

Middle East-North Africa Writing Centers Alliance 2011 Conference  
Strategies for Teaching Second Language Writers: Insights for the Writing Center  
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**Abstract:** This session considers strategies the presenter has used with second language writers of English. Research on pre-writing activities, transference of L1 literacy skills, contrastive rhetoric, rhetorical versus syntactic errors, error correction, peer editing, and revision will be considered, and practical applications for the writing center will be discussed.

This presentation is organized around ten operating principles concerning the writing process:

- 1) Writing and composition are inter-related activities.
- 2) Rhetorical structure may differ from one language/culture to another.
- 3) L1 literacy skills transfer to L2 literacy.
- 4) Better readers make better writers.
- 5) Writing is to be read first for content and idea development.
- 6) Errors can exhibit students' taking chances, and all errors do not necessarily need to be marked.
- 7) Rhetorical and syntactic errors are distinct phenomena.
- 8) Writing is not a solitary process, and the reader-writer relationship should be encouraged whenever possible.
- 9) Guided peer editing should be encouraged.
- 10) Teachers should act as counselors to facilitate the writing process.

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### Sample Essays

#### Essay #1

#### The Great Transformation

China is an ancient country. It is famous in the world because of its culture for thousands of years, its vast territory (and) rich natural resources and large population. But as it is a multiracial country, and it is divided into northern and southern parts by Young-tze River naturally, it was disunited until 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established. From that time on, China has been getting richer and richer. Now, everything has been enormous changed in China.

As everybody knows that China has being a famous agricultural country from long long ago. But the strange thing was that there were thousands of farmers suffering from starvation every years. They grew rice, wheat and vegetables just for the rulers who were living in luxury, but not for themselves or their country. Now, the situation is completely different. The rulers were elected by the people who include various races and farmers. They do everything according to the benefits of the people, especially the farmers who is the ninety per cent of the population in their country. The farmers are no longer poor as they have an integrated organization of allocation which is called people's commune and they have a very complete system of demand and supply. Not only they do agriculture in their farms, but also do industry. In this way, the farmer's life are improve in a high speed.

China was a very poor country in industry (before 1949). They could not create even a nail. But now, as we know, they have their manmade satellites, and they produce nuclear weapons, aeroplanes, vassels, automobiles and so on without any foreign aid. Now, every big cities and small towns are industrialized except rural areas.

China is no longer poor and silent. It has being awakening, and getting stronger and stronger.

#### Essay #2

#### Do Let Your Schooling interfer your education

Hopefully through our schooling we will all gain a great deal of practical knowledge that we can apply to any future profession that we may choose. If one is fairly intelligent and displays a certain amount of discipline, this can be easily done. However, first one must know what it is that they really want to do with their life. Where do I fit into societie's space? What kind of lifestyle do I want? What will make me happy? These are all questions we ask ourselves daily, and these can be answered through our own education.

Somebody once said: "No man is an island." To me to live is to love and understand people. One can spend all of his time in school and never have to relate to people. But when that person goes out into the world, he may be the last to find a job, friends, or on to love.

I have learned only through my personal experiences how to communicate with people. Diplomacy and the handling unexpected situations are most important in any

profession and this can only be gained by an awareness that comes from knowing different types of people.

I love sports. They can relieve many frustrations and tension and teach one how to relax. But most important, they should teach many people how to accept losing gracefully. This to me is very important when dealing with all phases of society.

School is a wonderful place to educate oneself. There are many different types of people with different directions, and as long as I continue to explore I am sure that I will have gained much more knowledge than I had hoped for in school.

Essay #3

[No Title]

There are thousands of languages in the world. Some of them are unknown for the majority of the people, because they are not too common. For example: All the dialects using in Africa. Others are known, but almost nobody pay attention to them, because they are not fairly common. They are only used in their countries of origin. As an example of these, are: German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese.

Among all these languages in the world, there is a group which is more common, and everybody is interesting in them. These languages are very important for a professional or businessman, because everyday they are treating with people all over the world. Between these languages, we have Spanish and English, which are the most used..

Spanish is very popular, because all the Latin American countries, except Brasil have it as their language. It is also the second Universal language. English is the most important of these languages, mentioned before. It is the Universal one, and it is used in almost all the countries as a common language, between the businessmen and scientifics and any professional, who are dealing with people from differrent countries. English nowadays is necessary for any career in order to have success in it. Even in many countries, English is teaching as a second language to all High school students.

(From Kroll, Barbara. 1990. "The rhetoric/syntax split: designing a curriculum for ESL students." *Journal of Basic Writing* 9, 40-55.)