as well as to general composing competence as measured by the quality of their first language writing. The writing fluency of good writers in both Japanese and English suggests a correlation between writing fluency and composing competence regardless of which language, Japanese or English, was used. A third finding of the study indicates that the students' self-initiated writing experiences in English, and not their writing experiences in school, corresponded to the variation between the two groups of writers. Good writers were also found to be also more confident writers in both Japanese and English. Hirose and Sasaki speculate that the good writers accumulated experiences because they were confident writers. Findings indicate the good writers considered writing in their first language to be less difficult than the poor writers did, in spite of the fact that both good and poor writers had similar experiences writing in their first language.

Approaches to Writing: Mariko and Esther

The 040 case study used the qualitative findings of the Hirose and Sasaki (1994) study to develop a focus for looking at the writer characteristics of Mariko and Esther. Characteristics analysed include contact with native speakers, planning, concerns while writing, and revision.

Contact with native speakers.

The good writers in the Japanese study were older than the poor writers and they had lived in an English-speaking country for more than 9 months. These characteristics were found

to differentiate the writers in the current study, as well. Mariko, who was 29 years old, had lived in Canada for one year before the 040 class began. During that year, she lived and worked with native speakers of English. As a participant in the International Internship Program, she taught English-speaking Canadian children about Japan. She lived with Canadian families in Medicine Hat and Regina. In her journal, she wrote about participating in family activities, such as birthday, wedding, and Mother's Day celebrations. For example, she wrote that she went to church every Sunday with her family, "I've been [to] several different churches. I've never been [to] church in Japan. So this is good and new experience for me" (MJournal, 9/5). By immersing herself in numerous aspects of Canadian culture, Mariko met and spoke to many English-speaking Canadians and had a variety of new experiences where she needed to use English. Moreover, she was the only Japanese speaker in 040B.

On the other hand, Esther, who was 23 years old, had been in Canada only 4 months prior to this study. During that time, she was an ESL student, and she lived with another Mandarin speaker. In her journal, she wrote that she and her friends went shopping, horse-back riding, had lunch together, and talked; Esther told me her friends were two Taiwanese 040A students and a third woman, Carrie, a bilingual Mandarin-Cantonese speaker in 040B. The four women had been friends the previous semester in 030 and when they were together, they spoke Mandarin. As well, there was another Taiwanese student in 040B, Lee. There is no indication in her journal or in conversations that Esther had contact with native English-speaking people, other than her instructors, or that she took part in Canadian cultural activities. Esther was much like the students Raimes (1985) describes in her study of unskilled ESL writers. Raimes writes that it is "not uncommon for some students to continue to use their first language at home, at work, and

often at school and thus to be deprived of much opportunity for natural language acquisition" (p. 237).

The environment in which the two 040 participants lived and worked affected their language. Esther wrote, "I worry about my speaking and listening. I hope my speaking and listening can improve" (EJournal, 22/4), but her associates were, for the most part, Mandarin speakers. This may account for the lack of slang or colloquial expressions in her writing. In contrast, the vocabulary in Mariko's journal reflects her immersion in Canadian life. For example, in a discussion of the current definition of family, Mariko referred to blended families, "composed of parents with children from [sic] previous marriage, and DINKS family which means double income no kids" (MJournal, 21/5). Writing about her favourite Japanese band, Tube, she stated "there will be a stadium gig" (29/5) in August. Questioning the purpose of holidays, Mariko wrote, it is "nice to have holidays but most of people are pooped out after holidays" (18/5). It appears the ability to use words such as "DINKS," "gig," and "pooped out" idiomatically in her writing developed from Mariko's contact with English-speaking Canadians.

Immersion in Canadian life also provided Mariko with a variety of writing topics. Eight journal entries discussed aspects of Canadian culture. According to Mariko, "These days, many numbers of students go overseas to study English. They also can learn other cultures. This is one purpose to live in other countries" (MJournal, 1/6). In the final draft of the first writing assignment, Mariko wrote, "I can learn about their [classmates'] countries, and as well, I can share my country. It is very interesting to know about the things that we didn't know, such as different cultures, lifestyles, ways of thinking, and so on" (MA1). Participation in another culture led not only to reflective writing about Canadian ways, but also about life in Japan. She

used her writing to connect the two cultures; for example, she wrote, "I learned American family is changing. Japanese is too" (MJournal, 12/5). She discussed the changes in families as a result of the movement from agricultural to industrial economies in both countries. By doing so, Mariko used her background knowledge and experience to bring understanding to her Canadian experience.

Like Mariko, Esther chose writing topics about subjects that were important to her during her stay in Canada. In fact, more than a quarter of Esther's journal entries were about friends. In one entry, she explained why friends are important. She wrote,

> Friend is so important in our life. There is no one could live on [sic] the world without friends. When you feel lonly [sic] friends can company [sic] with you and when you have troubles that they can help you to solve problems. If you feel happy you also can share your happy [sic] with friends. (EJournal, 27/4)

It appears her friends and her happiness being with them were central to Esther's survival so far from home; this is not a surprising finding considering that Esther is a foreign student.

A repeated topic in Esther's journal was the visit by Grade 8 students from St. Mary's School and the reciprocal visit by ESL students to St. Mary's School. On May 5, she wrote, "On Tuesday, we have an activity that is introducing the campus of university to Mary school student. It is a good activity" (EJournal, 5/5). She continued, "I think it is a good opportunity for us to practice our speaking ability." There are three other entries about the preparation for and visit to St. Mary's School. On May 12, Esther explained she had to prepare a story from her own country to present to the children at St. Mary's School. According to Esther,

> It is a trouble to me because I have to look for the story which is easier to understand for those children. Second I have to translate Chinese into English. Third I have to practice my speaking that make my pronunciation clear and try to make my story listening vivid. (12/5)

On May 27, Esther again discussed the preparations. She wrote,

> These day [sic] we are very busy because we have to prepare some subject teaching the children of Mary school.
>
> I think is a difficult program to us. First, you have to make some ideas in your mind. Second, when you make sure of your subjects what you want to teach them then you have to find the data from library or from some where [sic]. Third, after you preare [sic] those meterial [sic] already you also have to practice how to express your meaning completely in English. To sum up, this is a very interesting activity to me. (EJournal, 27/5)

Although ESL students participated in 12 department activities during the Spring semester, this is the only activity about which Esther chose to write. It was also the only activity that involved ESL students directly with native English-speaking Canadians. Clearly Esther was excited by the opportunity to meet Canadian children and to share her culture with them. On the day of the visit, she wrote in her journal, "Today I was so tired after I finished teaching the children of Mary school. But I feel happy because this is the first time I teaching [sic] children at school" (EJournal, 28/5).

Esther was not involved in Canadian culture to the extent that Mariko was. This may explain, in part, why she had difficulty finding writing topics. During a conversation about journal writing, Esther said she chose topics "after I talking with my friend [roommate] . . . . And sometimes I get idea from classmates" (EFinal). In fact, she would have preferred me to assign topics. Mariko, on the other hand, said she had no difficulty finding topics. She explained when she wrote in her journal, she chose a topic that interested her and she wrote for herself. She said, "I think journal I can explain just for myself and this is my idea. I pick this topic so it's not so hard 'cause I'm interested in this [topic]" (MFinal). Having something to write about is one factor that influences writing quality. Finding engaging topics was one strategy Mariko, the more

proficient writer, used to advantage. According to Zamel (1982), "writers write both quantitatively more and qualitatively better when they are composing papers about topics that engage them . . . . Students' writing thus should be motivated by their feelings about and responses to a topic with which they have had some experience" (p. 204). In her study of unskilled writers, Raimes (1985) suggests that unskilled writers and skilled writers generate language and ideas in much the same way. She claims, "they use what they have and move on from there" (p. 250). It appears that Esther's limited practice speaking with native English-speaking Canadians and her minimal involvement in the culture in which she was living may have affected her language fluency and ability to write with engagement.

Planning.

Hirose and Sasaki (1994) conclude that planning is one factor that influences the quality of writing; planning in the 1994 study involved thinking about the content and/or organization of the composition before beginning to write, and/or writing an outline before writing the composition. Hirose and Sasaki found that more good writers planned than did poor writers. Of those who did plan, all were concerned with content, that is, what they wrote, before they began to write. Half of the good writers who planned were also concerned about the organization of their piece. Poor writers did not plan for organization.

In the 040 Writing class, planning also referred to thinking about the content and/or organization before the actual writing and/or writing an outline. In a conversation with me, Mariko explained that sometimes she planned the content of her journal ahead of time, but sometimes she came to class with no idea, until she started to write, what she would say. She said on those days, she just wrote about what came into her head. In one such entry, she wrote

about her happy memories associated with playing in a park. However, when Mariko wrote a paragraph to be evaluated, she planned, mentally, what she was going to say and how she was going to write it before she put anything down on paper. In her journal, she complained about the difficulty of taking several factors into consideration at the same time. She wrote,

> These day [sic], I found Writing is very difficult. I didn't mind writing Jurnal [sic] every day. But once I knew I have to write accademic [sic] writing, that pressure makes me think [about] my Writing. I have to think about organization, main idea, sentence structure and so on. Anybody cannot write perfect sentence at once. We need [to] revise our own writing. (MJournal, 27/5)

Esther, on the other hand, said she always planned before she wrote, even in her journal. She said, "It have [sic] to take your time to think about your idea" (EFinal). She continued, "I think [about] what point I want to write first and then what is important . . . I have to think about it [writing] and then I can write." To prepare for the final take-home examination, Esther said she first tried to understand the question, and then she made a list of words and wrote the paragraph, "I made the whole paragraph" (EFinal). Because students were encouraged to bring an outline to the examination, Esther said she wrote an outline after her paragraph was finished.

In contrast, Mariko, who said she planned content and organization whenever her piece was evaluated, wrote a complete outline for the final examination before she wrote the paragraph. The outline carefully followed the rules for paragraph organization outlined in the Writing textbook. That is, it included a topic sentence, three points with two details about each, and a concluding sentence. Mariko said she also planned the structure of each sentence when she wrote a paragraph for evaluation, something she did not do when she wrote in her journal.

While Esther said she did not write an outline before she answered the examination question, her later journal entries and Writing Assignments #3 and #4 indicate that the three-

point paragraph plan influenced much of her later writing. The following conversation shows why Esther used the outline.

Teacher	How did the outline help?
Esther	It made my journal or paragraph more clear. Clear is easy to understand.
Teacher	Why?
Esther	Why? I list 1, 2, 3. And topic and concluding sentence.
Teacher	This is the way the textbook told you to do it. It told you to have 3 points and 2 details for each point. Is that a good idea?
Esther	Yeah. I think so.
Teacher	Why?
Esther	Because before you write a paragraph, you have to think. You have to make an idea in your mind. (EFinal)

Esther was correct to say that when she wrote an outline, her writing was much easier to read. Planning and using an outline were writing strategies that improved Esther's writing, and suggest her writing skills were developing.

Mariko, too, used the three-point paragraph outline to help solve the problem of organization of ideas. She said that, "Sometimes it [the outline] is a help. Sometimes it doesn't help" (MSTC4). According to Mariko, an outline helped because "it is easy to read and easy to make a good paragraph." It does not help, however, when the form is too rigid. Mariko had problems arranging her ideas into "only this one way," the way prescribed in the textbook. She said, "I thought it's like a kind of rule . . . . I have to make three big things [points], two things [details] in here." However, in Writing Assignment #3, Mariko was able to find the suggested number of points and details to complete the organization plan recommended in the textbook. This following paragraph is the final draft of that assignment.

> ESL students who are going to teach at St. Mary School need to consider three important points to succeed. First of all, we have to make ourselves understood in English. Because this the very first step to communicate with the children, we should make lots of efforts to use correct English. We also need to anticipate children's

> questions and prepare for them in English since it is difficult for ESL students to cope with the unexpected questions. Secondly, we must consider to make the detailed plans which consist of varieties of projects, the balance of content, time managements [sic] and teaching method. Because the children are not very patient, we have to make the classes attractive and get them involved. Thirdly, it is necessary for the children to have fun, [sic] also it is essential for us. On the other hand, we have to remember that the children regard us as representatives of each country. If the children show their intrests [sic] in other countries and other people through us, we can say that teaching at St. Mary School is a success. (MA3)

This paragraph carefully adheres to the point paragraph outline form found in the 040 Writing textbook. There is a topic sentence that introduces the topic (teaching at St. Mary's School) and the controlling idea (three points to succeed), 3 points that develop the controlling idea (making ourselves understood, making detailed plans, and having fun), 2 details about each of the points, and a concluding sentence (successful teaching).

The findings of this study indicate that, like all the writers in the Hirose and Sasaki (1994) study, Mariko and Esther usually planned what they would write before they started to write. Both Mariko and Esther followed, to varying degrees, the three-point paragraph organizational outline after it was introduced in class. Evidence of this can be seen in some of their later journal entries and assignments, as well as the final examination (see Appendix B for Esther's outline & Appendix C for Mariko's outline). Planning, then, is one feature of writing that does influence the quality of writing. The writing of both participants improved as a result of planning. However, the degree of planning varied between participants, and it varied for each participant according to her purpose for writing. It appears that Mariko, the more proficient writer, had more flexibility and ownership over the planning process than did Esther, the less proficient writer.

Concerns while writing.

Hirose and Sasaki (1994) claim that the approaches to writing vary with good and poor writers. In their study, participants rated themselves according to how much attention they paid to grammar, spelling, content, organization, and vocabulary choice while writing. The findings indicate that the good second language writers were particularly concerned about content, but they paid attention to the other aspects as well. In contrast, the poor writers gave relatively little concern to content; in fact, they paid less attention to all aspects of writing than the good writers did. They gave the least amount of attention to spelling.

To identify and analyse the writing concerns of the participants in the 040 study, I looked at comments each participant made during the peer response groups, student-teacher conferences, and her final conversation with me. When their work was discussed at a conference, 040 writers were expected to indicate a problem they encountered while writing and to ask for help solving it. In peer response groups, problems were to be about content and organization. Any type of writing problem could be raised during a student-teacher conference.

In three of the four peer response groups, Mariko expressed concern about the content of her piece. For example, during the second peer group conference on May 17, Mariko said she had "lots" of questions, but she specifically asked for help with the content. She was writing about a play that all ESL students attended, "True Canadian Stories." She indicated the topic was too broad and she needed to add more detail. She said, "This paragraph is too wide [and] is not detailed enough . . . . So I want to have your suggestion to make more detail. I need more detail. More explanation . . . . Always [it is] very hard to explain" (MPRG2).

Immediately following the oral reading, Mariko's peers asked about the intended audience, "Your audience is student? . . . Is it English as a Second Language people?" (MPRG2).

Mariko replied, "Audience is everybody. Somebody [who] knows about ESL. Of course, I want them to know about this, but . . . other who don't know about the ESL program. We have [to] let them know [about] this program" (MPRG2).

Kent pursued the problem of audience. He said, "Your audience is everybody . . . but they need to know what is the true story of the characters . . . . You just write this paragraph [as] if I have not seen the "True Stories" and I do [not] know what you are talking about" (MPRG2).

Mariko then asked, "Do I have to explain what was going on on the stage?" (MPRG2).

Kent answered, "This is not necessary. Just generally talk about main idea of this play because there are many, many stories in this play. So you cannot explain every story" (MPRG2).

In the revision, Mariko followed Kent's suggestion and added the sentence, "The story was about many problems which ESL students were faced with, how they were treated at the school, and how they felt and thought" (MSTC2).

In the same peer response group, Lee indicated a problem with the conclusion: "Their power may not be strong enough now, but if they continue this kind of activity, they might make 'the *new* true stories of Canada'" (MPRG2). He did not understand what "the new stories of Canada" were. Mariko explained that if the actors continue to present the problems of ESL students to Canadian audiences, "maybe they can make a difference . . . . They can solve the problem . . . . I want that story to be an old story" and the new stories to be happy stories (MPRG2).

Carrie confirmed Lee's observation, "I think it is quite confusing" (MPRG2).

Kent asked, "You want to change the meaning of the play?" (MPRG2).

Lee said, "I'm not sure what you mean [by] the 'new'" (MPRG2).

A lengthy discussion followed about the meaning of the conclusion. Mariko tried again and again to explain, "Now students [are] faced with this problem but if somebody help them--if you can help them--maybe it would be better. Right? So this new story is [a] better story" (MPRG2). She realised there was a problem with her writing, "You didn't understand . . . so I have to change it." In the following draft, the conclusion reads, "Even though this must be a big and hard problem to overcome, if they continue this work and spread a circle even by degrees, they might make a *new* version of 'True Stories of Canada'" (MSTC2). The revised draft was substantially altered as a result of peer response that focused on the content of Mariko's piece.

Although Mariko was free to ask about any aspect of writing during the student-teacher conferences, her concerns were usually about the development of ideas. For example, during the discussion of her piece about teaching children at St. Mary's School, Mariko explained she changed the main idea of Draft #1.

Mariko	This is my first one [Draft #1] and I changed the main idea because this is too specific, "having children's attention." This [Draft #2] is my last main idea.
Teacher	Why?
Mariko	Because this is [about] one teaching method, so I thought I will say [about] another teaching method including this method.
Teacher	Was this [Draft #1] too narrow?
Mariko	No. I think all of this [is the] same thing. No change. No difference. So it's not so interesting.
Teacher	How did you change it?
Mariko	I did this one [Draft #2]. This is how to teach. At first I have to make myself understood in English.
Teacher	What problems do you want me to look at?
Mariko	I decided to change this main idea, but it's better or not?
Teacher	Anything else?

> Mariko And the conclusion. I'm not satisfied [with] this conclusion. I couldn't end this paragraph because I have so many things in my mind. So how to conclude. (MSTC3)

As a result of this student-teacher conference which focussed on content, Mariko made substantive revisions to her piece about teaching at St. Mary's School (see Appendix C for revisions). Mariko was well prepared for each conference with specific problems she had identified and considered throughout the process of writing.

In contrast, Esther was not prepared for the first three of the four peer response groups. On each occasion, she used a journal entry for discussion. The journal entries had not been revised according to the criteria of an academic paragraph, as expected. As a consequence, the groups had difficulty understanding her text. For example, after she read one piece, a reader asked, "What is the topic ? . . . Is this [a] type of poem or something?" (EPRG1).

In the second peer response group, Esther said her problem was that,

> I want to explain more than I can write down. . . I try to write down more but sometimes I couldn't . . . . Sometimes I don't [know] how to use [a] word to explain my ideas. I don't know if I use this word, is it correct or not. (EPRG2)

The group did not address either the problem with expression or vocabulary. Peers did, however, point out surface level mistakes. The failure of the group to provide satisfactory feedback seems to have been the result of Esther's uncertainty with respect to what she wanted to communicate.

During the May 31 peer response group, Esther confessed to her peers that she forgot to revise the journal entry so she photocopied a journal entry, "Because I forgot so I didn't rewrite again, so I use the first draft" (EPR3).

In light of this announcement, one of the readers tried to move the group toward the expected first step of the peer response group procedure. He asked, "Do you have any

questions?" (EPRG3) referring to requests for help Esther might have had writing the text.

Esther replied, "My first question is I am [sic] very difficult to decide what topic I want to talk [about]." This question confused the readers and a lengthy discussion followed as to whether Esther was asking about a writing problem or about the main idea of the text.

Esther tried again to explain, "Because you asked me what is my problem. Before we discuss the article. So I just talk about my problem about my journal. So I am not talking about my topic" (EPRG3).

After Esther read her piece, Kent said, "We don't know the question so we don't know what to say. What is your question? What is your topic?" (EPRG3).

Esther answered, "My topic is I found some very interesting article from [a] book" (EPRG3).

Mariko advised. "[You] must describe, explain what's [an] interesting article" (EPRG3).

Esther told her she liked personal experience articles.

Mariko continued, "What type [of] personal experience? . . . If you say you found some very interesting article, then you should describe that article . . . . and how do you feel about the article" (EPRG3).

In spite of their difficulty understanding Esther's writing problem, the group did provide specific content suggestions Esther used to revise and improve her text (see Appendix B for revisions). Esther, however, had reservations about the benefits of peer response; she said, "I think [they helped] a little bit" (ESTC4). In her conversation with me about peer groups, she said, "I think some suggestion is good," but she said she preferred to talk to the teacher, "I think talk to you [the teacher] help me more" (EFinal). When asked why, she replied, "Because you

correct my grammar and told me many things that students didn't tell me. And you asked me some questions that I can make sure my journal [is] clear." By the end of the semester, Esther was gaining an appreciation of the importance of writing clearly so that her reader understood the content of her piece, but it appears that grammar continued to be Esther's prime concern.

Throughout the semester, the focus of Esther's concerns raised at student-teacher conferences was on grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. For example, during the first conference, she said, "My first problem is involve grammar and the second is vocabulary" (ESTC1). Only once during any of the four conferences did she refer to anything else, and that was during the discussion of Esther's text about interesting textbook articles. Because peer readers had difficulty understanding the text the previous day, Esther asked me to, "check my sentence construction and help me explain my meaning" (ESTC3).

Unlike Mariko's, Esther's requests were made in general terms and were not related to specific words, sentences, or ideas. Esther did not initiate discussion with specific questions or concerns during student-teacher conferences, but she did question suggestions I made. For example, she asked, "Why is 'can' better than 'could?'" (ESTC1), "I don't understand why we need a comma in here" (ESTC1), "Why [did] you put 'had' in here?" (ESTC2), and "You have to put article in here?" (ESTC2). These questions demonstrate a desire to understand suggestions; however, when asked if she had any questions of her own, her answer was usually the same, "Yes, this is my question. All my questions" (ESTC2), indicating her questions had been answered.

Similarly, the ideas and language of Esther's writing were written in general terms. For example, the text about interesting reading was confusing to her peers, in part, because there

were no specific references, details, or examples. She wrote,

> These day [sic] when I study my writing book, I found some very interesting articles and I enjoyed them very much.
>
> There are many different kinds of article [sic] in this book, some of them were talking about personal experience, some of them described their courtry's [sic] geography, and some of them were talking about culture problem.
>
> All of these articles which I special [sic] like to read are culture problem and personal experience.
>
> For example, on [sic] those culture articles that you could find some funny things and you could also realize different culture that came from different country. On the other hand, the personal experience articles that could give you some good idea.
>
> In short, you could learn more from those articles and they were good experience to you in your livies [sic]. (EPRG3)

After Esther read the text aloud, a peer reader asked,

> What type [of] personal experience? Exactly what type? I don't know. If you say you found [an] interesting article then you should describe what article. What was the article about? You found some specific one . . . . Or when you said culture interesting experience, so . . . like holiday somewhere? You must have some expression . . . and how do you feel about the article . . . and why were you so interested. (EPRG3)

Such questions and comments helped Esther realise that her readers did not understand the text. With this in mind, Esther revised (see Appendix B for revisions), and consequently, at this student-teacher conference, asked me to "help me explain my meaning" (ESTC3).

One sentence from this assignment (EA3) illustrates Esther's developing concern for her readers. In Draft #1, she wrote, "On those culture articles that I could find some funny things and you could also realize different culture that came from different country." Following the peer response group discussion noted above, she revised the sentence. In Draft #2, it read,

> In culture problem article that it is talking about culture habit. For example, the wedding in Java, sugar can [sic] symbolized the couple will have a sweet life, but in my country it has a different meaning. So in this kind of article you could find different culture customs. It is very interesting. (ESTC3)

The conversational focus remained on content when, during the student-teacher conference,

I asked about the meaning of sugar cane in Taiwan. Esther answered, "I don't remember but I know [it] is different" (ESTC3). However, in the final draft, Esther included this missing piece of information. She wrote, "At the wedding in Java, sugar cane symbolizes the couple will have a sweet life but in my country it has a different meaning. It means the couple living together long time, no separate, until they die" (EA3). It appears that Esther cared enough about her piece and her reader to find the meaning of sugar cane and add this detail to make her writing more interesting and more complete.

Similarly, other ideas in the final draft are easier to comprehend because Esther followed suggestions to include specific examples, use more exact vocabulary, and use example to explain. Instead of writing, "my writing book," Esther included its title, The Process of Paragraph Writing; instead of the words "article,"and "things," she found more precise vocabulary, "paragraph" and "stories;" and when I drew attention to expressions I did not understand, she clarified them. For example,

Teacher	[reading] "He takes away sense and makes it funny." What do you mean?
Esther	He want [sic] to say this word but he say [sic] his pronunciation is wrong so the meaning is very different.
Teacher	Tell me that. The way you just said it makes more sense to me.
Esther	So I need more detail. (ESTC3)

In the final draft, Esther wrote, "One day the author wants to buy the cheese which is called 'Muenster', but his pronunciation of 'Muenster' is 'monster'. He makes the salesperson began [sic] to smile because she can't imagine how to get a 'monster'." The meaning is undoubtedly clearer.

The May 31 peer response group and the June 1 student-teacher conference helped Esther improve her piece about the textbook paragraph. The 134 word journal entry was expanded to a

211 word piece that is qualitatively better because it is easier to read. Esther responded to the comments, concerns, and suggestions of peer readers and the teacher. She was actively involved in negotiating the meaning of her writing, and this involvement is reflected in the quality of the revisions made to the content (see Appendix B for all revisions).

Esther focused on the content of Writing Assignments #3 and #4 following the peer response groups and student-teacher conferences. As well, she had asked for help with the meaning of her first drafts during the peer groups, but that was expected according to the 040B class procedure. The vagueness of the questions suggest she probably had not given them prior consideration. When she was free to ask any question she chose, Esther chose questions related to grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Again the questions were vague, but they do suggest that for Esther, grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure were more important than content. Other comments made by Esther support this contention.

For example, in a conversation with me about journal writing, Esther indicated she preferred to write the journal during class time so that it did not take too much time. She said,

> If at home, you take your time to write journal. I think that is not good. But you can think [about] more detail. But if you write journal in class, you don't need to take more time to write a journal at home. (EFinal)

In fact, the shortest journal entries were written during class. It appears that, for Esther, the addition of more detail did not justify the extra time it took to write at home. This conversation suggests that content may not have been particularly important to Esther.

Several times during her final conversation with me, Esther said she liked talking to me because I corrected her grammar. At different times throughout the conversation, she said, "I think talk to you help me . . . because you correct my grammar" (EFinal), "I want [you] to show

[me] what is my problem and I want [you] . . . to correct my grammar;" and "I like to talk to you and [you] to correct my grammar." When I asked Esther what was the most difficult part of writing for her, she answered, "Grammar." She explained, "Because for foreign students that is the big problem--to write a correct sentence."

In fact, Esther's fourth writing assignment was about the importance of grammar in writing. She wrote,

> Journal writing is good for our writing skill. Through the journal writing, we can practice grammar and remember more vocabulary. Before we begin to write the journal, we have to make an idea in our mind and think about how to express our meaning in correct way and that helps us to improve our grammar and reduce the mistakes of grammar in our writing. Then we have to think about how to express our idea in complete sentence and that is good training for us to learn how to establish the structure of paragraph. We also have to remember vocabulary because we need the appropriate words to express our opinion. If we do not remember the words which we want to use, we have to look up the words in the dictionary. By this way, it can help us learn more words and remember clearly.
>
> In short, journal writing is a good place to practice writing if we want to improve the writing skill. It is necessary to write journal every day. (EA4)

According to what she said in this piece, it appears that for Esther the focus of writing is on grammar, organization, and vocabulary.

Comments made during the conference support this interpretation. When I questioned Esther about whether it was necessary to write every day and whether this is related to the controlling idea, Esther said that it was necessary to write every day "But not include Sunday and Saturday" (ESTC4). She explained that she included the idea of writing every day to distinguish the conclusion from the introduction, "The topic sentence is the same, so I add this last sentence to do my conclusion sentence." It appears that, in this particular revision, Esther attended to organizational form at the expense of content. That is, she adopted the content to fit the form.

The findings of the 040 study indicate that Mariko was more concerned about content than was Esther. This supports the conclusions of the Hirose and Sasaki (1994) study that concludes good second language writers are particularly concerned about content, whereas the poor writers are much less concerned about content. Zamel (1983) claims that the process of composing is a process of making meaning, and that meaning is created through language. Mariko's focus on content allowed her to develop her ideas throughout the writing process as she developed her language skills. Esther's writing, on the other hand, tended to be controlled by her language conventions and her use of them.

Revision.

Hirose and Sasaki (1994) identify revision as another writer characteristic that distinguishes good and poor writers. In their study, the good writers reread and revised their texts once written, but only one of the five poor writers reread or revised. Furthermore, the good writers were concerned about form and content at the discourse level, whereas poor writers concentrated on form at the sentence level.

Revision refers to the written change or changes the 040 writers made to the form or content of their pieces with the expectation that the revision would make the text easier to read and to understand. Revisions could be made at the word, phrase, clause, sentence, or paragraph level; they could involve addition, deletion, substitution, or rearrangement. Mariko, the more proficient writer in this study, revised each of the four writing assignments at least three times. She revised one journal entry for each peer response group; she revised that draft, called Draft #1, for the student teacher conference; she revised the draft, called Draft #2, to be the Final Draft which was submitted for evaluation. Furthermore, Mariko often completed several additional

drafts that she submitted for this study, but which were not analysed because they were not discussed or evaluated by others.

Mariko revised extensively from the first draft to the final draft. She added new ideas, examples, and information. She removed ideas that no longer supported her evolving text. She replaced details with others that seemed more appropriate, and she rearranged details and ideas so the order was more effective. As ideas were developed, Mariko adjusted and refined the form with which to express them. Like the ESL students in Zamel's (1983) study, Mariko often rewrote large chunks of discourse in an attempt to clarify a previously stated idea. Her revising strategy indicates she understood that "composing involves the constant interplay of thinking, writing, and rewriting" (Zamel, 1983, p. 172). The final drafts of Mariko's assignments were not free of errors or problems, but they did benefit from attention to content, organization, grammar, vocabulary choice and spelling (see Appendices C & E for revisions).

Esther's final drafts were also significantly better than her earlier drafts, but they did not indicate the attention to global units or details that Mariko's revised drafts show. Esther, the less proficient writer in this study, did not revise her journal entries for the first three peer response groups as required; as a result, the first three assignments were revised only twice. Only the fourth assignment was revised three times, but the overall organization and main ideas were not altered in any draft to the degree that they were changed in Mariko's work.

The majority of Esther's revisions were made following peer response groups and student-teacher conferences. Frequently the revision involved the addition of details or information, a process that has been shown to be the earliest and easiest type of revision (Urzua, 1987). For example, in a piece about Esther's two problems living in Canada, she added details

to three different sentences following the student-teacher conference. In one sentence, she wrote, "In Taiwan there are many different kinds of vegetable [sic] that you can choose in supermarket every day" (EA2). Following the suggestion to add more detail, Esther wrote, "In Taiwan there are many different kinds of vegetable [sic] that you can choose in supermarket such as cabbage, spinach, turnip tops." To another sentence in the same piece, "I can't understand what people talking about so I just guess," Esther added the clause, "when they ask me questions." The third addition involved adding the phrase "with English." The revised sentence reads, "I cannot express myself very well with English." The addition of detail improved this piece (see Appendix D for revisions).

Esther also made surface level changes, but these changes rarely affected meaning. For example, in the same piece about her problems, she wrote in Draft #2, "Language is a great problem for me in Canada" (EA2). In the Final Draft, she wrote, "Language is one of my greatest problem [sic] in Canada." In the conclusion of Draft #2, Esther wrote, "Every day I just tell myself," but in the Final Draft, she said, "Now, I often tell myself." These revisions illustrate that Esther did attend to surface level concerns. Revision improved each of Esther's assignments; however, her revisions tended to be more restricted and superficial than Mariko's were (see also Appendices B & F for revisions).

Mariko, the more proficient writer, revised more extensively and more frequently than did Esther, the less proficient writer. The findings of this 040 study suggest that the use of revision is one writer characteristic that distinguishes the proficient ESL writer and her writing from the nonproficient writer and her work. To learn more about this particular writer characteristic, I looked at how both 040 writers used reader response to a work in progress (the fourth and final

writing assignment) to revise their subsequent drafts. Response was provided by classmates in the peer response groups and by the teacher in the student-teacher conferences. I analysed the revised writing drafts of Mariko and Esther to determine if the revisions reflected comments made by their readers and to discover whether or not their writing developed in the three areas identified by Urzua (1987).

The Urzua Study

Urzua (1987) investigated the ways that peer response groups helped four ESL children write more effectively. She was particularly interested in how the children helped each other and in the development of their reading and writing skills when awareness of audience is a consideration in their written work. Usually, audience is removed in time and space from the writer, but in Urzua's study, audience was composed of "real" people, people the writers knew and trusted, their ESL classmates and teachers, and who read in the presence of the writer.

The participants of Urzua's (1987) study were two grade 6 boys and two grade 4 girls from Southeast Asia who attended ESL classes because they continued to read below grade level on standardized tests. None of the children had had formal schooling in their native language; all had passed out of the ESL program at their present school. The data for the study included transcripts of peer response sessions and teachers' notes of the sessions, weekly compositions, and twice weekly dialogue journals. The children met with their teacher for 45 minutes once a week for 15 weeks. Each session was audiotaped and transcribed.

The learners' compositions were usually started at home and then shared with peer group members at the weekly meetings. Some class time was spent writing with discussions prior to and during the writing focusing on the successful communication of meaning. Each student read

the piece orally to the group; teacher and peer feedback were provided. Revised drafts completed at home were read in class the next week. This write-and-revise routine continued for each composition until the writer determined it was finished.

Urzua (1987) concludes that peer response groups appear to have a "dramatic effect" on writing development (p. 283). She suggests it was the immediacy and variety of audience feedback that helped children begin to understand the need to vary their messages in response to their audience. The voice of each learner was affected, in varying degrees, by peer group suggestions for solving writing problems. Voice, according to Graves (cited in Urzua), is "the imprint of ourselves on our writing" (p. 289). Urzua says that voice is a "driving force" that writers struggle with as they try to say something in "the right way" (p. 289). Urzua found that the children's developing sense of voice was found in the topics they chose, the peer advice they accepted or rejected, the honesty and openness with which they wrote, the amount of space devoted to a subject, what they chose to revise or not revise, and through the words and phrases they appropriated from their peers.

The children's abilities as writers also developed when they asked each other questions about aspects of language that they may not have known or understood, such as the meaning of a word. Following peer response groups, the participants added information to their pieces; they added words that were new to them; and they changed the language in their pieces so that it more closely approximated their intended meaning. According to Urzua (1987),

> They [the children] were recognizing, largely through revision, that language can be manipulated and rearranged, that sections of a composition can be deleted or added. They realized they were masters, not slaves. They began to develop flexibility in language use and ask about things they did now know, so they could add to their repertoire. (p. 293)

As the children themselves began to take responsibility for changing the language of their compositions, they sensed they had power in language. Urzua (1987) concludes that the process of writing and revising with trusted classmates helped the children in her study to develop their writing skill in three areas: a sense of audience, a sense of voice, and a sense of power in language.

Response to a Work in Progress: Mariko and Esther

Mariko and Esther participated in four peer response groups and four student-teacher conferences during the 8-week Writing course. An analysis of the fourth and final writing assignments and related discussions completed in the final week of the semester was undertaken to determine whether or not oral response led to substantial changes in the subsequent drafts. The changes that were made, along with the group and conference comments, were compared to the findings of Urzua's (1987) study that concludes audience response led to growth in three areas, a sense of audience, voice, and power of language. I wanted to learn whether or not the writing of Mariko and Esther developed in the same three areas.

In her fourth assignment, Mariko compared Canadian and Japanese weddings. She had been invited to two weddings in Medicine Hat and was interested in cultural differences. Esther revised a journal entry about the benefit of journal writing. The original entry had been written in class in response to the suggestion that students express their opinions about the value of writing in journals.

Sense of audience.

Like the writers in the Urzua (1987) study, Mariko and Esther knew the members of their reading audience, their classmates who participated in peer response groups, and their teacher

who spoke with them during the student-teacher conferences. During the peer response group on June 7, the readers of Mariko's Draft #1 were Esther, John, and Carrie. To begin the group discussion, Mariko identified two problems she had comparing Canadian and Japanese weddings: the outline and conclusion. She said the outline included three points she wanted to contrast and asked if the organization was satisfactory: "I made the outline and I followed the outline. [Does] it work or not? I want to know" (MPRG4).

The readers were very interested in the details of Mariko's paragraph asking many questions about Japanese weddings, particularly the expenses involved, but Mariko focussed the discussion by repeating the question.

Mariko	When I try to contrast, do you think it works?
John	Your controlling idea I can find this, the comparison between Canadian wedding and Japanese wedding [but] Japan is just. How about the Canadian? You haven't talk about Canadian.
Esther	Yes, you just talk about Japanese traditional wedding.
John	Because this part is just suitable for the paragraph about the Japanese wedding.
Mariko	Yeah, I know. (MPRG4)

Several minutes later, the discussion returned to the text's organization.

Carrie	Maybe you can balance your paragraph because actually you write more about Japan.
Mariko	More about Japan?
Carrie	Yeah. But I think you can write some about Canadian because
Mariko	But this audience is Canadian. I wrote this paragraph for the Canadians so Canadians [already] know Canadian way.
Carrie	I think your paragraph is to compare, so I think you can write about what the Canadians are doing at the party. What is different with your party?
Mariko	OK. (MPRG4)

Although Mariko had written Draft #1 with a particular audience in mind, she considered the recommendations of her peers and included additional details about Canadian weddings in

the revision. For example, in Draft #1, Mariko wrote, "Canadians are dressed in Western robes and most of cases, wear one kind" (MA4); in Draft #2 she wrote, "In Christian ceremonies, the brides wear white wedding dresses and the grooms wear morning coats."

However, Mariko was still concerned about audience during the student-teacher conference. Referring to Draft #1, she said, "I wrote this paragraph for the Canadian people. Canadian people know Canadian weddings, so I don't have to explain Canadian weddings. But in the peer conference, [they said] you should explain Canadian wedding and Japanese wedding and contrast them" (MSTC4). She explained, "I did this one [Draft #2] for the ESL [audience]," but the draft remained problematic for Mariko. She continued, "They [peers] didn't understand Japanese wedding, not very much. So I have to explain Japanese wedding and Canadian one and then I have to talk lots more in one paragraph, but I can't put the answer in one paragraph, so I decided to write just one topic." Because there was too much information when she compared everything about both kinds of weddings, she decided to narrow the topic. The topic she chose was the wedding ceremony because "the forms of ceremony is very different and clothes is also." Mariko asked, "I narrowed this topic. Is that right or not?"

Concern for audience, what they know, and what they need to know dominated the peer response group and the student-teacher discussions. Following both discussions, Mariko revised her work several times until she was satisfied that the text accomplished her purpose, that is, to contrast Japanese and Canadian weddings. According to Urzua (1987, responses that lead to and shape revision help ESL writers develop a sense of audience. Response substantially influenced the revision process of Mariko's fourth writing assignment (see Appendix E for revisions). Clearly, she respected the opinions of her readers. Their feedback helped Mariko understand

how messages must be altered and how to explain the details of her text to different readers. According to Mariko, "This thing [revision] takes lots of time . . . [I have to] Think. Think. Think" (MSTC4).

Esther, too, was prepared for the June 7 peer response group with a revision of her June 3 journal entry, a photocopy of Draft #1 for each of the readers (Mariko, John, and Carrie), and a problem for discussion. Esther asked her peers for help in explaining her main idea. However, before the group began to discuss the problem about the main idea, John asked about the number of paragraphs. When Esther answered there were two paragraphs, John suggested, "You can maybe do one paragraph" (EPRG4). Later in the discussion, Carrie indicated a concern she had with the sentence about using the dictionary.

Carrie	You say, "We look up the dictionary to find them if we don't remember the words which we want to use." I think maybe the best way [is] you must . . . write more detail about what's the function when you look up the dictionary. What's going to help your writing skill?
Esther	Here . . . I just want to explain. You can remember if you look up dictionary, so if you open to look up dictionary, it help [sic] you to remember it.
Carrie	To memorize all the words. So I think maybe you can explain in here.
Esther	Explain?
Carrie	Yeah, because your main idea is writing skill
Esther	And your suggestion is what?
Carrie	I suggest you can write little bit more detail. I mean you must explain to look up the dictionary will help you in which part to help you in your writing skill. (EPRG4)

In Draft #2, Esther changed the order of the two clauses so that the sentence now read, "If we don't remember the words which we want to use, we have to look up the dictionary to find them." This was, in fact, the same order of clauses that had been used in the original journal entry. In the following sentence, the noun "words" was substituted for the noun "vocabulary"

and three words, "help us" and "them," were deleted. The meaning of the revised sentence was not affected, "By this way, it can help us learning more words and remembering clearly." According to Urzua (1987), although direct imperatives from the reader to the writer did, at times, influence revision for the children in her study, it was usually questions from the peer response readers that substantially affected the revision process. This was true for Esther. She did not follow John's suggestion to write one paragraph rather than two, nor did she follow Carrie's advice to add more detail about how looking a word up in the dictionary will develop writing skill, but she did attempt to address Carrie's question, "What's going to help your writing skill?" (EPRG4) by changing the order of the clauses.

It is probable that Esther chose the topic, the advantages of journal writing, a practice of the 040B Writing class, with her reader in mind. She knew this assignment would be read and evaluated by her teacher. This does not mean that Esther did not believe what she was writing. It means that at the outset, she considered her reader. As well, when she revised her journal for the peer response group, she incorporated changes so that the organization followed the form her readers expected in an academic paragraph. From the comments made during the peer response group and the student-teacher conference, however, there is little indication that Esther was developing an increasing appreciation that she was writing for a specific audience. Unlike Mariko who spent "lots of time . . . hours work" (MSTC4) addressing the concerns of her audience, Esther did not discuss audience during either conference about this piece and, it appears, she did not revise with the audience in mind.

Sense of voice.

I looked at the writing of Mariko and Esther for evidence that each was developing a sense of voice as she revised her piece. I found that Mariko's voice did develop through the process of revising her comparison of Japanese and Canadian weddings, but Esther's voice did not appear to have become stronger as a result of reader response.

One of the problems Mariko identified in the peer response group concerned her written conclusion, "Japanese have to look for the ways which keep tradition and reduce expense at the same time." She said, "This concluding sentence is not right. That's my opinion. But I think I have to do another thing but I can't find it" (MPRG4). It appears Mariko was not comfortable expressing her own opinion. In fact, throughout the semester she was careful not to criticize or appear critical. For example, Mariko refused to take part in the 040 debate, an activity that is central to the 040 Listening/Speaking class. She explained to me that she did not like to criticize others, even in a formal debate situation. Perhaps because her conclusion appears critical of a Japanese wedding practice, Mariko looked for an alternate one.

After reading Draft #1 aloud, Mariko asked her peers, "Do you have any suggestion to make the concluding idea?" (MPRG4).

John said, "The Japanese way costs too much maybe I will use the Canadian" (MPRG4).

Mariko agreed, "Yeah, I think so too. But I don't want to miss the tradition . . . . So we have to think about--'keep the tradition and reduce the money at the same time.' That's my opinion" (MPRG4).

Carrie suggested Mariko add her own feelings about the two types of weddings. "What do you feel? You feel the Canadian wedding is the best?" (MPRG4).

Mariko was adamant: "No. I don't think Canadian is best. I don't think Japanese is best. Both have character" (MPRG4).

Carrie then asked: "If one day you get married, which one will you use?" (MPRG4).

Esther suggested: "Maybe you can use this [idea] for the conclusion" (MPRG4).

Mariko, laughing, said, "I don't have any idea . . . . I think if I have money I will do Japanese way" (MPRG4).

In the following draft, Draft #2, Mariko rewrote the conclusion. She solved the problem by avoiding any reference to herself or making a judgement. Although the controlling idea of the paragraph is about the differences between the weddings and the examples support the controlling idea, the conclusion pulls the piece together by making a comparison. The conclusion to Draft #2 reads, "Although there are many differences between Japanese wedding and Canadian wedding, they are same from the point of swearing by god (or gods)" (MA4). In the final draft, Mariko wrote, "Although the ways of wedding ceremonies are different each other, both ideas of wedding ceremonies are same as to the brides and grooms swear eternal love by God and pray God for their happiness in new lives" (MA4).

Although her peers did not provide a specific suggestion she could use, Mariko appears to have benefitted from thinking about and defining her own writing problems and from the discussion with interested readers who were prepared to respond to her text. The revised conclusion illustrates how the process of response helped Mariko's voice become increasingly clear. The sentence satisfies Mariko's concerns about expressing her own opinion and appearing critical while at the same time it draws the paragraph to a satisfactory conclusion.

During the peer group discussion of Esther's piece on the advantages of journal writing,

Esther and Mariko discussed at length whether it is possible to improve one's grammar in an uncorrected journal. The two writers disagreed about the relationship between journal writing and grammar. Esther stated that journal writing develops writing skills because it is a place to practice grammar. Explaining that when you write your ideas, you may make several grammar mistakes, she said, "Because when you write down a sentence about your opinion, you maybe make many mistakes in grammar" (EPRG4).

Mariko suggested that even if your grammar is wrong, the reader can still understand your work. She said, "You can still express your meaning . . . . It's not correct way though" (EPRG4).

Esther said, "We have to think about how to express our meaning very clear [sic]" and to do that "you have to reduce your wrong . . . . The correct way and correct grammar" (EPRG4).

Mariko asked, "So could you reduce the grammatical mistakes when you write in your journal?" (EPRG4).

Esther replied, "But I think that if you write often . . . after your discussion with your teacher, I think you can improve it, a very little" (EPRG4).

Mariko pointed out that she, herself, had difficulty finding her own grammar problems and that because grammar in the journal was not corrected, journal writing did not help reduce grammar mistakes. She said, "It doesn't help very much" (EPRG4). Mariko then advised that because the main idea of the Esther's piece is that journal writing is good practice for improving writing, Esther should not write that journal writing improves grammar, given that the teacher does not correct the grammar and that Esther cannot find her own grammar mistakes. Mariko continued, "Your main idea and concluding idea is to improve the writing . . . 'journal writing is a good practice' . . . but if you can put like [that], the most important thing to write a journal is

not to correct the grammar. What's the most important thing to write a journal?"

Esther answered, "[To] improve your writing skill" (EPRG4).

Mariko agreed that was the purpose of journal writing.

Esther continued, "And also can practice how to establish the construction [sentence structure]" (EPRG4).

Mariko explained she thought the purpose of journal writing was to practice expressing your ideas, "Make your ideas clear" (EPRG4).

Esther replied, "Yes, make your idea clear. How to clear express. That is your opinion" (EPRG4).

Esther did not make any changes to Draft #2 of this piece about journal writing as a result of her discussion with Mariko even though she had specifically asked Mariko for suggestions with her text. It appears Esther was confident enough in the truth of her own ideas that she did not adopt those of her peer, a person whom she trusted. Esther's voice was clear in this piece. She believed the purpose of journal writing was to improve writing skills by practising grammar, and that is what she wrote. However, this is also what she wrote in the original journal entry. Her ideas did not change or develop through extensive discussions with Mariko and her teacher, readers who did not support what she wrote. Because her ideas were not modified throughout the writing process, it appears that Esther was not developing an emerging sense of voice during the writing of this assignment.

Sense of power of language.

Urzua (1987) concludes that peer response influenced the pieces of the participants of her study in a third area, their sense of power of language. I looked for and found evidence of similar

growth in the development of language used in the work of both Mariko and Esther.

During the student-teacher conference, Mariko asked whether what she had written in Draft #2 was factually correct. She was concerned that the topic sentence, "Japanese weddings are very different from Canadian weddings" (MA4), did not reflect the main idea of the paragraph.

Mariko	One thing I was wondering [about] is, I was talking about Canadian and Japanese wedding in this sentence, but actually, I was talking about Shinto and Christianity in this [paragraph]. I don't know which way I should take. [Do] I have to change Canadians? Shinto wedding?
Teacher	Yes. If you say, "Japanese Shinto weddings are very different from Canadian Christian weddings," you are limiting the topic. You're being more specific.
Mariko	Yes. And Canadians, not all of the people get married in the church, so in Japanese either. (MSTC4)

This conversation demonstrates Mariko's concern for finding the appropriate language needed to communicate her ideas correctly.

Later in the conference, Mariko raised a concern about the third point in her paragraph. She said, "I was not sure [about] this one" (MSTC4), referring to the sentence, "Third, the couples have to be believers in Christian wedding; on the contrary, in Shinto weddings, it doesn't matter whether the couples are believers or not." Mariko asked for clarification about who could be married in a Christian church and a discussion followed about religion and traditional religious ceremonies in Canada and Japan. Mariko explained, "Shinto is a religion but I have to talk about Shintoism. It is tough." It appears that Mariko became concerned about the need to include details about Shintoism, and she did not want to digress from her controlling idea. To solve this problem, Mariko deleted the third point about religion, and in its place, added details about who attends weddings. She wrote,

> Third, the number of attendance at Shinto ceremonies is smaller than that at Christian ceremonies. In Japan, the idea that a marriage ties two people together, and at the same time, it ties two families has been emphasized. Therefore, only a limited number of relatives attend Shinto ceremonies. On the contrary, in Canada, since people lay more emphasis upon the ties of two people than those of two families, the couple wants lots of people [to] attend the ceremony and celebrate [with] them. (MA4)

Another example of Mariko's growing awareness about the power of language came as a result of my concern about the meaning of the concluding sentence, "Although there are many differences between Japanese wedding and Canadian wedding, they are same from the point of swearing by god (or gods)"(MSTC4). I indicated it was not clear that it is the bride and groom who swear by God in the ceremony. Mariko then asked a rhetorical question, "Why do they get married in front of church or shrine?" She answered that question in the final draft by writing, "Although the ways of wedding ceremonies are different each other, both ideas of wedding ceremonies are same as to the brides and grooms swear eternal love by God and pray God for their happiness in new lives" (MA4). Mariko paid careful attention to the language required to convey her message.

During the opening comments of the peer response group, Esther asked her peers for help in explaining her main idea about the advantages of writing a journal. She identified her problem as "my meaning . . . my explaining is not very clear. I want [my peers to] give me suggestion" (EPRG4). Again the next day during the student-teacher conference, Esther expressed her concern saying, "I want to know if my outline is clear or not." (ESTC4). She explained that her peers had made suggestions the previous day.

Esther	I ask them which sentence they couldn't understand and I tried to explain more clear [sic].
Teacher	Is that what you need--someone to tell you where the problem is?
Esther	Yeah, because I know I want to talk about what--but if the audience or

> reader couldn't understand then it's a thing [sic]. Your sentence expression is not very clear so you have to try write again. (ESTC4)

In the peer response group and in written comments on their copies of Draft #1, Esther's readers indicated problem areas. They did not correct the meaning-related problems, but they did draw attention to them. Esther addressed some of their written concerns in Draft #2. For example, when Mariko drew attention to something she did not understand, the group discussed the sentence, "First, we have to think about how to express our meaning in correct form of grammar that help you to improve your grammar and less the wrong of grammar in your writing" (EPRG4).

Mariko	Grammar mistake?
Esther	Oh? You are not very clear [about] the meaning? Is it, "to improve your grammar, to reduce your wrong . . . about grammar?" [For you] to understand maybe I have to change the words. "reduce . . . reduce the wrong about grammar." OK?
Mariko	OK. "express our meaning . . . correct form of grammar . . . ?"
Esther	OK? Can you understand?
Mariko	How are they related? "express our meaning in correct form." Just "meaning?" "Express your idea . . . in correct grammar"
John	Just say, "in correct way"
Esther	Maybe yeah . . . The meaning is what [I] want to talk about. (EPRG4)

When Esther revised this sentence, she wrote "First, we have to think about how to express our meaning in correct way that help us to improve our grammar and reduce the mistakes of grammar in our writing" (ESTC4). Esther wanted her readers to comprehend; she asked questions to help her understand their problem, and she, herself, was able to suggest improvement. It was Esther, as well, who found and corrected the pronoun agreement problem. During the oral reading of Draft #1, Esther had self-corrected by replacing the pronouns "you" and "your" with the correct pronouns, "we" and "our."

The same sentence was revised again following the student-teacher conference. During the discussion about what happens in writing, Esther explained she used the adverb, "first," because, she said, "I want to show order" (ESTC4).

Teacher	Don't you "make your idea" first?
Esther	We have to make sure [of] our idea
Teacher	Isn't that what you do first?
Esther	Yeah. To [make] sure what topic you want to write down. (ESTC4)

In the revision, Esther combined two sentences to make it clear that the first step is to find and think about a topic. She wrote, "Before we begin to write the journal, we have to make an idea in our mind and think about how to express our meaning in correct way and that helps us to improve our grammar and reduce the mistakes of grammar in our writing" (EA4). Esther's revisions illustrate that when Esther was made aware of a problem, she addressed it and, by doing so, demonstrated that response helped her to use language more accurately to express her intended meaning. She was developing a sense of the power of language.

The analysis of oral comments during the fourth peer response group and the student-teacher conferences and of the writing contained in the journal entries, Drafts #1, Drafts #2, and Final Drafts of the fourth Writing Assignments suggests that only Mariko, the more proficient writer, appears to have developed a growing sense of audience, sense of voice, and sense of power in language. A comparison of Mariko's original journal entry with the Final Draft illustrates the extent to which Mariko's writing benefited from oral response and revision (see Appendix E for all drafts of Mariko's fourth Writing Assignment). A similar comparison of Esther's original journal entry with the final draft indicates that Esther's writing also developed through the process of completing the fourth assignment. The organization of her piece is more

obvious, the sentence structure is improved, and the ideas are expressed more clearly. The development, however, is not as extensive as is that of Mariko (see Appendix F for all drafts of Esther's fourth Writing Assignment).

Conclusion

This study looked at the writing and comments of two ESL university writers who were considered serious students, but whose writing displayed qualitative differences. The study concludes that a major difference between good and poor writing is the variation in the number and range of metadiscourse features used by the writer. The journal writing of Mariko, the good writer, contained all seven categories of metadiscourse features identified by Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995), and it included a significant number of them. While Esther's journal contained almost all of the categories, there were fewer features used in each category than there were in Mariko's journal. As well, there were occasions when the features were used inappropriately so that the reader had difficulty understanding the journal.

Differences in writer characteristics between the two participants seemed to be related to the quality of their writing. In contrast to Esther, Mariko, the more proficient writer, had extensive contact with native speakers of English, planned extensively when assignments were evaluated, was concerned with the content and overall organization of her pieces, grammar and choice of vocabulary, and revised extensively and frequently. Mariko's revisions benefitted from response to her work in progress in the three ways that Urzua (1987) identified. It appears that Mariko developed as a writer in three areas; her sense of audience, sense of voice, and sense of power of language were strengthened. The peer response group and the student-teacher conference were dominated by Mariko's concern for audience, what they already knew, and what

they needed to know in order to understand and appreciate her piece. She revised her piece several times in order to clarify the message for the reader. The study shows that response influenced the revision process substantially by drawing attention to problems readers encountered while reading and by Mariko's concern for and attention to solving those problems.

Mariko took responsibility for her writing. She identified and defined problems in her own work and she considered problems her readers indicated. To solve these problems Mariko focussed on the content of her piece. Communicating her message more effectively and efficiently appear to have been her goals for revision, but Mariko was also concerned about writing honestly. She viewed writing as an opportunity to explore her own interests and ideas in writing, and in the process, she developed an emerging sense of voice. During one peer group, she said that in writing it is important "[To] make your ideas clear" (EPRG4). Mariko realized, however, that successful communication of ideas requires appropriate and accurate language. While Mariko did not focus on language concerns in the student-teacher conferences, an analysis of the drafts of her writing assignments indicates that she did attend to grammar and vocabulary in her pieces. The findings of this study suggest that Mariko's writing demonstrates a growing awareness of the power of language.

An examination of Esther's writing indicates that for her, too, there was a development in her sense of the power of language. This is not surprising, however, given that for Esther grammar and vocabulary were the most important aspects of writing. Questions and concerns she raised in peer groups and at student-teacher conferences were related to language. The revisions to Esther's pieces rarely included the addition or development of ideas and never revealed an awareness of writing for a specific audience, or even for herself. It appears that for

Esther writing may have been merely an assignment that she had to finish in order to fulfill the requirements of the course. Esther was anxious to learn English so that she could enter a Canadian university, and learning to write academic paragraphs was something she had to do. It also appears that Esther was dependent on her teacher to tell her what to do and how to improve her writing. For Esther, improvement involved the correction of her language mistakes. The findings of this study indicate that Esther's writing skills did not develop as much as Mariko's skills did in either the area of sense of voice or sense of audience.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

I undertook this study in order to better understand the writing process as it is manifested in my university ESL classes. According to Silva (1990), second language writing involves the writer, the reader, the text, the contexts for writing, and the interaction of these elements in an authentic ESL setting. This study looked at these four elements of writing for each of two serious ESL writers in my own class. One of the writers, Mariko, was a proficient writer; the other writer, Esther, was not. The purpose of the study was to identify those features that distinguish proficient and nonproficient ESL writers and their writing. By investigating each writer and her writing during the semester, I was able to develop a picture of two very different writers and to find, in this picture, the distinguishing features of proficient and nonproficient ESL writers and their writing. Analysing this picture has enabled me to consider aspects of my own approach to the teaching of writing that may help writers, especially the less proficient, become more effective ESL writers.

A Picture of Two Very Different Writers

A major feature of this picture of two very different writers is the ways each approached writing. Mariko was primarily concerned with the content of her writing. She had no difficulty finding interesting journal topics, and like Carlos, the proficient writer in Zamel's (1990) study, Mariko appeared eager to explore her own interests in writing. For example, she chose a variety of topics related to her experiences living with Canadian families, her participation in ESL classes and activities, and her reflections about language learning. For Mariko, choosing interesting topics puts the focus of writing on the content. In a peer response group, Mariko

explained the importance of content. She said,

> Even in your [own] language, it is hard to express your ideas onto the paper so that's good practice to express your ideas in a paragraph. I thought that's the most important thing to write a journal. Make your ideas clear. (MPRG4)

During peer response groups, Mariko asked for help with problems related to content. For example, she indicated the topic of one paragraph is "too wide [and] is not detailed enough" (MPRG2); she wanted suggestions about appropriate detail needed for her to explain , "Always [it is] very hard to explain." In each of the student-teacher conferences as well, Mariko expressed concern for the content. During the first conference, she asked whether or not the main idea is "quite strong enough" (MSTC1). In the second, she wanted to know if "You know my main idea?" (MSTC2). In the paragraph about St. Mary's School, she indicated "I'm not satisfied [with] this conclusion. I couldn't end this paragraph because I have so many things in my mind" (MSTC3), and at the fourth conference, she said, "I wanted to make a contrast paragraph but it was tough . . . [because there are] lot of things I have to say, so I can't put [them] together in one paragraph" (MSTC4). Like the skilled writers in Zamel's (1983) writing class, Mariko's writing focus was on the exploration and development of her ideas. She was concerned with "making meaning" (p. 166) and used language to communicate her ideas.

Esther, on the other hand, was primarily concerned with using correct language. Like Fida, the ESL writer in Ray's (1990) case study, Esther thought of language "in terms of correctness" (p. 321). In fact, in the piece about the benefits of journal writing, Esther wrote, "Through the journal writing, we can practice grammar and remember more vocabulary . . . . We have to . . . think about how to express our meaning in correct way and that helps us to improve our grammar and reduce the mistakes of grammar" (WA4). At the beginning of peer groups and

student-teacher conferences, Esther usually chose to ask questions related to grammar, vocabulary, or sentence structure. For example, she asked one group for help with vocabulary, "Sometimes I don't [know] how to use word to explain my ideas. I don't know if I use this word, is it correct or not" (VPRG2). In a student-teacher conference, she asked me to "check my sentence construction" (ESTC3). Esther found student-teacher conferences more valuable than peer response groups because she said I corrected her grammar, something her peers were not expected to do. Grammar, according to Esther, was the most difficult aspect of writing.

Like the poor writers in the Hirose and Sasaki (1994) study, Esther displayed relatively little concern about content. She had trouble finding ideas for writing and indicated she would have preferred me to assign topics; in fact, on the few occasions when suggestions were made, Esther did write on the proposed topics. At other times, she said she asked her friends for writing ideas. Esther preferred to do journal writing during class time because it took less time than writing at home. She said that although "you can think [about] more detail" when writing at home, thinking about details, or ideas, took too much time (VFinal). It appears that for Esther, like Fida in Ray's (1990) study, writing is "a school requirement to be completed for teachers" (p. 324). Both Esther and Fida preferred the teacher to tell them what to do and how to do it.

Esther was dependent on the teacher as well to find problem areas in her writing and to correct them for her. She never raised specific questions or concerns during student-teacher conferences, but indicated that, during the conferences, all of her questions had been addressed. Esther preferred to discuss her writing with her teacher rather than with her peers. She said that comments from her peers helped "a little bit" and "some suggestion is good" (VSCT4), but, like Hiroko in Swain and Miccoli's (1990) study, Esther was unprepared to take full advantage of

small group discussions. In fact, she used a journal entry for discussion in the first three of the four peer response groups and she began every discussion by identifying general, rather than specific, concerns. Nevertheless, Esther did participate in peer groups and she responded to the writing of others by drawing attention to and asking questions about aspects of the text she did not understand. This was the procedure expected from readers.

By the end of the semester, however, there were important developments in the way Esther revised the content as a result of feedback from her peers and teacher. For example, in the final draft of the third writing assignment, Esther followed suggestions to include specific examples, to use more exact vocabulary, and to use an example to explain the point she was making. No global revisions were made to either the final draft of the third or fourth assignments, but both were considerably longer. The addition of detail to the final drafts of assignments #3 and #4 made each almost 40% longer, but the additions rarely affected the meaning. However, both pieces were qualitatively better because they were easier to read. Esther was becoming aware of the necessity to write so the reader could understand what she was saying.

Esther's writing did not suggest that she was writing to a reader. For example, her writing includes no emphatic validity markers to indicate she was expecting a challenge to her ideas. In both the peer response group and the student-teacher conference, Esther's ideas about writing and grammar were challenged by readers, but these conversations about the content of her work were not reflected in the final draft. As well, there are no commentaries in her writing. Commentaries address the reader, ask the reader a question, or anticipate a response to the text, engaging the reader in the text (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995). Their absence suggests that

Esther was not aware of or responsive to her readers' needs or reactions.

This study reveals significant variations in the way Esther and Mariko approached writing. In fact, they approached language learning and living in a foreign country very differently. A major strength of case study research is that it reveals differences, as well as commonalities. Both writers were serious students who attended class regularly and participated in writing activities. Both were cooperative and well-liked by their peers and teachers. Both had definite goals for learning English, and both were anxious to improve their writing skills. It is important, then, for this study to suggest ways that pedagogy can help Esther adapt her approach to writing so that she can develop those writer characteristics that lead to the writing of efficient and effective pieces.

Pedagogical Implications

Raimes (1985) concludes that less proficient writers need "more of everything" (p. 250) than do proficient writers. She suggests they need more time and opportunity "to talk, listen, read, and write." Mariko made time and gave priority to talking and listening to native speakers, and this commitment to using the language is reflected in her writing. Mariko was also prepared for peer response groups and student-teacher conferences with revised drafts of her texts and specific questions she had considered prior to the discussions; she had read and reread, written and rewritten her own pieces numerous times. Less proficient writers, like Esther, need to become more aware of the connections between and among the four language modes which have traditionally been taught as separate skills in ESL programmes. They need to appreciate that all four modes are mutually reinforcing and cannot be separated one from the other, particularly in a discourse community such as a university ESL class where listening, speaking, reading, and

writing should be taught as integrated and purposeful social activities.

Reading in the Writing Class

In the ESL Writing class, reading is considered appropriate input for the development of writing skills because it provides a source of new knowledge, a stimulus for discussion and ideas, and a model for writing. Good writers learn to write well, in part, through extensive and intensive reading (Krashen, 1984; Leki, 1993; Reid, 1993). The readings in the 040 composition textbook, The Process of Paragraph Writing (Reid & Lindstrom, 1985), are used as models to introduce organizational patterns of development. ESL writers are expected to read, analyse, and imitate the patterns in their own writing, suggesting that all students need to do to write well is to complete the appropriate form. However, this approach was not successful for Esther, probably because the writing focus was on practising an organizational pattern, rather than communicating meaningful ideas. Writing classes must include authentic readings that are written for communicative purposes, not merely to display form, and writers need to be allowed to do "real writing."

Less proficient writers need to develop a "feel" for the look and texture of writing (Krashen, 1984). Because reading and writing are both cognitive processes of constructing meaning, they have a reciprocal effect on each other. When writers read, they learn about the nature of writing; when readers read, they focus on the writer's ideas and the ways the ideas relate to one another. According to Krashen, we become competent writers in the same way we become competent in oral language, "by understanding messages encoded in written language, by reading for meaning. In this way, we gain a subconscious 'feel' for written language" (p. 28). Teachers need to work with writers as they read and analyse texts for patterns of communication

that make the piece unified and meaningful for readers. Specifically, writers need to be taught to identify the metadiscourse features that are the distinguishing features of good writing .

Less proficient writers need to be taught to read and reread their own work to be able to see it as others do. The discussion of writing texts in peer response groups is intended not only to help the writer improve that draft, but also to help the writer develop a sense of audience because real people read and respond to their work. According to Reid (1993), "The concept of audience gained by peer review allows the writer to think not just *about* readers, but *as* a reader, to read the text through the eyes of potential readers, trying to fathom the meaning they would make" (p. 46). Writers need to learn to assess their own work in terms of reader reaction to and comprehension of their writing. In peer groups, the social dimension of writing is recognized by the concern for audience. When students read and respond to one another's texts, genuine communication takes place as students negotiate meaning, particularly when the writer's intended meaning is not the one perceived by readers. In such circumstances, meaning is created by the active negotiation between writer, reader, and text.

Listening, Speaking, and Writing

Peer response groups provide ESL writers with the opportunity to discuss reading material that is authentic and meaningful to them. Group work can increase the quantity and quality of student conversation and it can increase student motivation to use the language. Interacting with ESL peers develops English language proficiency (Long & Porter, 1985).

Interacting with native speakers is one writer characteristic identified by Hirose and Saski (1994) as influencing the quality of Japanese university students' writing in English. It is perhaps the one characteristic that most distinguishes Mariko as a writer from Esther. Mariko

intentionally immersed herself in Canadian culture and activities; as a result, she was involved in situations where she was dependent on using English for the purpose of communication. Her extensive experience using English in conversations with native speakers is reflected in the vocabulary and fluency of her writing. In addition, participating fully in the Canadian way of life provided Mariko with numerous topics for writing.

ESL teachers can encourage students to become involved in community activities with native speakers, but such involvement is, for the most part, beyond a teacher's control. Teachers can, however, arrange activities where their students meet and talk with Canadians. The one activity about which both Mariko and Esther chose to write was the visit with the students from St. Mary's School and their return visit to the school. Meeting the Canadian students and participating in activities with them provided Esther with topics for four journal entries. Esther wrote only about this one activity, in spite of the fact that she participated in 12 department activities; however, the visit with St. Mary's students was the only activity involving direct contact with native speaking Canadians.

Developing Independence

Several case studies suggest that some writers, often less proficient writers, are dependent on their teachers to tell them what to do and how to do it (Ray, 1990), to transmit information (Swain & Miccoli, 1994), and to find and correct errors in the student's written texts (Homes & Moulton, 1995). Esther, too, was dependent on her teacher for similar reasons. For example, she preferred student-teacher conferences to peer response groups because, she said, "You [the teacher] correct my grammar and told me many things that students didn't tell me" (ESTC4). Esther preferred the teacher to assign writing topics and to identify and solve problems in her

writing. While Mariko was prepared to participate in a dialogue with her teacher about concerns she herself identified, Esther preferred her teacher to take the leadership role. Raimes (1985) says that less proficient writers need "more instruction and practice in generating, organizing, and revising ideas" (p. 250). Certainly, Esther would benefit from this, but in addition, she needs to be able to read the work of her peers, to take part in groups where the discussion focuses on ideas, and to become aware that writing is a process of developing, refining, and transforming ideas through writing and rewriting. Less proficient writers, like Esther, need to become more active in their own learning.

A productive topic for further research is the examination and development of teaching practices that may encourage less proficient ESL writers to become more active in their own learning. Research should also investigate writer characteristics other than those identified in this study that contribute to writing proficiency. For example, Esther told me that she enjoyed reading. When I asked what kind of reading she enjoyed, she mentioned Chinese children's stories and paragraphs from the 040 writing textbook. Both examples were required readings for her ESL classes. Further research into the amount and type of reading done for academic and pleasure purposes could contribute relevant information about the relationship between reading and writing proficiency. Research also needs to explore the relationship between speaking and writing proficiency in the second language. In peer response groups and during the student-teacher discussions, Esther was asked to repeat or clarify what she said more often than Mariko was asked. Such research could provide insight into the connection between the production of proficient second language speaking and writing.

Teacher Research

This qualitative case study grew out of concerns and curiosity about the writing of students in the university ESL classes I teach. I investigated the work of two particular writers and observed they way they functioned in a naturalistic environment, the 040 Writing class. Bissex (1990) claims that case study research is not designed to provide a method of proving, but a way of learning. From this study I learned a great deal about two individual students and their writing. I gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for the picture of the ESL Writing class, as seen through the eyes of two of my own students (Zamel, 1990). As well, the study provided a bridge between theory and research and my teaching practice. That is, this study, which is grounded in my professional experience, has utilized credible research in the fields of second language writing, qualitative case study, teacher research, and university ESL writers to help bring order and meaning to the data collected during one semester of a Writing course. The analysis of the data and the conclusions reached in this study have allowed me to define, assess, and alter my own teaching practices, or as Zamel proposes, conducting this study has compelled me "to revise, to see again, with new eyes" (p. 96).

This examination of the writing of Mariko and Esther has increased my understanding of what is involved in second language writing, how ESL students learn to write, and what might assist them in that process. I now teach metadiscourse, the distinguishing feature of good writing. I teach grammar through examples using the students' own work and in class readings so that learners can recognize that grammar is not an end in itself, but a means to make meaning. I attempt to integrate the four language skills stressing the importance of content or message. I have increased the number of small group writing activities that provide opportunities for

negotiated interaction and that help the writer develop a sense of audience, and I attempt to help learners take more responsibility for their own learning by making explicit those writer characteristics that determine the quality of good ESL writing.

The conclusions of this study apply only to the two particular cases and cannot be generalized. However, understanding more about two individual students and their writing has led to the implementation of more sensitive and effective teaching strategies. Just as ESL student writers need to be active and involved in the development of their language skills, so too does the ESL teacher needs to discover for herself, with her own students, and in her own classroom, what adjustments or changes need to be made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of her approach to teaching. Classroom research makes this discovery possible.

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Appendices

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

OFFICE OF ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT AND DEAN
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

TO: Mary Calder

FROM: Dr. G.W. Maslany, Chair
Research Ethics Review Committee

DATE: April 19, 1993

Re: Writing Development of Three ESL University Students.

Please be advised that the committee has considered this proposal and has agreed that it is:

__X__ 1. Acceptable as submitted.
(Note: Only those applications designated in this way have ethical approval for the research on which they are based to proceed).

_____ 2. Acceptable subject to the following changes and precautions:
(Note: These changes must be resubmitted to the Committee and deemed acceptable by it prior to the initiation of the research. Once the changes are regarded as acceptable a new approval form will be sent out indicating it is acceptable as submitted.)

_____ 3. Unacceptable to the Committee as submitted. Please contact the Chair for advise on whether or how the project proposal might be revised to become acceptable (ext. 4161/5186).

G.W. Maslany

/sm

c: Applicant
Academic Unit Head
(Ethics1.Doc)

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA S4S 0A2 PHONE: (306) 585-4161 FAX: (306) 585-4893
INTERNET: URGRAD@MAX.CC.UREGINA.CA

Appendix B

Letter of Permission, Participants of the Study

April 27, 1993

To: 040B Writing Students

From: Mary Calder
040B Writing Instructor

This semester, I would like to do the research for a study that I am undertaking. The study concerns the acquisition and development of writing in ESL university students.

I am asking for your permission to use your work in this study. You would be required to complete only the assignments that are required of any student in my 040 ESL writing class. You would do no additional work because of the study.

I would like to audiotape peer group conferences and student teacher conferences. I also request permission to photocopy your writing and to use your work in my study.

Your identity will be kept confidential. Dr. Salina Shrofel, Faculty of Education, and I are the only two people who will know your real names; pseudonyms will be used in the study.

In order to begin the study, I need your signature on this letter. If you do not want me to use your work, I will not do so. If you agree to let me use your work, please sign this letter of permission.

Thank you.

Signed

_____ 040B Student

_____ Instructor

Mary Calder

Appendix C

Esther: Writing Assignment #3

May 25 Journal Entry and Draft #1 for PRG

These day [sic] when I study my writing book, I found some very interesting articles and I enjoyed them very much.

There are many different kinds of article [sic] in this book, some of them were talking about personal experience, some of them described their courtry's [sic] geography, and some of them were talking about culture problem -----.

All of these articles which I special [sic] like to read are culture problem and personal experience.

For example, on [sic] those culture articles that you could find some funny things and you could also realize different culture that came from different country. On the other hand, the personal experience articles that could give you some good idea.

In short, you could learn more from those articles and they were good experience to you in your livies [sic].

May 31 Draft #2 for STC

In daily life, when we read newspaper and books or watch television news or listen radio, we can get some imformation [sic] from them. Yes, it is. These day when I studied my writing book I found some very interesting articles. I am really enjoyed them.

In those articles, some of them are talking about personal experience, contry's [sic] geography or culture problem. All of these articles which I special like to read are culture problem and personal experience. In personal experience article that it is talking about pronunciation. One day the author he wants to buy "Muenster" but his pronunciation is "Monster". He takes away sense and makes it funny just because his pronunciation is different of the two words. So in this kind of article you could find some funny things. In culture problem article that is it talking about culture habit. For example, the wedding in Java, sugar cane symbolizes the couple will have a sweet life, but in my country it has a different meaning. So in this kind of article you could find different culture customs. It is very interesting.

In short, you could learn more from those articles and they are good experience to you in your livies [sic].

Outline of Final Draft #3

Topic Sentence:

I found some very interesting articles from my writing book and I enjoyed them very much.

A: personal experience
   1. Give you some good idea
B: country's geography
C: culture problem
   1. find some funny things
   2. Realize different cultures that come from different country

Concluding Stence [sic]:

You could learn more from those articles and they were good experience to you in your livies [sic].

June 1 Final Draft #3

In daily life, when we read newspapers and books or watch television news or listen radio, we can get some information from them. When I study my writing textbook, The Process of Paragraph Writing, I find some very interesting paragraph. I am really enjoyed them.

In those paragraphs, some of them are talking about personal experience, country's geography or cultural problems. All of these paragraphs which I like to read are personal experience and culture problem. Personal experience is talking about pronunciation. For example, one day the author wants to buy the cheese which is called "Muenster", but he pronunciation of "Muenster" is "monster". He makes the salesperson began to smile because she can't imagine how to get a "monster". In this kind of paragraphs we can find some funny stories. Cultural problem paragraph is talking about cultural custom. For example, at the wedding in Java, sugar can symbolizes the couple will have a sweet life, but in my country it has a different meaning. It means the couple living together long time, no separate, until they die. In this kind of paragraphy [sic] we can find different cultural custom. It is very interesting.

In short, we can learn from those paragraph and sometimes they can give us some good ideas.

Appendix D

Mariko: Writing Assignment #3

May 17 Journal Entry

We are going to go to St. Mary School.

It is very difficult to have children pay attention. People say it is only half a minute to keep their attention. Especially for ESL students who can't speak their language very well, it is hard to keep their attention, make ourselves understood, let them intrested [sic] about our countries and ourselves, and communicate with them. In order to have their attention, at first, we have to make ourselves understood. Because we are not native speaker, we need to prepare (make class plans) what we are going to talking about and to check our pronounciation [sic] and correct them. After we don't have problems with English, we have to think about how we can let them intrested [sic] in our topic. We need to know what they are intrested [sic] in, what kind of question they have and what kind of information are new for them and same for them. Ask ourselves about those questions, and we should make plans which contain what we do and how much time it takes. Finally, most important things to have childrens [sic] attention is not to give them chance to think about anything else.

May 26 Draft #1 for PRG

It is very difficult for ESL students to have children's attention. At first, we have to make ourselves understood in English. In addition to make stories which we want to talk about in English, we have to check and correct our pronunciation. Secondly, in order to intrest [sic] children, we need to put ourselves in their places. If we were children, what we would want to know. Finally, we have to prepare a lot of different stuff in order not to bore them. For the purpose of that, we need to make the detailed plans and to use technique to get them involved. But we have to remember humanity holds the key to success in teaching to children.

Outline of Draft #2

Topic Sentence: There are three important points to succeed in teaching at St. Mary School

A: Make ourselves understood in English
   1. Practice correct English
   2. Anticipate children's questions and prepare answers in English

B: Make detailed plans
   1. Balance of content
   2. Time management

C: in the classroom
   1. relax
   2. act as a representative of each country

Concluding sentence: Have fun and they will have fun.

May 31 Draft #2 for STC

There are three important points to succeed in teaching at St. Mary School. First of all, we have to make ourselves understood in English. We should practice to be able to use correct English including pronunciation. Also, we should anticipate children's questions and prepare to be able to answer them in English. Secondly, we need to make detailed plans in order not to bore children. Think about balance of content and time management. How many projects, what kind of projects, how do we proceed, how long each project should take, how is the order of projects, and so on. Because they are not patient very much, we have to plan attractive project and get them involved. Thirdly, in the classrooms, relax and enjoy classes. But we have to remmember [sic] that we are in school. Children look at us as representative of each country. The most important thing to visit them is they can touch a little bit on other countries and people. Have fun and they will have fun.

June 1 Final Draft

ESL students who are going to teach at St. Mary School need to consider three important points to succeed. First of all, we have to make ourselves understood in English. Because this is the very first step to communicate with the children, we should make lots of efforts to use correct English. We also need to anticipate children's questions and prepare for them in English since it is difficult for ESL students to cope with the unexpected questions. Secondly, we must consider to make the detailed plans which consist of varieties of projects, the balance of content, time management and teaching method. Because the children are not very patient, we have to make the classes attractive and get them involved. Thirdly, it is necessary for the children to have fun, [sic] also it is essential for us. On the other hand, we have to remember that the children regard us as representatives of each country. If the children show their intrest [sic] in other countries and other people through us, we can say that teaching at St. Mary School is a success.

Appendix E

Esther: Writing Assignment #2

May 17 Journal Entry and Draft #1 for PRG

I came here for five months more than. My greatest problem [sic] living in Canada are the food and language. For example, when I want to have vegetable [sic], sometimes I can't find what I like to eat because I am not used to Canada food and on the other hand, the kinds of vegetable are very different from my country. The kinds of vegetable are very few in Canada but in Taiwan there are many different kinds of vegetable that you can chose in supermarket every day.

Language is one of my greatest problem in Canada. It is very difficult to me to communicate with people at first. I can't utterly understand what people talk about and it is very difficult to me to talk to people with English. I feel so nervous when I have to talk to them because I couldn't express myself very completely.

Every day I just tell myself "Time will change everything." "[sic] Do not nervous, do not worry and afraid. You will be used to live in Canada after one year.

May 18 Draft #2 for STC

I came here have five months. I have two problems living in Canada, one is the food, another is language. For example, I want to have vegetable [sic], sometimes I can't find what I like to eat because I am not used to Canadian food. On the other hand, the kinds of vegetable are very different than my country. The kinds of vegetable are very few in Canada but in Taiwan there are many different kinds of vegetable that you can choose in supermarket every day.

Language is one of my greatest problem in Canad [sic]. It is very difficult for me to communicate with people. I can't understand what people talking about so I just guess. It is also very difficult to me to talk to people in English. I felt so nervous when I have to talk to them because I couldn't express myself very well.

Every day I just tell myself, "Time will change everything." "[sic] Don't be afraid, don't be cry." You will better living in Canada.

May 17 Final Draft

Because I came here only five months ago, I have two problems living in Canada, one is the food, the other is language. For example, sometimes I want to have Chinese vegetables but I can't find what I like to eat because I am not used to Canadian food. On the other hand, the kinds of vegetable [sic] are very different from those [sic] my country. The kinds of vegetable are very few in Canada but in Taiwan there are many different kinds of vegetable that you can choose in supermarket such as cabbage, spinach, turnip tops . . . .

Language is a great problem for me in Canada. It is very difficult for me to communicate with people. I cannot understand what people are talking about so I just guess when they ask me questions. It is also very difficult to me to talk to people in English. I feel so nervous when I have to talk to them because I cannot express myself very well with English.

Now, I often tell myself, "Time will change everything, don't be afraid, don't cry." It will better living in Canada.

Appendix F

Mariko: Writing Assignment #4

May 23 Journal Entry

I went to the Wedding. This was my first time in Canada. Wedding in Canada is very different from that in Japan. At first, religions are different. We usually get marry in front of SHINTO alter. Bride and Groom drink holly [sic] SAKE (Japanese rice wine), read their vows, exchange rings. They are wearing Japanese traditional clothes, special kind of KIMONO. Bride is wearing wig. After ceremony, we have reseption [sic]. Guests make speach [sic] for new couple and sing, dance, do lots of entertainment.

Weddings costs lots. Including everything that include travel. It costs $70,000. I cannot say this is smart idea. We misunderstand the meaning of tradition.

June 7 Draft #1 for PRG

Canadian wedding is very different from Japanese wedding. The first is ceremony; most Canadian are married in Christian ceremonies, but most Japanese wedding ceremonies are conducted according to SHINTO rites. Although they are same from the view point of swearing by God (or gods), each form is different. Second, clothes in ceremonies are totally different. Canadians are dressed in Western robes and most of cases, wear one kind. On the contrary, Japanese grooms wear traditional full trousers and jackets and brides wear pure white silk KIMONO and Japanese-style wigs with white cloth headdresses attached over them. Brides change the clothes two or three times during the receptions and many grooms change their clothes as well. Third, although basic processes in receptions, such as guests address, toasts and cake cut, are similar, there are more entertainments by guests, such as singing, dancing and playing music, in Japanese receptions. Another difference is cost; a standard reception costs close to 30,000 dollars in Japan. Japanese have to look for the ways which keep tradition and reduce expence [sic] at the same time.

Outline of Draft #2

T.C [sic]. Japanese weddings are very different from Canadian weddings.

- A. Forms of ceremonies
  - 1. in Christian ceremonies
  - 2. in Japanese ceremonies
- B. Clothes
  - 1. Wedding dress and morning (Christian)
  - 2. SHIROMUKU and MONTSUKI (SHINTO)
- C. Qualification for the bride and groom
  - 1. They are Christian (Christian wedding)
  - 2. They don't have to be believer (SHINTO wedding).

C.S. Although there are many differences between Japanese wedding and Canadian wedding, they are same from the view point of swearing by God (or gods).

June 8 Draft #2 for STC

Japanese weddings are very different from Canadian weddings. The first difference is forms of ceremonies. Many Canadian are married in Christian ceremonies, but many Japanese wedding ceremonies are conducted according to SHINTO rites. There are teaching by ministers, address by the guests, chiors [sic], rings exchange and signning [sic] in marriage registration forms in Christian ceremonies. In SHINTO ceremonies proceed as follows, purification rites by the priests, the bride and groom vows by drinking in turn from each of a set of three SAKE cups, recitation of sacred vows, and so on. Second, clothes are totally different. The brides wear white wedding dresses and the grooms wear morning coats. However, in SHINTO ceremonies, the brides wear white silk KIMONO and Japanese-style wigs with white cloth head-dresses attached over them and the grooms wear traditional full trousers and jackets. Third, the couples have to be believers in Christian wedding; on the contrary, in SHINTO weddings, it doesn't matter whether the couples are belives [sic] or not. Although there are many differences between Japanese wedding and Canadian wedding, they are same from the view point of swearing by God (or gods.)

June 9 Final Draft

There are three main differences between Japanese Shinto weddings and Canadian Christian weddings. The first is the form of ceremonies. Christian ceremonies are performed as the teachings by ministers, addresses by the guests, choirs, exchanges of rings and signings [sic] of marriage registration forms. On the other hand, Shinto ceremonies proceed as follows: purification rites by the priests, vows by the brides and grooms drinking in turn from each of a set of three sake cups, recitations of sacred vows and vows by relatives drinking sake to tighten the kinships of families each other. Second, wedding clothes are totally different. In Christian ceremonies, the brides wear white wedding dresses and the grooms wear morning coats. However, in Shinto ceremonies, the brides wear white silk kimono and Japanese-style wigs with white cloth headdresses attached over them, and the grooms wear traditional full trousers and jackets. Third, the number of attendance at Shinto ceremonies is smaller than that at Christian ceremonies. In Japan, the idea that a marriage ties two people together, and at the same time, it ties two families has been emphasized. Therefore, only a limited number of relatives attend Shinto ceremonies. On the contrary, in Canada, since people lay more emphasis upon the ties of two people than those of two families, the couple wants lots of people [to] attend the ceremony and celebrate [with] them. Although the ways of wedding ceremonies are different each other, both ideas of wedding ceremonies are same as to the brides and grooms swear eternal love by God and pray God for their happiness in new lives.

Appendix G

Esther: Writing Assignment #4

June 3 Journal Entry

Journal writing is good for our writing skill. Through the writing of journal we can practice grammar and remember more vocabulary. Because we write the journal we have to think how to express our meaning in correct grammar and how to express our idea with completely sentence. We also have to rember [sic] vocabulary because we need the appropriate words to express our opinion.

We don't remember the words which we want to use, we have to look up the dictionary to find them. By this way, it can help us leaning more vocabulary and can help remembering them clearly.

In short, journal writing is good for us.

June 4 Draft #1 for PRG

Journal writing is good for our writing skill. Through the writing of journal, we can practice grammar and remember more vocabulary. Before we begin to write the journal, we have to make an idea in our mind. First, we have to think about how to express our meaning in correct form of grammar that help you to improve your grammar and less the wrong of grammar in your writing. Second, we have to think about how to express our idea with completely setence [sic] that is good training for you learning to establish the structure of paragraph. We also have to remember vocabulary because we need the appropriate words to express our opinion. We look up the dictionary to find them if we don't remember the words which we want to use. By this way, it can help us learning more vocabulary and help us remembering them clearly.

In short, journal writing is a good practice if you want to improve the writing, it is necessary to write every day.

June 7 Draft #2 for STC

Journal writing is good for our writing skill. Through the journal writing, we can practice grammar and remember more vocabulary. Before we begin to write the journal, we have to make an idea in our mind. First, we have to think about how to express our meaning in correct way that help us to improve our grammar and reduce the mistakes of grammar in our writing. Second, we have to think about how to express our idea with completely setence that is good training for us to learn how to establish the structure of paragraph. We also have to remember vocabulary because we need the appropriate words to express our opinion. If we don't remember the words which we want to use, we have to look up the dictionary to find them. By this way, it can help us learning more words and remembering clearly.

In short, journal writing is a good practice if you want to improve the writing skill. It is necessary to write journal every day.

Outline of Final Draft

T.S.: Journal writing is good for our writing skill.
- A: make an idea in mind
  - 1: helps us to improve our grammar
  - 2: reduce the mistakes of grammar
- B: think about how to express idea in complete sentence
  - 1: is good training
  - 2: learn how to establish the structure of paragraph
- C: remember vocabulary
  - 1: learn more words
  - 2: remember clearly

C.S. It is necessary to write journal every day.

June 8 Final Draft

Journal writing is good for our writing skill. Through the journal writing, we can practice grammar and remember more vocabulary. Before we begin to write the journal, we have to make an idea in our mind and think about how to express our meaning in correct way and that helps us to improve our grammar and reduce the mistakes of grammar in our writing. Then we have to think about how to express our idea in complete sentence and that is good training for us to learn how to establish the structure of paragraph. We also have to remember vocabulary because we need the appropriate words to express our opinion. If we do not remember the words which we want to use, we have to look up the words in the dictionary. By this way, it can help us learn more words and remember clearly.

In short, journal writing is a good place to practice writing if we want to improve the writing skill. It is necessary to write journal every day.

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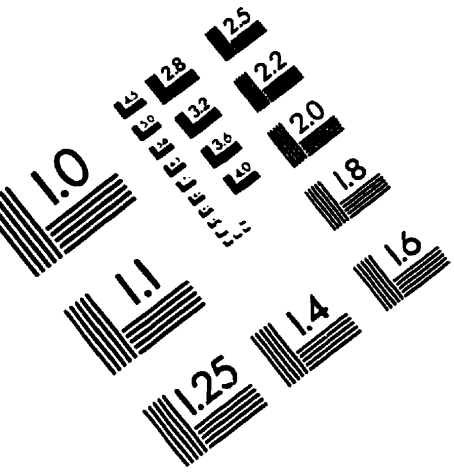

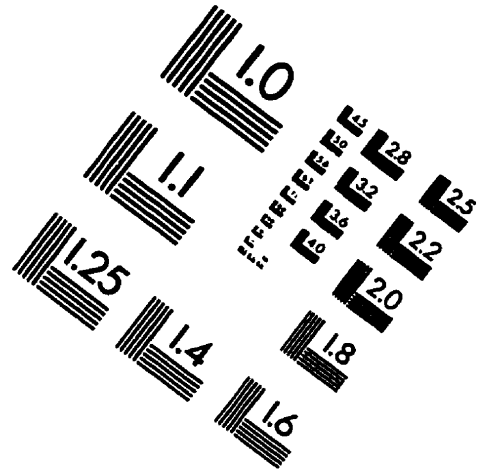

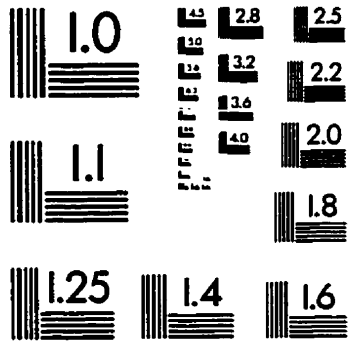

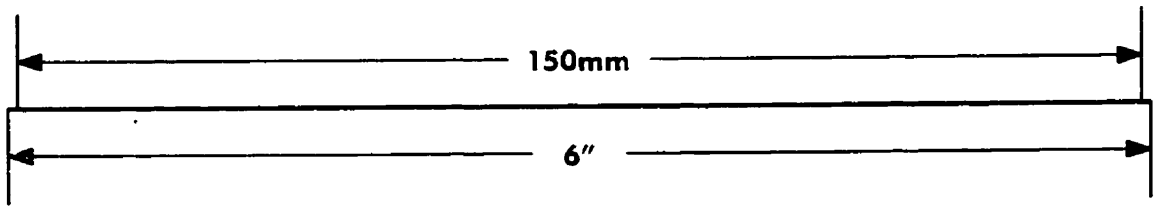

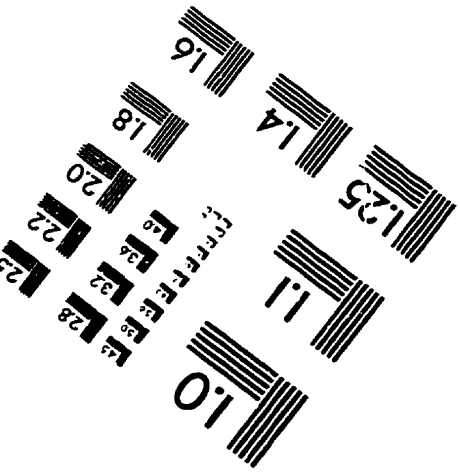

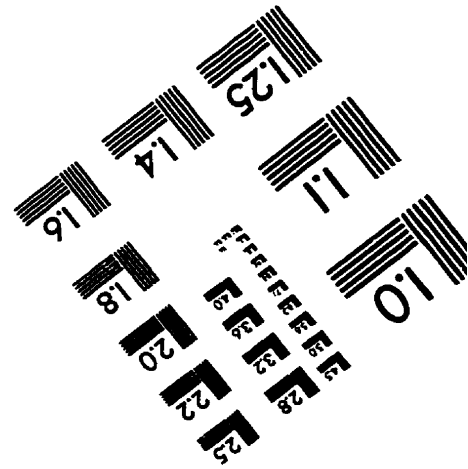

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