

those reflecting teachers' capacities to handle diversity. Well-educated teachers who showed commitment to their work and set up rich literacy environments for their students—and these tended to be mostly female teachers—and who frequently assessed students' progress in order to address their needs were helping close the gender or home language gaps. However, many teachers were struggling to cope with increased diversity among students under conditions making it difficult for them to be responsive to individual needs. Additional school and classroom factors that might minimise reading difficulties experienced by boys at an early age and students from non-English-speaking backgrounds are discussed.

## Writing

**99-264 Daoud, Sada A.** (U. of Warwick, UK). How to motivate EFL learning and teaching of academic writing by cross-cultural exchanges. *English for Specific Purposes* (Exeter, UK), **17**, 4 (1998), 391–412.

Learning and teaching academic writing in EFL/ESL (English as a Foreign/Second Language) contexts is often described as challenging. In the case of Arab learners and teachers, the task is often formidable, mainly because of students' lack of proficiency and motivation to write. This paper describes a strategy which has proved useful in motivating intermediate-level EFL/ESP students to write better. Two teachers were involved in the strategy, which was based on the exchange of student essays. Students on both sides began by answering one another's questions; subsequently, they wrote essays—very much with the reader in mind—which reflected their personalities, lives and cultures, or dealt with issues of international concern. The teachers kept closely in touch throughout, sharing implementation and management issues, including responses—both their own and students'—to the experiment. The paper discusses how the strategy apparently helped to effect improvement in the learning and teaching of academic writing skills, as well as some change in students' attitudes toward the target culture, perhaps as a result of increased audience awareness.

**99-265 Desmarais, Lise** (Institut canadien du service extérieur) **and Bisailon, Jocelyne**. Apprentissage de l'écrit et ALAO. [CALL and learning to write.] *Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée* (Paris, France), **110** (1998), 193–203.

The authors of this article consider writing to be a skill particularly well-supported by computer assisted language learning (CALL), since it lends itself to various forms of development in a CALL environment. Not only can simple word-processing lead to effective learning, but so also can writing tools such as the spellchecker, text analysis tools and the concordancer, as well as telematics, a writing environment which allows

exchanges between writers. The authors report an experimental study involving 60 advanced students of French as a second/foreign language, which suggested that the teaching of writing strategies combined with the use of word-processing would significantly improve the students' revising skills and writing performance. The article goes on to offer an overview of the various CALL tools available for the development of writing skills, discussing the advantages and drawbacks of each, and looking at ways in which they might be used as more or less successful aids to learning.

**99-266 Dong, Yu Ren** (Queens Coll., CUNY, USA). Non-native graduate students' thesis / dissertation writing in science: self-reports by students and their advisors from two U.S. institutions. *English for Specific Purposes* (Exeter, UK), **17**, 4 (1998), 369–90.

Writing a thesis/dissertation is a formidable task for many graduate students, and perhaps particularly so for the fast-growing number of non-native (NNS) students in the fields of science and technology. This paper reports results from a survey about thesis/dissertation writing in science which involved 169 graduate students and their advisors at two US southeastern institutions. The paper compares the article compilation and the traditional five-chapter thesis/dissertation, reveals NNS students' lack of social networks and use of resources and their suggestions for an adequate and improved writing supervision, and examines the impact of language and cultural differences on NNS students' thesis/dissertation writing. It is suggested that the findings point to a need for teaching knowledge transformation skills in EAP (English for Academic Purposes) classes, for establishing helping networks, and for collaboration among disciplines on audience/genre/discipline-specific writing instruction.

**99-267 Grundy, Peter** (U. of Durham, UK) **and Li, Vivian**. Responding to writing: credible alternatives to the 'You write: I correct' syndrome. *NovELTy* (Budapest, Hungary), **5**, 3 (1998), 7–13.

This paper discusses current ways of responding to language learner writing. In the first part the authors address the unsatisfactory nature of current assessment practice and suggest reasons for this continuing situation. It is suggested that error correction of finished products is the typical response mode and that this tends to respond to learner language rather than to apprentice writing. The authors claim that process writing lends itself naturally to a whole range of new response modes which product-orientated approaches never considered. In the second part of the paper alternative methods are considered, including commenting on drafts, conferencing, checklists, learner logs and portfolios. It is concluded that teachers need to experiment more with these new techniques and that learners need to be encouraged to take more responsibility for assessing their own writing.

**99-268 Hyland, Fiona** (Open U., Hong Kong). The impact of teacher written feedback on individual writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **7**, 3 (1998), 255–86.

The study reported here investigates English as a Second Language under- and postgraduate writers' reactions to and uses of written feedback. Using a case-study approach and a variety of data sources including observation notes, interview transcripts and written texts, overall findings on six students' use of written feedback throughout a course are briefly discussed. The paper then focuses on two student writers who show contrasting patterns of feedback use and who also become much less positive about their writing during the course. The student revisions after receiving teacher written feedback are analysed, and contextual data are used to gain a deeper understanding of the students' motivations and responses to the feedback. The data show that use of teacher written feedback varies due to individual differences in needs and student approaches to writing. It also appears to be affected by the different experiences students bring with them to the classroom setting. Some implications for teachers giving feedback are also given. It is suggested that there needs to be a more open teacher/student dialogue on feedback, since the data suggest that the feedback situation has great potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding.

**99-269 Jacobs, George M.** (SEAMEO Regional Lang. Centre, Singapore), **Curtis, Andy, Braine, George and Huang, Su-Yueh.** Feedback on student writing: taking the middle path. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **7**, 3 (1998), 307–17.

Among the many controversies in second language (L2) writing instruction is the issue of whether or not to employ peer feedback. The study reported here collected anonymous questionnaire data on whether L2 learners prefer to receive peer feedback as one type of feedback on their writing. Participants were first- and second-year undergraduate English as a Second Language students of lower intermediate to high proficiency, 44 in a university in Hong Kong and 77 in a university in Taiwan. All were enrolled in writing courses in which peer, self and teacher feedback were used. The chi-square test was used to analyse the questionnaire data, with the alpha level set at .05. A statistically significant percentage of participants (93%) indicated that they preferred to have feedback from other students as one type of feedback on their writing. This finding, as well as students' written explanations of their choices, is discussed with reference to how best to incorporate peer feedback into L2 writing instruction.

**99-270 Kubota, Ryuko** (U. of North Carolina, USA). An investigation of Japanese and English L1 essay organisation: differences and similarities. *The Canadian Modern Language Review / La Revue*

*canadienne des langues vivantes* (Toronto, Ont.), **54**, 4 (1998), 475–507.

Previous studies in contrastive rhetoric have discerned a tendency for Japanese texts to be inductive and English texts deductive, although text quality was not usually assessed. The present author suggests that, while such differences in discourse preference may exist in a relative sense, they have tended to be oversimplified and over-generalised, resulting in a static, exotic and monolithic image of Japanese written language divorced completely from English. In the study reported here, the rhetorical structures were analysed at comparable levels of organisational quality. The study compared Japanese and English first language (L1) essays written by university students in Japan and in Canada; 22 expository and 24 persuasive essays written in each language were evaluated in terms of organisation and analysed for macro-level discourse features. Results show that inductive patterns were identified in Japanese more often than in English and were used more often in the persuasive than expository mode across both languages. However, across languages and modes, the quality of inductive essays usually ranged between average and low, while deductive essays were usually ranked as average to high quality. It is suggested that, although Japanese and English may exhibit rhetorical differences in overall frequency, they may also share characteristics of good writing.

**99-271 Lee, Icy** (Douglas Coll., British Columbia, Canada). Writing in the Hong Kong secondary classroom: teachers' beliefs and practices. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* (Hong Kong), **3**, 1 (1998), 61–76.

This paper reports the findings of an investigation into secondary teachers' beliefs and practices regarding writing in ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. A questionnaire survey of 101 teachers and follow-up interviews with 10 of those teachers were used to elicit: (1) teachers' views of students' abilities in different aspects of writing; (2) teachers' self-reported practices in the classroom; and (3) teachers' beliefs about the teaching and learning of writing. The findings of the survey reveal that there exists a gap between teachers' beliefs and practice. Although most of the teachers think that discourse coherence is essential to writing instruction, the findings suggest that they primarily attend to grammar in their evaluation of students' writing and in their own teaching. The paper concludes that teachers need to be made aware of their role as writing teachers rather than language teachers.

**99-272 Sengupta, Sima** (Hong Kong Poly. U.). From text revision to text improvement: a story of secondary school composition. *RELJ Journal* (Singapore), **29**, 1 (1998), 110–37.

The relationship between revision and text improvement was explored as part of a study investigating the effect of systematic revision instruction on writing in a

second language. Students in two form four/five classes in a Hong Kong secondary school were taught to revise their first drafts for six writing tasks completed over one academic year. A selection of 30% of student original and revised tasks was analysed for revision changes. This analysis showed that all revised texts were longer and more elaborated. Six student writers were then interviewed to examine how they interpret the influence of their revisions on their texts. These interviews indicated a common belief that text 'improvement' was beyond the writers' capabilities as it entailed more 'accurate' texts. A third of the texts analysed were also graded for improvement by two *independent* readers, who also completed a questionnaire and were interviewed. The findings suggest that revised texts were not always considered 'better'. The author suggests that the similarities between the readers and writers in the way they interpreted text improvement points to the possibility that, in order to improve the texts, a threshold level of linguistic maturity is required.

**99-273 Sengupta, Sima** (Hong Kong Poly. U.) and **Falvey, Peter**. The role of the teaching context in Hong Kong English teachers' perceptions of L2 writing pedagogy. *Evaluation and Research in Education* (Clevedon, UK), **12**, 2 (1998), 72-95.

This paper examines the ways in which second language (L2) writing is perceived and its pedagogy conceptualised by English language teachers in Hong Kong secondary schools. It then attempts to delineate the factors that shape teacher perceptions. Data were gathered through a questionnaire survey, classroom observations, written protocols and documentary analysis. The data indicate that these teachers' perceptions regarding students' writing are dominated by language-related concerns at the sentence level with minimal focus on either the discourse-related or cognitive aspects of writing. Grammatical and lexical errors engage maximum teacher attention. The data further suggest that teachers' perceptions of L2 writing are predominantly shaped by the contextual factors that surround their classroom lives. It is argued that conditions for teacher perceptions will be subject to change as the context becomes more sensitive to the discourse-related and cognitive factors within L2 writing which recent developments in curriculum renewal and language teacher education in Hong Kong are likely to bring.

**99-274 Shi, Ling** (U. of Hong Kong). Effects of pre-writing discussions on adult ESL students' compositions. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **7**, 3 (1998), 319-45.

The study reported here assessed whether peer talk and teacher-led pre-writing discussions affected the quality of students' compositions. Forty-seven adult ESL (English as a Second Language) students from three pre-university writing classes participated. Each student wrote three drafts of opinion essays under conditions of peer discussion, teacher-led discussion, and no discussion. Non-parametric tests of rating scores showed no

statistically significant differences overall in the writing under the three conditions. However, students were found to write longer drafts in the condition of no discussion, shorter drafts after teacher-led talk, and drafts with a greater variety of verbs after peer talk. Comparison of students' use of verbs in both written and spoken texts traced the effects of various pre-writing conditions. Whereas the no-discussion condition led to longer drafts (presumably because this left more time to write), pre-writing discussions provided social contexts where either the teacher scaffolded students in the whole-class situation to conceptualise their thinking, or students assisted each other in peer groups to explore more freely and generate diverse vocabulary and ideas for the writing tasks. These results imply that teachers may usefully balance these pre-writing conditions to generate various types of thinking and discourse processes that facilitate ESL students' writing. The study also highlights the importance of the time factor and the relationship between length and quality in L2 writing.

**99-275 Varghese, Susheela A. and Abraham, Sunita A.** (Nat. U. of Singapore). Undergraduates arguing a case. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **7**, 3 (1998), 287-306.

The need for undergraduate writing instruction enabling students to master skills in argumentation is increasingly being recognised. To date, however, there are few studies demonstrating the effects of explicit instruction in argumentation. This paper describes an instructional study in which students were trained in two key aspects of argumentation, namely, the structural and interpersonal components. Participants were 30 undergraduate students following the (English) Academic Reading and Writing module offered at the University of Singapore. All students received eight weeks of explicit instruction: the structural aspects were taught and measured in terms of Toulmin's 1958 framework of argument analysis; the interpersonal aspects were measured in terms of the creation of a clear persona, audience adaptiveness, and stance towards the unique discourse of argumentation. Findings contrasting a pre- and post-instruction writing task reveal statistically significant improvement in students' abilities to formulate claims, to offer specific and developed grounds, and to use more reliable warrants (i.e. the structural aspects); students also showed improvement in the interpersonal aspects of argument. The paper concludes with recommendations for improving the research on and teaching of argumentation.

## Language testing

**99-276 Barnes, Anne** (U. of Warwick, UK) and **Pomfrett, Gwynne**. Assessment in German at KS3: how can it be consistent, fair and appropriate? *Deutsch: Lehren und Lernen* (Rugby, UK), **17** (1998), 2-6.