

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Publications and Research

Baruch College

2015

Collaborative power: Graduate students creating and implementing faculty development workshops on multilingual writing

Brooke R. Schreiber
CUNY Bernard M Baruch College

Dorothy Worden
University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa

Eunjeong Lee
Pennsylvania State University - Main Campus

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/bb_pubs/214

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).
Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu



2015

Collaborative Power: Graduate Students Creating and Implementing Faculty Development Workshops on Multilingual Writing Pedagogy

Dorothy Worden

The Pennsylvania State University, dzw5105@psu.edu

Brooke R. Schreiber

The Pennsylvania State University

Lindsey Kurtz

The Pennsylvania State University

Michelle Kaczmarek

The Pennsylvania State University

Eunjeong Lee

The Pennsylvania State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte>

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Worden, Dorothy; Schreiber, Brooke R.; Kurtz, Lindsey; Kaczmarek, Michelle; and Lee, Eunjeong (2015) "Collaborative Power: Graduate Students Creating and Implementing Faculty Development Workshops on Multilingual Writing Pedagogy," *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*: Vol. 4: Iss. 1, Article 2.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte/vol4/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.



Collaborative Power: Graduate Students Creating and Implementing Faculty Development Workshops on Multilingual Writing Pedagogy

Cover Page Footnote

Thanks to all members of the MWRG, past and present, and to Dr. Suresh Canagarajah and Dr. Xiaoye You for their support of the group. Special thanks to Chas Brua and all the staff at the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence.



Collaborative Power: Graduate Students Creating and Implementing Faculty Development Workshops on Multilingual Writing Pedagogy

Dorothy Worden, Brooke R. Schreiber, Lindsey Kurtz, Michelle
Kaczmarek, Eunjeong Lee
The Pennsylvania State University

Introduction

It is no shock to anyone who works in US colleges and universities that the number of international students studying in such contexts has increased dramatically in recent years. According to the Institute of International Education, 819,644 international students, most of whom come from non-English speaking contexts, studied in the US in the 2012/2013 school year (“Fast Facts”). This represents a 40 percent increase in the past 10 years and an all-time record high. Because of this increase in international enrollment and the growing number of multilingual students who are permanent US residents or US citizens it has become increasingly clear that students’ language needs can no longer be relegated to the ‘experts’ in specialized courses or tutoring centers (Hall). All faculty will teach multilingual students and all faculty need to understand their unique linguistic resources and needs. Yet few faculty, even among writing teachers, have received specialized training to prepare them to work effectively with the multilingual writers in their classrooms (Cox “Closing Doors”). As a result, faculty can often feel overwhelmed and confused when faced with student writing that does not conform to monolingual expectations. Given this confusion, some may be eager to learn new strategies for negotiating language differences in their classrooms (Ives et al.) and others may need to be persuaded that they have a role to play in improving writing instruction, particularly for multilingual students (Walvoord). These challenges are particularly pressing for multilingual writing (Cox “Felt Need”). In light of all of these factors, it is clear that there is a significant need for professional development for faculty across the disciplines to work with multilingual writers.

While we suspect that such faculty development initiatives are already underway at many universities (see, for example, Phillips, Stewart, and Stewart),

publications on these efforts are few, and most published materials are written by and specifically for Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) (Cox “Felt Need”). While WPAs often do take the lead on such faculty development efforts, this is not always the case. At some institutions, there may be no established Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) or Writing in the Disciplines (WID) program. Moreover, since many WPAs are themselves operating “at the edge of their competence” (McLeod and Miraglia 12) when dealing with multilingual writing issues, they may welcome opportunities to collaborate with L2 writing specialists on such efforts. For any of these potential reasons, those of us who are not WPAs but are invested in supporting multilingual writing instruction can decide to take on the implementation of such workshops either independently or in collaboration with institutional writing programs. In other words, we would like to suggest that the responsibility to address the needs of multilingual writers and their instructors does not rest solely in the hands of WPAs; rather, these needs can be addressed even by those who occupy marginal positions within their institutions.

While such efforts have the potential to provide needed support to both multilingual writers and their instructors, proposing and implementing a faculty development initiative from such a position brings with it unique challenges. To aid others in negotiating these challenges in their own contexts, we offer an account of our efforts creating a series of two faculty development workshops designed to help teachers across the disciplines to work more effectively with multilingual writers. This project differed from others reported in the literature in that it was initiated not by a WPA nor even by a tenured professor, but by a graduate student led research group. By articulating and reflecting on our efforts, sharing our curriculum, and evaluating our ongoing efforts in light of faculty responses to the initial curriculum, we hope that our experience can provide a model for others to adapt to their own specific contexts.

Our Context: Seeking a New Platform to Bridge the Disciplinary Divide

At Penn State, general education writing instruction is housed in two independent academic departments. The Program in Writing and Rhetoric, managed through the department of English, offers mainstream first-year composition courses as well as advanced writing in the disciplines, which includes rhetoric and writing electives in the social sciences, humanities, technical writing, and business writing (Penn State Division of Undergraduate Studies). Additionally, the undergraduate and graduate writing centers are both affiliated with the Program in Writing and Rhetoric, with the English department conducting tutor training courses.

The department of Applied Linguistics manages and staffs the ESL first-year composition program. At our institution, these courses are credit-bearing and

equivalent to the first-year composition courses taught in the English department, fulfilling the university first-year writing requirement. Students who speak a language other than English at home are eligible to enroll in the ESL writing courses through self-placement (with guidance from their faculty advisors). The department of Applied Linguistics also offers non-credit writing courses through an intensive English program as well as elective courses for international graduate student writers and tutoring services for students currently enrolled in the ESL first-year writing courses (Penn State Division of Undergraduate Studies).

The division in L1 and L2 writing instruction at Penn State is neither new nor unusual – most universities maintain some separation between these types of courses, whether by creating separate sections of writing courses within one department or giving responsibility for the two types of courses to different departments. This separation, in fact, reflects what Paul Kei Matsuda calls the tacit “policy of linguistic containment” that prevails in many institutions, whereby programs and institutions work to contain language differences by sending students to writing centers or specialized courses to work on their language needs (Matsuda “Myth”). While specialized instruction can be very helpful for students, who get the benefit of learning from an instructor trained in second language pedagogy, such practices can also have unintended negative consequences. At Penn State, though the departments of English and Applied Linguistics have much to offer each other and the university more broadly in terms of our collective expertise on writing and second language development, the institutional division between our departments made any potential contributions more difficult to coordinate.¹

Recently several prominent scholars in both composition studies and second language writing have noted the limitations of the long standing division between L1 and L2 writing research and instruction and have called for greater interdisciplinary conversation and sustained collaboration (Horner et al., MacDonald, Matsuda “Wild West,” Donahue). It was partially in response to this separated nature of writing instruction and scholarship at the university and in line with such calls for collaboration, that the Multilingual Research Group ([MWRG]) was formed. The MWRG was started in 2012 by a small group of graduate students primarily in Applied Linguistics and English. Though the “research group” was a common form of departmental collaboration in Applied Linguistics, two factors differentiated the MWRG from other existing research groups. First, though supported and advised by faculty members in both Applied Linguistics and English, the MWRG was organized and led by students. Second, the MWRG actively sought to create cross-disciplinary connections, particularly between

¹ Since the founding of the Multilingual Writing Research Group (MWRG), faculty from both departments have been working to forge stronger connections between the two departments.

scholars in Applied Linguistics and English. Initially, the goal of the group was to give scholars interested in multilingual writing research a “home base” for discussing multilingual writing research. It was not until the second year that we first began discussing the possibility of taking on a more public role in the university at large by creating a faculty development workshop focusing on multilingual writing pedagogy.

Our Motivations: A Fix for the Grammar Fix

Our motivation for creating the workshops started with our concern for both the multilingual students we worked with and the professors who were teaching them. We had all seen anecdotal evidence of the need for an increased understanding of multilingual writing issues across the curriculum through our interactions with our own multilingual students. Undergraduates had told us of being advised to drop classes because their nonstandard grammar was too much for the instructors to handle. Our students would sometimes ask us for help interpreting writing assignments for their disciplinary courses, or bring us their instructors’ feedback on their papers hoping we could help them decipher cryptic or overwhelming comments. It is also not uncommon to receive requests for copy editing services from multilingual graduate students who have been told by their advisors that they can’t defend their dissertations until “their grammar is fixed.” From our casual interactions with instructors in other disciplines and our own experiences learning to teach multilingual writing, we believe that the majority of these practices stem not from prejudice or lack of concern for students, but rather from honest confusion about how to best support multilingual writers. Giving instructors the opportunity to learn about some of the research and pedagogical practices that had been beneficial for us as we had learned to teach multilingual writers seemed like an obvious step.

In addition to the felt need for the workshops, we saw potential connections that could allow us to make the workshops a reality. The Applied Linguistics department had recently begun collaborating with the local center for teaching and learning, the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, to create a series of workshops for International Teaching Assistants. Through hearing about these efforts and learning how receptive the Schreyer Institute had been to these proposals, as well as learning that one of the instructional consultants at Schreyer was a graduate of the Applied Linguistics program, we began to see the Schreyer Institute as a potential ally and platform for creating some type of faculty development initiative.

Developing Our Workshops: Garnering Allies

Prior to proposing the workshops to the Schreyer Institute, our group spent several sessions brainstorming about what content we believed would be most appropriate for an audience of teachers in the disciplines. One of the major challenges we faced in these brainstorming sessions was how to translate our own understanding of writing, which was admittedly largely humanities-oriented, for an interdisciplinary audience of teachers. We decided that two workshops, one focusing on inclusive assignment design and the use of model texts and one focusing on strategies for responding effectively to multilingual student writing, would keep the focus on concrete and practical advice. These two topics were also chosen as assigning and grading are shared features of writing instruction across the university and therefore most applicable for an interdisciplinary audience. In these brainstorming sessions, we focused a great deal of attention on striking a balance between accurately representing what we believe to be good practices for teaching multilingual writers and adapting to the specific challenges and needs of the teachers we would be working with. This balance would be one that we continually assessed and adjusted throughout the process.

After we developed this initial conception, we contacted the Schreyer Institute to ask whether such a workshop was something they would be interested in sponsoring. They responded favorably to this proposal and our contact was able to provide us with useful information, particularly what teachers might need and value, how such workshops had been conducted in the past, and what participation strategies had been most effective in other workshops. Much of the advice we were given aligned with our earlier discussions regarding the need to balance our disciplinary perspective with the expectations of the teachers. In particular, our contact at Schreyer suggested that participating teachers might be resistant to the idea that writing instruction was their responsibility at all. He advised that we focus on attempting to convince these faculty that they do have a role to play in helping multilingual writers learn the writing practices of their discipline and that providing such help need not detract from their overall teaching. Our contact at Schreyer likewise encouraged us to provide concrete resources such as model assignments and examples of effective teacher commentary for faculty both because faculty tended to express their appreciation for such materials and also so that these materials could be made available to faculty who were not able to attend the workshop itself.

With these suggestions in mind, we began to develop the curriculum, a process that took nearly a full year to complete and one that included several feedback and revision sessions with the Schreyer Institute For Teaching Excellence. The following sections describe the final content of the workshops as they were presented to faculty.

Workshop One: Expectations and Explanations for Assignments

We focused the first workshop on how instructors across the disciplines could better design their writing assignments to be accessible to multilingual writers. Based on our own formal and informal interactions with multilingual writers, we knew these student writers often have difficulties in understanding and approaching writing assignments in the disciplines. In addition, as we believe better assignment design leads to better outcomes (in this case, writing), we concluded that helping instructors to create writing assignments that are more assessible to multilingual writers as well as native English writers would be an important topic. During the preparation, we reflected on our own practices of constructing and explaining writing assignments in our writing classes. We compiled a few principles behind how to effectively construct writing assignments as well as concrete examples and strategies around a sample writing assignment, a literature review (see Appendix A).

In the actual workshop, we started off by discussing how multilingual writers' language ability can be conceptualized as both a linguistic and cultural matter in order to help the attendees to understand multilingual writers' specific challenges in academic writing practice. We then discussed how the instructors can lay out their expectations more clearly, and how a writing assignment can be designed so that multilingual writers' L1 knowledge and cultural background can be utilized as a resource (Canagarajah, Horner et al., Lu and Horner). As practice, the faculty attendees analyzed instructions for a sample writing assignment and discussed their critique of the accessibility of the writing assignment for multilingual student writers. In the rest of the workshop, we shared our own strategies for reinforcing the principles such as using graphic organizers, making a connection between the assignment and what students are already familiar with, using a model essay and analyzing it in class using a color-coding scheme, and modeling our own reading practice by thinking aloud. Each of these strategies was briefly introduced with a sample activity that the attendees could carry out in their own classes.

Workshop Two: Giving Feedback on Student Writing

For the second workshop, we drew on research from both composition and rhetoric and applied linguistics to collect the best practices for responding to multilingual student writing (see Appendix B). Using our experience as writing instructors and researchers, we presented our own teaching methods and situated them within the research from each field. Knowing that instructors in all fields who assign writing will have to provide students with feedback, we saw this as a

pedagogical topic that crossed the disciplinary divide. Based on our own experience working with multilingual writers in classrooms and writing centers, we also saw this as an area of pedagogy that many instructors—ourselves included—struggle with early on when teaching multilingual writers.

Because one of the graduate student leaders had conducted similar workshops for faculty and tutors in the past as the writing center director at another university, we were able to build off of an existing framework in creating this workshop with the added advantage of knowing how teachers had previously responded to the content. We were also able to integrate perspectives on feedback from writing center theory and practice into the workshop, relying on the work of Ben Rafoth and Shanti Bruce in finding clear guides for responding to multilingual writing. With this grounding, we stressed feedback as interactive social action, emphasizing the importance of context and clear communication (Hyland and Hyland). To do this, the curriculum modeled a scaffolded approach to providing students with feedback, separated into 1) approach, 2) response, and 3) follow-up (Ferris and Hedgecock). Within the workshop, we used sample student writing along with samples of teacher feedback to model our practice alongside the theoretical approach we presented.

In the latter half of the workshop, we presented strategies for addressing grammar in multilingual writing (Ferris and Hedgecock, Bruce and Rafoth). While grammar correction is a fraught issue both within L1 and L2 composition, we acknowledged that multilingual student papers may contain excessive grammatical and lexical inaccuracies by the standards of their English-speaking professors (for a more extended discussion of the issues of grammar correction in student writing, see the debate between Truscott and Ferris). Our goal, therefore, was to provide a framework for approaching grammar in multilingual writing that was simple and easy to use in the classroom. We first emphasized the importance of limiting focus to errors that seemed frequent, serious and treatable (Ferris and Hedgecock), and second, introduced the distinction between errors and mistakes (Bruce and Rafoth). However, understanding that faculty attending the workshops might not be teaching a language course and might not be qualified or desire to provide grammar instruction, we were also careful to remind teachers that grammar correction should be integrated into their course and be in line with their overall instructional goals. We explained that if grammar was not an instructional goal, and if students' mistakes did not seriously impede overall comprehension, it might be appropriate to simply "read through" grammar errors rather than correct them. As the emphasis of the workshop was on how to use feedback on writing to help students succeed, providing advice on teaching grammar within the classroom was beyond the scope of the workshop, and we remained focused on options for marking errors and mistakes within a student paper.

The Faculty Responses

Overall, the response to the workshops² was positive – out of 20 participants who filled out feedback forms, 12 marked “strongly agree” in response to the sentence “Overall, this program was valuable to me,” and 6 other participants marked “somewhat agree.” Primarily, positive comments centered on the practical aspects of the program, with comments such as “very useful, practical tips,” “useful handouts,” and “useful information and practical strategies,” though a few participants also commented on the value of having a theoretical introduction – one participant “appreciated both the conceptual orientations and the practical ‘tips’ of techniques to try.”

Critical comments fell into two general groups: several participants wrote that the information and strategies presented were too heavily based in the humanities and were not transferrable to the technical domains in which they worked. Thus, participants requested “more strategies applicable to the science class” or “more consideration of differences between disciplines and assignments,” as well as for future presentations to “address more technical writing issues (from the sciences and engineering)” as well as “technical language and terminology for ESL students.” While we had anticipated and attempted to address this concern in our planning, these responses suggest a need to collaborate either with professors from scientific disciplines or technical writing specialists to make the presentation more inclusive and to overcome disciplinary divides more effectively.

A few participants expressed strong resistance to two particular sets of strategies presented within the workshop. The first was reading through grammar errors that do not impede understanding; two participants felt that glossing over errors, specifically with articles, was problematic for multilingual writers. In addition, some attendees strongly disagreed with the practice of encouraging students to use their first languages as resources in the research and writing process. One participant objected simply that students should not be allowed to write in one language and then translate into English, and another had more pragmatic “concerns about students using texts in their own language due to plagiarism issues.” In fact, plagiarism as a potential problem with multilingual writers arose multiple times in the feedback forms, with one participant requesting more strategies for dealing with plagiarism particularly in the sciences because “some students have difficulty re-wording a technical phrase” due to lack of vocabulary.

² The feedback discussed here comes from the first workshop, and from a repetition of the second workshop for a Penn State branch campus.

This resistance suggests deeply held conceptions about the subtractive nature of the relationship between students' first and second languages, conceptions which are unlikely to be overcome in the span of an hour-long workshop. However, the workshop does provide a space for participants to explore their own thinking about language and learning, as evidenced by the participants' positive comments on the theoretical introductions we provided. The focus on plagiarism also suggests a strong concern that might be addressed in future workshops.

Finally, a single participant expressed what seemed to us to be a very telling concern – that this workshop was valuable because it is “very hard for a parochial person like me to handle ESL students because my background is limited.” This suggests to us that these workshops are especially important, and may be especially welcome, at rural institutions or universities experiencing a new influx of international or language minority students where not only students but also instructors may not have had much interaction with speakers of other languages. One of the major goals of this workshop was to alleviate the instructor anxiety that may arise from working with multilingual writers through demystifying the teaching of such students conceptually and providing practical, easily implemented strategies. For this participant, at least, the workshop was successful in that regard.

Presenting at the Law School

Two law school faculty members who work with the Masters of Law (LLM) program, which caters to international students, attended the first workshop and requested that our group present in the law school. Because two members of our research group either had worked or currently work in the law school, we were able to negotiate our established professional networks to arrange for the workshop in a rather straightforward manner. Our group's experience with writing expectations in the law school context and relationships with law school faculty also provided us with a valuable opportunity as we revised the content of our workshops for the law school. That is, we were better able to anticipate what the conversation with law school faculty might actually look like and to tailor the content of the workshop to address what we anticipated faculty concerns would be.

Three relevant themes emerged from the activity of revising and implementing the original workshops for the law school. The tension of remaining true to our disciplinary backgrounds while respecting the law school's writing culture presented a challenge; to the composition of the law school faculty who actually attended the workshop suggested faculty buy-in is still an issue; to the

questions asked by the law school faculty in the workshop demonstrated that these types of workshops are both appropriate and necessary.

In other sections of this paper, we have discussed our desire to strike a balance between accurately representing what we believe to be good practices for teaching multilingual writers and addressing the specific challenges and needs of the teachers we would be working with. Revising the original workshops for the law school presents an interesting case study for this point because we were not merely anticipating what faculty needs or orientations might be. Again, because two members of our research group have experience working in the law school, we were acutely aware of the writing culture in the law school. This knowledge may have exacerbated the tension in striking the disciplinary balance, but it did allow us to address the different writing cultures explicitly. While in the original workshops we were addressing faculty from varied disciplines with varied writing beliefs and expectations, in the law school workshops the audience had a more or less homogenous orientation to what constituted “good writing” in their field and our group was able to address this orientation a priori.

While this familiarity with the different genres of and standards for writing in a law school may have aided us in starting the inter-disciplinary conversation with law school faculty, it did not necessarily ease the task of revising the content of the workshops for the law school, which has a writing culture quite different from other writing contexts. First, when students are asked to write in the law school, often they are asked to write professional texts – texts typically associated with legal practice in one form or another, such as inter-office memoranda, contracts, and briefs addressing the court. Second, as specified in its honor code, students in the law school are expressly forbidden from discussing or sharing their work with anyone other than their course instructor (“Honor Code”). So, while some of our discussion of best practices in previous workshops involved group work or the use of writing centers, these methods would be considered highly inappropriate in the law school context. We had to balance what our professional experience as writing instructors and researchers tells us and at the same time respect the professional identity of law professors who orient to the task of writing and evaluating writing very differently.

In the end, we decided that one way to achieve this balance was to share what our experience and the literature we read tells us is effective writing instruction and practice, but to hedge the discussion. We acknowledged that we were aware of differences in law school writing culture and the L2 writing instruction we are used to, and that “to the extent possible,” these may be some useful recommendations or practices. We further attempted to adapt our presentation by changing the examples we used to illustrate our points to those relevant to the law school context.

An additional issue we anticipated and addressed in revising the curriculum for the law school was that many of the doctrinal courses (or what we traditionally think of as substantive, content-based law courses such as criminal law or constitutional law) are graded solely on a student's performance on one final exam, typically in essay form. While we had serious concerns about the validity of such a form of assessment, especially for multilingual students, we knew that this is a long-established practice in law school culture. Instead of trying to change this entrenched practice, we focused on ways of making the existing exam structure more equitable for multilingual students. We explained how these high-stakes and timed exams on complex subject matter would exacerbate the ongoing battle between accuracy and fluency in writing. The more attention a multilingual writer pays to difficult content and generating text quickly and fluently, the less attention they have to spare for monitoring grammatical accuracy. It is also possible for students to focus too much attention on accuracy in such a context, leading to shorter and less insightful responses. Knowing that students would likely not be able to attend to both fluency and accuracy in a timed exam, we recommended that faculty decide which they were more concerned with and let the grading criteria reflect their focus. Moreover, we recommended that faculty explicitly tell students whether or not grammar would be graded (provided of course that it does not seriously impede understanding). At the workshop, a doctrinal law professor who does base his grades on a single, timed essay exam seemed particularly pleased that we had anticipated and addressed these issues.

Additionally, the questions asked by law faculty in the workshop suggests that the workshops we had developed were not only applicable to the context of a law school but actually quite useful. In index cards handed out during the workshop asking attendees what concerns they had about teaching multilingual writers, the overwhelming majority of attendees listed both questions about how to give “constructive not hurtful” feedback and “how much” feedback is appropriate. Since the law school faculty who attended the workshop were almost exclusively legal writing faculty who do assign writing and give feedback, these types of questions indicate that such work is part of the law school curriculum. These questions were precisely the issues our workshops were designed to address, suggesting that at least the law school faculty in attendance saw the need for and welcomed the interdisciplinary conversations the workshops sought to begin.

Conclusion: A Reflection on the Process

We want to conclude this article with some reflection about what we as graduate students have learned about the process of conducting faculty development, and what our experiences might offer to others in similar

institutional positions. As we began to discuss the workshops in preparation for writing this article, we found several common themes emerging from our individual impressions regarding first, what enabled us to propose and implement the workshop, and second, how it might be more effectively facilitated.

The first theme in our reflections is the importance of making use of professional networks to create a platform for the workshops. As is evident from our description of the process of implementing the workshops, we drew on these networks in many ways. It was through conversations with a faculty supervisor that one of us became aware of the work of the Schreyer Institute and their receptiveness to language-focused faculty development proposals. We chose the instructional consultant in Schreyer Institute who had graduated from the Applied Linguistics program as our initial contact specifically because of our indirect connection to him through our professional network. The chance to adapt the workshops for the law school came about largely because two of us had worked or were currently working in the law school and thus had professional connections there that we could draw on to help us understand the disciplinary culture and adapt the workshops for this new context. Also importantly, the professional connections we established in the course of creating the initial workshops enabled us to pursue further opportunities to conduct similar sets of workshops. While working on this article, we were contacted by the Schreyer Institute again to repeat the workshops for different groups of instructors at branch campuses, in which a larger audience from a variety of disciplines participated. In other words, our initial contacts within our professional networks opened up more opportunities for us to reach out to potential participants and in turn eventually helped us to create bigger professional networks. These connections are especially important for those of us working as graduate students or adjunct faculty, who are at the same time developing institutional identity as experts - the second theme that emerged in our reflections.

For us, the formation of the MWRG was a key element of this identity. As graduate students creating a professional development workshop, we were aware of our own somewhat marginal position within the university. No one of us individually felt that we had the necessary status to independently propose and lead workshops such as this. However, by creating the MWRG following the established research group format within the department of Applied Linguistics, we were able to form a new institutional identity – one that was not available to us as individuals. The MWRG not only connected us to other like-minded colleagues from both English and Applied Linguistics, the name itself and the implied institutional approval that it carried gave us both the social capital to feel confident proposing the workshops and the credibility that likely contributed to our proposal being accepted.

For those who would like to undertake similar work, we encourage you to consider what avenues are available to you to take on a more powerful institutional identity than the one conferred upon you as a graduate student or adjunct instructor. For us, the format of the research group made the most sense because this was a form of collaboration that was already established within one of our departments. In your context other forms of collaboration, such as reading groups and committees, may be a more recognizable form of collaboration and action. Whatever form it takes, creating a group identity may be an important strategy, as it was for us, for creating institutional credibility.

Finally, our experiences speak to the difficulties and rewards of interdisciplinary conversation. As we designed the workshops, presented them, and subsequently adapted them for the law school, we were actively seeking to respect faculty members' disciplinary expertise and their experiences with multilingual writers, even when, or perhaps especially when, they contradicted our own beliefs. This collaborative and open attitude which we actively cultivated in our conversations with faculty not only helped us to counter resistance and gain faculty investment (Walvoord), but also allowed us to learn from faculty and incorporate these new insights into future versions of the workshops. The interdisciplinary nature of the workshops also required us to anticipate what faculty already knew and believed about multilingual writing and particularly to be mindful of their potential resistance to the strategies and information we were presenting. It additionally involved distilling our disciplinary knowledge in ways that avoided jargon and were not predicated on ideas that were unfamiliar or anathema to those outside of our discipline but that still remained true to our field and our professional knowledge of multilingual writers and writing pedagogy. For example, in our presentation we adopted the terms "disciplinary culture" rather than "discourse community" and "text type" rather than "genre," as being more accessible to our participants. In addition, we decided to include in our presentations practices which we have found effective but which we anticipated might be considered radical or even problematic by our participants, such as teaching strategies for student writers to include their L1s in the research and composing processes, and "reading through" grammar mistakes if they do not impede understanding and are not central to the purpose of the assignment.

How effective were these strategies? Based on the response of the participants, it seems clear that though the workshops were overall well-received, the content of our presentations, drawn as it was from literature in our field and our own teaching experience, remained too focused on writing in the humanities. As discussed earlier, we see a need for further collaboration across disciplines during the planning and/or execution of such workshops, to better address participants' concerns with technical and scientific writing. As shown in the case of our workshop at the law school, more focused workshops that target specific

disciplinary writing might be more appreciated by the faculty. We also believe that a useful extension of our current assessment processes would be to conduct follow-up surveys or classroom observations with the participants, to determine how they have transferred the techniques to their classrooms. Based on the requests we are currently receiving for similar workshops at other Penn State campuses as well as the university medical school, it seems that we will have the opportunity and the motivation to continue revising and improving our presentations.

Overall, we found that the workshops fostered highly rewarding interdisciplinary interactions, which benefitted not only the faculty members who participated but us as developing professionals. As graduate students, we were able to refine how we discuss multilingual writing with faculty from different disciplines and gain a broader perspective on writing instruction at the university, while providing a service which empowered faculty members to work more effectively with their multilingual students. While such efforts can always be refined to be more responsive to the needs of participants, ultimately, what our experience demonstrates is the power of collaboration as a means for those who occupy marginal positions to access a higher status institutional identity, and in turn, to address the needs of multilingual writers and their instructors.

Works Cited

- Bruce, Shanti, and Bennett A. Rafoth. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2004. Print.
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. *Critical Academic Writing for Multilingual Students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002. Print.
- Cox, Michelle. "WAC: Closing Doors or Opening Doors for Second Language Writers?" *Across the Disciplines* 8.4. (2011). Available at <http://wac.colostate.edu/atd/ell/cox.cfm>
- . "In Response to Today's 'Felt Need': WAC, Faculty Development, and Second Language Writers." *WAC and Second-Language Writers: Research Towards Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Programs and Practices*. Eds. Terry Myers Zawacki & Michelle Cox. Fort Collins, Colorado: The WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press. (2014): 299-326. Available at <http://wac.colostate.edu/books/12/>
- Donahue, Christiane. "'Internationalization' and Composition Studies: Reorienting the Discourse." *College Composition and Communication* 61.2 (2009): 214-243. Print
- "Fast Facts." *Open Doors*. Institute of International Education, 2013, Web. 8 Oct. 2014.

- Ferris, Dana R. "The 'Grammar Correction' Debate in L2 Writing: Where are We, and Where Do We Go from Here? (And What Do We Do in the Meantime?...)" *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13 (2004): 1-14. Print.
- Ferris, Dana R. and John S. Hedgecock. *Teaching ESL Composition: Purpose, Process and Practice*. 2nd Ed. New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.
- Hall, Jonathan. "WAC/WID in the Next America: Redefining Professional Identity in the Age of the Multilingual Majority." *The WAC Journal* 20. (2009): 33-49. Available at <http://wac.colostate.edu/journal/vol20/hall.pdf>
- "Honor Code." *Penn State Law*. Penn State. n.d. Web. 8 Oct. 2014.
- Horner, Bruce, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline J. Royster, and John Trimbur. "Opinion: Language Difference in Writing-Toward a Translingual Approach." *College English* 73.3 (2011): 303-321. Print.
- Lu, Min-Zhan and Bruce Horner. "Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency." *College English* 75.6 (2013): 582-607. Print.
- MacDonald, Susan Peck. "The Erasure of Language. *CCC* 58.4 (2007): 585-625. Print.
- Phillips, Talinn, Stewart, Candace, & Stewart, Robert D. "Geography Lessons, Bridge-Building, and Second Language Writers." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 30.1 (2006): 83-100. Print.
- Matsuda, Paul Kei. "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition." *College English* 68.6. (2006): 637-651. Print.
- . "It's the Wild West Out There: A New Linguistic Frontier in U.S. College Composition." *Literacy as Translingual Practice: Between Communities and Classrooms*. New York: Routledge, (2013). 128-138. Print.
- McLeod, Susan H. and Eric Miraglia. "Writing Across the Curriculum in a Time of Change." *WAC for the New Millennium: Strategies for Continuing Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Programs*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, (2001). 1-27. Print.
- Penn State Division of Undergraduate Studies. "Scheduling First Year Writing Courses." *Undergraduate Advising Handbook*. Penn State. n.d. Web. 8 Oct. 2014.
- Truscott, John. "The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes." *Language Learning* 46 (1996): 327-269. Print.
- Walvoord, Barbara E. "Getting Started." *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Guide to Developing Programs*. Eds. Susan H. McLeod & Margaret Soven. Newbury Park, California: Sage. (1992): 12-31.

Appendix A: Workshop 1 Handout
Helping ESL Students Understand Your Writing Assignments

Provide opportunities for multilingual writers to use their unique resources

- a) encourage students to conduct research in non-English publications
- b) encourage cross-cultural comparisons and insights

Unpack your expectations

- a) When you assign writing, ask yourself the following questions:
 - 1. When I complete this type of writing, what do I do?
 - 2. What are the features of a good example of this type of writing?
 - 3. What is the purpose of this type of writing?
 - 4. Who is the audience and what does this audience expect?
 - 5. What is the typical content? What types of questions, sources, and evidence are valued?
 - 6. What is the typical structure? How flexible is this structure?
 - 7. What are the mechanics and conventions (citation style, document design, formatting, etc.)?
 - 8. What type of language is expected (level of explicitness, formality, technical language, etc.)?
- b) Focus on the terms you use to describe writing (i.e. report, argument, literature review, etc.) as well as the verbs you use to describe what your students are supposed to do (analyze, describe, reflect, etc.)

Illustrate your expectations to your students

- a) Use visual representations and graphic organizers can illuminate the purpose and primary features of a type of writing
- b) Compare a new type of writing with a more familiar type
- c) Provide model texts and help students analyze the relevant features of the model
- d) Model your own research, writing, grading, and other literate practices

Remember that anything you can do that will benefit your multilingual students will also benefit your native English speaking students.



Appendix B: Workshop 2 Handout

The goal of feedback is to make **better writers, not just better papers!**

It may be helpful to think of writing feedback as a three-step process consisting of **approach, response, and follow-up.**

Approach – Before you comment

- Let your purpose for the assignment guide your commenting
 - What is important to you? Match your comments to your instructional purpose
 - Is this draft graded or ungraded? Can your students revise? Are there more papers like this in your class?
- Do everything you can to get better first drafts
 - Address common problems in class before the paper is due
 - Provide detailed assignment sheets to clarify your expectations
 - Include grading criteria, rubrics, and checklists when you assign writing
 - When possible, provide model texts and help your students analyze what makes them successful
- Identify possible feedback points
 - Goals of the assignment
 - Grading criteria
 - What has been covered in class
 - Difficulties you have observed in previous writing assignments
- Share your principles and strategies for commenting with your students
 - Explain to your students why and how you comment
 - Model your commenting process on a sample paper
 - Provide students a paper with comments from a previous class and ask them to make suggestions for how the writer could address the comments

Response – While you comment

- Select 2-4 feedback points based on the assignment and the student's needs
 - Too many comments overwhelms students and you
- Focus on fewer, high-quality comments
 - Be specific

T/W

- Respond as a reader
- Explain reasons behind your suggestions
- Give students choices about how to revise
- Address both strengths and weaknesses in the paper
- Avoid jargon-filled and vague comments
- Avoid making changes for the student

Follow-Up – After you comment

- Give students opportunities to ask questions about the comments you have made
 - If possible, allow your students to read your comments in class
 - Choose a few of the most common issues from the papers and explain them in class (with good and bad examples)
- Make students responsible for addressing your comments
 - Require written revision plans or revision reports in which students explain how they have considered and addressed the comments they received or why they chose not to address them
 - Require that students summarize the feedback they received and explain how they might apply it in the future

Dealing with grammar – If, when, and how

- Decide whether or not to mark grammar
 - Can you understand what the student has written even with grammatical problems?
 - Is correct grammar an important part of your instructional goals for the assignment?
- Expect and accept a written accent – non-idiomatic does not necessarily mean incorrect or inappropriate
- Focus on problems that are **frequent**, **serious**, and **treatable**
 - **Frequent** – What errors are most common?
 - **Serious** – What errors make impede your understanding?
 - **Treatable** – What errors can the student reasonably be expected to improve on?
 - Common “less-treatable” grammar problems include
 - Idiomatic expressions and word pairings (*on the other hand* not *in the other hand*; *take a test* not *write a test*)
 - Prepositions, especially when used in abstract ways (i.e. difference in meaning between *think about*, *think of*, *think over*, *think on*, *think through*)

- Articles (when to use *a*, *an*, *the*, or *nothing* before a noun)
- When possible, distinguish between **errors** and **mistakes**
 - **Error** – Consistent misuse of particular grammatical structures, usually the result of a lack of understanding of the linguistic feature, a natural and necessary part of language learning.
 - **Mistake** – Typo, or the writer not consistently or consciously applying a grammatical pattern that the he/she does understand
- Addressing errors
 - Do not try to address every error, as this will overwhelm you and your students
 - Provide short, narrowly focused grammatical explanations and lots of practice noticing and correcting the errors in their own writing
 - Some good resources for grammar explanations:
 - Purdue OWL ESL- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/5/>
 - Lingolia - <http://english.lingolia.com/en/>
- Addressing mistakes
 - Remember that your goal is to help your students become better self-editors, not to create grammatically perfect papers
 - Be aware of external factors that make it harder for your students to catch their grammar errors
 - Time limits on writing
 - Challenging content
 - Unfamiliar genre/writing task
 - Teach self-editing strategies (reading out loud, reading from the end of the paper to the beginning, thoughtful use of spell-checkers, etc. . .)
 - If you choose to comment on mistakes, do not edit papers for your students - this is work you don't need, and it reduces your students' opportunity to learn
 - Provide *implicit* feedback to help students *notice* the mistakes and *gradually reduce* the support you give them – for example:
 - Round 1: Mark and label mistakes. Student edits.
 - Round 2: Mark mistakes but do not label. Student edits.
 - Round 3: Mark lines that contain mistake. Student finds and edits.
 - Make students responsible for using your editing feedback