

SLS 630 Term Project

Program Development: Analysis of ACADEMIC WRITING NEEDS of ELI 73 Students

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Introduction

Writing has long been recognized as foreign students' weakest deficiency. Although students often report they devote little time to writing assignments, good writing is critical to achieving academic success because many courses evaluate students through some form of written text (e.g., essay exams, short-answer essays, research papers). The aim of writing instruction in English for academic purposes (EAP) writing classrooms is to prepare students by focusing on students' composition needs so that students can function well in their fields. Sound analysis of the needs of academically-oriented ESL students is essential for the development and improvement of an effective academic writing curriculum.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the needs that distinguish the separate and/or overlapping goals of undergraduate students and graduate students in the ELI 73 course. Undergraduate students and graduate students were placed in ELI 73 because they show "notable unfamiliarity with and general lack of control of academic writing and would benefit from at least two semesters of ELI writing instruction" (ELIPT hallmarks for ELI writing placements, 2002). However, there is no study on whether such arrangement is appropriate to promote fluent academic competence commensurate with UH faculty expectations. Based on data collected from questionnaires and face-to-face interviews, I investigate arguments for and against the development of separate curriculum tracks within the ELI 73 class. It is hoped that based on the needs assessment, realistic, specific, and testable objectives can be set to provide a solid basis for future development of criterion-referenced tests and materials suitable for the instructors, learners and the ELI program.

Background information

The following excerpts from ELI Teacher's Manual (2002) provide information about the ELI program and ELI 73 course. **[NOTE: For the information below, you should use italics and or a different sized font and indenting to set off the parts that are direct quotes from the Teacher's Manual, as opposed to parts that are your paraphrases of what is said in the manual.]**

The English Language Institute (ELI) is located in the Department of Second Language Studies. ELI's primary purpose is to provide English instruction for international and immigrant students so as to facilitate their academic studies at the University. All international and immigrant students admitted to the University are referred to the ELI to determine if they must take the ELI placement test before registering for University courses. ELI courses are taught during the regular 16-week fall and

spring semesters, and students take ELI courses concurrently with other university coursework.

The ELI offers writing courses of two levels—intermediate and advanced. The 73 course includes more textbook-driven choices, more teacher-identified needs and puts more emphasis on language use, while the 83 and 100 are more advanced, including more student-driven content choices, more work on student-identified needs, and more emphasis on strategy reflection.

ELI 073 Writing for Foreign Students: Extensive practice in expository writing. Analysis and use of rhetorical devices. Individual conferences and tutoring as required.

ELI 083 Writing for Foreign Graduate Students: Individual instruction in specific writing problems: term papers, reports, projects. Foreign graduate students only except by permission.

ELI 100 Expository writing: A Guided Approach Extensive practice in writing expository essays; linguistic devices that make an essay effective.

ELI writing curricula draw strongly from social constructionist, process approaches to composition. General themes for ELI 73, 100, and 83 are 1) teach writing as process, 2) develop writing assignments that are relevant to students, 3) teach university writing, and 4) develop revision/editing skills. The ELI helps to prepare students by providing students with the opportunities to investigate the varied contexts in which they compose. Students are asked to examine the audiences they address, the purposes for which they write, genres, and discourse conventions in order to develop a repertoire of skills with which they can approach the writing task and successfully complete it.

For the purpose of close examination and discussion, the objectives for ELI 73 were not listed here, but in a separate section on page .

Methodology

The project was divided into six procedures: 1) Needs Analysis: gather detailed information about current ELI 73 students, 2) ELI student interviews, 3) ELI staff interviews, 4) justify the necessity for development of separate tracks, 5) adjust existing and establish new general goals for separate tracks within ELI 73, 6) adjust existing and establish specific, testable objectives for separate tracks within ELI 73.

A questionnaire on academic writing was designed to elicit information about student needs, which were viewed in terms of language abilities or skills in a language program. It also attempted to investigate students' perceptions of the relationship between the writing instruction the students

received in ELI 73 and the English writing skills required in their undergraduate and graduate programs. The students in ELI 73 were undergraduate and graduate students with TOEFL scores ranging from 500 to 550. After the research proposal received approval from the ELI, questionnaires were administered in the two sections of ELI 73, with assistance from both ELI 73 instructors. From students' responses in the questionnaire, basic understanding of the academic writing needs of nonnative-English-speaking undergraduate and graduate students' was developed. Of the 19 students enrolled in ELI 73 in spring 2003, a total of five student volunteers were recruited for further in-depth interviews. The interviews elicited information regarding the students' previous writing experiences, current writing activities in the UHM regular courses and the students' learning in ELI 73. Then the ELI assistant director and two instructors were interviewed on their opinion regarding the necessity or lack of necessity of developing separate tracks for undergraduate and graduate students. Previous literature was consulted for justifications for developing separate writing curricula for graduate and undergraduate students. Finally, with the data collected, existing general goals and objectives for ELI 73 were examined. New general goals and specific objectives for separate tracks within ELI 73 were suggested.

Results and Analysis

1) Needs Analysis: gather detailed information about current ELI 73 students

With the help of the two ELI 73 instructors, questionnaires on academic writing were distributed and collected. 14 questionnaires were usable (8 females and 6 males), 73% of the 19 questionnaires distributed. Table 1 provides background information on the undergraduate ($n = 8$) and graduate students ($n = 6$). The majority of the students were from East Asian countries, with the biggest subgroup of Japanese ($n = 7$). The average length of residence in the U.S. was 8 months, with a range from 3 to 24 months. Most of the students were in their first semester at the University of Hawaii and majored in the disciplines of business, science, or social science. In addition, the writing tasks required by their regular UHM courses (other than ELI courses) belonged to similar types, with research papers, short answers in exams, and essay exams as the most common requirements.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of students in ELI 73, 2003 spring

Academic status	Undergraduate students	Graduate students
Student number	8	6
Average age	19-38, Ave: 23	22-30, Ave: 25
Gender (F : M)	3 : 5	5 : 1
Native language	4 Japanese	3 Japanese

	2 Korean 1 Chinese 1 Hebrew	2 Chinese 1 Tetun
Time in U.S.	4—three months 3—eight months 1—one year and six months	3—three months 1—ten months 1—one year 1—two years
Time at UHM	5—one semester 2—two semesters 1—three semesters	5—one semester 1—two semesters
Time at other American colleges	6—none 1—two semesters 1—seven semesters	5—none 1—five semesters
Major	3—Science 1—Social science 3—Business 1—Unspecified	2—Science 1—Social science 3—Business
Types of writing in regular UHM classes	7—essay exams 5—a research paper 4—short answers in exams 2—a reaction paper 2—a summary-analysis 1—an argumentative paper 1—a lab report 1—a book report 1—a literature review	3—essay exams 4—a research paper 3—short answers in exams 2—an argumentative paper 2—a critique 1—a summary-analysis 1—a lab report 1—a book report
Three aspects of academic writing most concerned about	2—vocabulary 1—word choice 1—grammar 3—structure 2—logical reasoning 1—creative writing 1—spelling 1—accuracy 1—format	1—vocabulary 1—word choice 2—paragraph structure 1—skill of discussion 1—fluency 1—content

According to the survey, the most common writing tasks ELI 73 students did were essay exams and short-answer exams, in which students needed to produce specified quantities of composition with clear, convincing content, clear organization, and standard grammar within a limited timeframe. The speed or fluency of students' writing had important consequences on the grades they received. This perceived need by most of the students surveyed corroborated ELI 73's objective of developing written fluency. **[NOTE: "research paper" was actually the second most common task, according to the data above, with 9 total mentions]**

When asked to list three aspects of academic writing they were most concerned about, undergraduate and graduate students expressed divergent views. It appears undergraduate students

were more concerned about micro-language skills than graduate students. This may be attributed to common expectations of undergraduate students to demonstrate content knowledge learned in their curricula, while graduate students are typically expected to demonstrate critical thinking and analyzing skills. It could also mean that foreign graduate students were more confident with their grammar.

Table 2. Three areas graduate students feel an urgent need to improve in writing

Areas needs improving \ Rank	1 (Most urgent)	2	3 (Urgent)
Fluency	4		
Accuracy			1
Reasoning and evidence	1		1
Sentence structure		1	
Paragraph structure			2
Word choice	1	2	2
Mechanics and form		3	

Table 3. Three areas undergraduate students feel an urgent need to improve in writing

Areas needs improving \ Rank	1 (Most urgent)	2	3 (Urgent)
Fluency	3		1
Accuracy	1	2	1
Reasoning and evidence	1		
Sentence structure	1	4	1
Paragraph structure		1	1
Word choice	1	1	2
Mechanics and form	1		1

Tables 2 and 3 respectively show three areas in writing graduate and undergraduate students felt an urgent need to improve in their writing. Undergraduate and graduate students were similarly concerned about the issues of fluency and word choice. Graduate students, in comparison to their undergraduate peers, wanted to learn more about mechanics and form. Undergraduate students, on the other hand, showed stronger desire to improve their grasp of sentence structures and accuracy.

[NOTE: The numbers in Tables 2 & 3 are different from the numbers in Table 1 for the same question from the survey. Shouldn't they be consistent? Or do Tables 2 & 3 come from other data, such as interviews? If so, you need to say where the data comes from.]

It appears that all respondents had strong interest in vocabulary development and grammatical accuracy. **[NOTE: Vocabulary is not listed in either Table 2 or Table 3.]** Despite the small

sample, the findings of this current study resemble those of Leki and Carson. In 1994, they surveyed 77 former L2 students who received academic writing instruction. They found students focused on the need for more language skills, even though they “made a point of saying that their professors did not focus on sentence-level features of writing and ignored spelling or grammar errors” (p. 89). They concluded students’ desire for efficiency was the reason behind this disproportionate interest in language. Additionally, students sought to expand their vocabulary in order to facilitate more precise expression of their thoughts; they were discouraged by caps on their vocabularies, which had the effect of alienating their thoughts from their expression of those thoughts. Given their awareness of their lack of control over grammar and vocabulary, students regarded English classes as places where they could learn to mitigate their deficiencies in English.

Leki and Carson (1999) discussed writing teachers’ concern that students misplaced their focus on superficial, low-level language skills while many writing teachers have been expanding the content of EAP to “include critical thinking as well as a focus on the heuristic functions of writing” (p.91). They suggested that students’ interest in language skills might reflect their desire to improve their proficiency and devote their finite cognitive resources on the actual demands of their education. My interviews with three students confirmed this assumption. Moreover, students in ELI 73 considered themselves already having certain writing or writing-related skills, such as the ability to conduct research and identify the audience and purpose of a paper. They wanted to learn to write the American way, specifically with regard to language proficiency (grammar and appropriate vocabulary) and rhetorical skills (e.g., organization, transition).

Table 4. Opinion on the necessity of dividing ELI 73 into separate sections

	Undergraduate students	Graduate students
Should ELI 73 divided into separate sections?	1—Yes 7—No	3—Yes 3—No
Willing to adjust schedule to take separate sections for undergraduate and graduate students?	2—3 4—4 1—6	1—1 1—2 1—3
Number of students : 1 (Very willing)-7 (Very unwilling)	1—7	1—4 2—7

Opinions were solicited regarding students’ views on developing separate sections for undergraduate and graduate students. Four out of the fourteen students (29 %) answered yes and gave the following reasons: were ELI 73 divided into two sections, the class could not only focus more on what the students needed but also could have adjusted to students’ levels. Ten students (71%) did not see it necessary to develop separate tracks for the class. In the second round of interviews, two of

them (**Were these two grads? Undergrads? This information might be revealing.**) expressed their opinions that: ELI 73 students have comparable English skills and are more or less at the same level in the process of English acquisition. Yet, 71% of the students were also willing to adjust their schedules to take the special sections specifically designed for either undergraduate or graduate students.

Table 5. Graduate student survey

Do you need to use this skill in any of your regular UH-Manoa classes? Do you think this skill needs to be taught in ELI 73 writing course?

WRITING SKILLS	Do you need to use this skill in any of your regular UH-Manoa classes?			Do you think this skill needs to be taught in ELI 73 writing course?		
	Yes	No	<u>Not Sure</u>	Yes	No	<u>Not Sure</u>
<u>Prewriting</u>						
1. Understand the assignment	(6)	()	()	(6)	()	()
2. Identify the audience	(4)	(1)	(1)	(4)	(2)	()
3. Decide on the purpose of the essay	(5)	()	()	(6)	()	()
4. Choose a subject that you are interested in	()	()	(1)	(4)	(2)	(1)
5. Narrow the subject to a topic (title)	(5)	(1)	()	(2)	(3)	(1)
6. Collect ideas about the topic	(4)	(1)	(1)	(4)	(1)	(1)
7. Use idea-generating strategies such as listing, brainstorming, clustering, flow chart, etc.	(4)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(3)	()
8. List details that will interest the audience	(2)	(3)	()	(2)	(3)	()
9. Use library skills	(5)	()	()	(1)	(4)	()
<u>Drafting:</u>						
10. Plan the ideas and the structure of the paper	(5)	(1)	()	(6)	()	()
11. Write an introduction	(5)	(1)	()	(5)	(1)	()
12. Write a thesis statement of opinion/intent	(6)	()	()	(5)	()	(1)
13. Write body paragraph topic sentences and headings	(6)	()	()	(6)	()	()
14. Write supporting sentences	(5)	()	(1)	(5)	(1)	()
15. Write concluding sentences	(5)	()	()	(6)	()	()
16. Move smoothly from one paragraph to another	(5)	()	(1)	(4)	(1)	(1)
17. Write a conclusion (summary, solution, prediction, recommendation)	(6)	()	()	(6)	()	()
18. Use coherence devices like transitional words and phrases or synonyms for controlling ideas	(5)	()	(1)	(3)	(2)	(1)
19. Reference or footnote others' idea						
<u>Development: support ideas</u>						
20. Use specific details to explain general ideas	(4)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(4)	()
21. Use supporting techniques: facts, examples, physical descriptions or personal experiences	(5)	(1)	()	(5)	(1)	()
22. Use methods of development such as process, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, etc.	(4)	(1)	(1)	(4)	(1)	()
<u>Revision: look again, change and strengthen</u>	(5)	(1)	()	(5)	(1)	()
23. Reconsider the needs of the audience						
24. Reconsider the purpose(s) of the paper						
25. Use brief, precise, accurate vocabulary						
26. Detect logical fallacies	(2)	(3)	(1)	(3)	(3)	()
27. Peer revision	(5)	(1)	()	(5)	(1)	()
28. Editing/proofread for errors	(5)	(1)	()	(4)	(2)	()

Grammar and Mechanics	(5)	(1)	()	(4)	(2)	()
29. Use language with precision	(4)	(2)	()	(2)	(4)	()
30. Avoid common errors of grammar and sentence structure	(6)	()	()	(5)	(1)	()
31. Strengthen writing through editing	(6)	()	()	(3)	(2)	(1)
32. Use correct citation form	(6)	()	()	(5)	(1)	()
33. Use correct punctuation						
34. Get help with final proofreading	(6)	()	()	(4)	(1)	(1)
	(6)	()	()	(4)	(2)	()
	(6)	()	()	(6)	()	()
	(5)	(1)	()	(3)	(2)	()

Table 6. Undergraduate student survey

Do you need to use this skill in any of your regular UH-Manoa classes?

Do you think this skill needs to be taught in ELI 73 writing course?

WRITING SKILLS	Do you need to use this skill in any of your regular UH-Manoa classes?			Do you think this skill needs to be taught in ELI 73 writing course?		
	Yes	No	<u>Not Sure</u>	Yes	No	<u>Not Sure</u>
<u>Prewriting</u>						
1. Understand the assignment	(7)	()	()	(7)	(1)	()
2. Identify the audience	(4)	(2)	(2)	(5)	(2)	(1)
3. Decide on the purpose of the essay	(6)	(1)	(1)	(7)	(1)	()
4. Choose a subject that you are interested in	(7)	(1)	()	(6)	(2)	()
5. Narrow the subject to a topic (title)	(7)	(1)	()	(5)	(2)	(1)
6. Collect ideas about the topic	(6)	(1)	(1)	(5)	(1)	(2)
7. Use idea-generating strategies such as listing, brainstorming, clustering, flow chart, etc.	(5)	(3)	()	(7)	(1)	()
8. List details that will interest the audience	(5)	(2)	(1)	(4)	(3)	(1)
9. Use library skills	(5)	(2)	(1)	(5)	(3)	()
<u>Drafting:</u>						
10. Plan the ideas and the structure of the paper	(7)	(1)	()	(8)	()	()
11. Write an introduction	(7)	(1)	()	(8)	()	()
12. Write a thesis statement of opinion/intent	(8)	()	()	(8)	()	()
13. Write body paragraph topic sentences and headings	(8)	()	()	(7)	()	(1)
14. Write supporting sentences	(8)	()	()	(8)	()	()
15. Write concluding sentences	(7)	(1)	()	(8)	()	()
16. Move smoothly from one paragraph to another	(7)	(1)	()	(6)	(1)	(1)
17. Write a conclusion (summary, solution, prediction, recommendation)	(7)	(1)	()	(8)	()	()
18. Use coherence devices like transitional words and phrases or synonyms for controlling ideas	(5)	(3)	()	(6)	(2)	()
19. Reference or footnote others' idea						
<u>Development: support ideas</u>						
20. Use specific details to explain general ideas	(7)	(1)	()	(6)	(1)	(1)
21. Use supporting techniques: facts, examples, physical descriptions or personal experiences	(7)	()	(1)	(4)	(2)	(2)
22. Use methods of development such as process, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, etc.	(7)	()	(1)	(6)	(1)	(1)
<u>Revision: look again, change and strengthen</u>						
23. Reconsider the needs of the audience	(5)	(2)	(1)	(8)	()	()
24. Reconsider the purpose(s) of the paper						

25. Use brief, precise, accurate vocabulary					
26. Detect logical fallacies	(4)	(2)	(2)	(3)	(3) (2)
27. Peer revision	(6)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(4) (1)
28. Editing/proofread for errors	(7)	(1)	()	(7)	(1) ()
<u>Grammar and Mechanics</u>	(6)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(3) (2)
29. Use language with precision	(4)	()	(4)	(4)	(1) (3)
30. Avoid common errors of grammar and sentence structure	(7)	(1)	()	(6)	() (2)
31. Strengthen writing through editing	(8)	()	()	(8)	() ()
32. Use correct citation form	(7)	(1)	()	(8)	() ()
33. Use correct punctuation					
34. Get help with final proofreading	(4)	(1)	(2)	(4)	(2) (1)
	(6)	(1)	(1)	(7)	() (1)
	(6)	()	(1)	(6)	(1) ()
	(6)	()	(2)	(6)	(1) (1)

[NOTE: I don't see any discussion of the results of these two surveys. It might be very revealing about the students' perceptions of their needs, especially if there are clear differences between grads and undergrads.]

2) ELI student interviews

Depending on the instructor and students' former experiences with writing, students' evaluations of ELI 73 differed. Some found it too easy, not challenging enough, not useful. One student even commented the teacher had turned the writing course into a reading course. Others viewed ELI 73 as useful; they found it helpful learning about citation and how to organize essays.

After having understood the potential benefits of separate tracks in ELI 73 during the second round of interviews, some students who had previously opposed such a division later conceded they might benefit more from a writing class specifically designed for undergraduate or graduate students.

3) ELI staff interviews

One of the ELI 73 teachers had two-semester experience of teaching writing. The first semester was hectic, as he was informed of which class to teach only two days prior to instruction. He found teaching ELI 73 interesting and challenging. In his opinion, both undergraduate and graduate students in ELI 73 needed to develop fluency, but the intensity of writing needs differed. Undergraduate students had been initiated into the academic community, just as they began to learn to write for academic purposes; whereas graduate students faced the much greater challenge of demonstrating analytical and critical writing in English right from day one.

According to his observation, graduate students in his class were more studious, because their English proficiency was often lower than their peers, yet they were held to the same standards **as other students** whose native language is English; they had to write lengthy research papers and prepare lectures. The graduate students in ELI 73 were generally overwhelmed by the immediacy of graduate-level pressures, and thus sought to learn graduate-level specific skills to cope with such academic demands (like citation and paraphrasing methods). Since the students were immediately required to produce big academic papers, they couldn't wait to learn how to cite and paraphrase sources until they advanced to ELI 83. Undergraduate students, on the other hand, may just need to write short essays or express opinions with supporting ideas.

He commented on why there should be separate tracks for undergraduate and graduate students. He cited his observation that graduate students suffered from bruised egos as a result of placement with undergraduate students in an English class as impetus to divide ELI 73 into undergraduate and graduate sections. He believed different sections catering to students' specific writing needs would motivate students to learn more actively. Based on the above-mentioned reasons, he supported developing separate tracks for the ELI 73 course.

4) Justify the necessity for development of separate tracks

In addition to supporting arguments collected from questionnaires and interviews for developing separate tracks for ELI 73, I hereby review relevant literature on academic writing instruction. After conducting a survey on the writing needs of nonnative English speakers, Leki and Carson (1999) made the following comments on undergraduate writing:

For undergraduates, writing within the academy is a unique genre, neither the same as the kind of free-flowing personal writing favored (often for quite appropriate reasons) in many writing classes nor the same as professional or even graduate writing within specific disciplinary communities... Undergraduates are not expected to engage in or contribute to the ongoing professional discourse. The "discourse community" of undergraduate writers, particularly in courses outside their majors, is peculiarly short-lived and is not reproduced elsewhere. Educational discourse community affording these students the opportunity to sample knowledge from different disciplines, most of them will never include these students as actual members or even as apprentices. (p.96)

Previous research suggests that graduate students need to know certain rhetorical knowledge and to apply cognitive space-saving strategies at the appropriate place and level of ideation during writing.

Therefore, instruction of L2 graduate-level writing should be more didactic than writing instruction of the undergraduate level. Biggs et al (1999) trialed a workshop addressing the writing needs of graduate students for whom English is a second language. They found students particularly appreciated didactic instruction within the context of formal requirements of academic writing.

Table 7. Different needs of undergraduate and graduate students

Undergraduate students	Graduate students
More micro-writing skills	More macro-writing skills
Multiple-paragraph essays	Long research papers
Fewer, easier writing tasks	More, intensive writing tasks
More display writing	More critical, analytical writing
Standard proficiency	Higher proficiency
Standard academic competence	Higher academic competence
Generic purpose, form, procedures, and audience	More specific purpose, form, procedures, and audience

[NOTE: Does Table 7 come from Biggs et al? If so, you need to cite it]

5) Adjust existing and establish new general goals for separate tracks within ELI 73

The required materials for ELI 73 are **(were)** *Changes* and *Process of Discovery*. The writing curriculum objectives for ELI 73 are:

Teaching writing as process

Students: *develop written fluency (extensive writing, freewriting, focused freewriting)
 *learn pre-writing strategies (e.g. brainstorming, diagramming, freewriting)
 *become familiar with different writing tasks associated with multiple drafts
 *build vocabulary

Develop writing assignments that are relevant to students

Students: *write about their own research questions/issues/topics they want to explore
 *learn to prioritize content over form in their writing
 *analyze written products/models
 *become aware of field-specific & genre-specific discourse conventions

Writing in the university

Students: *learn about the differences between personal and university writing
 *learn to create arguments, argue a point of view
 *learn to structure various types of university writing (e.g. book review, lab report, outline, research paper, article critique, essay exam, etc.)
 *learn to develop a research question or thesis statement
 *learn to evaluate, integrate, and draw from a variety of sources
 *learn to use sources to make/support an argument

- *learn how to avoid plagiarism (quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, citing)
- *learn/review library skills (library cards, finding sources, using CARL, etc.)
- *learn basic formatting skills (double spacing, margins, titles, etc.)
- *learn how to cite sources, use different bibliographic styles (e.g. MLA, APA)
- *learn to interpret professors' expectations for writing assignments

Develop revision/editing skills

- Students:
- *receive some grammar instruction (derived from and within the context of Ss essays)
 - *learn self- and peer-editing skills
 - *learn about peer response and the benefits of sharing work with peers
 - *become aware of differences between “proofreading” and “revising”

[NOTE: Where does this table come from? ELI Writing Goals & Objectives?]

[Also, are you going to recommend different, new, and tracked objectives and goals in your paper?]

6) Adjust existing and establish specific, testable objectives for separate tracks within ELI 73

Discussions and Implications

Wright (2001) conducted a study on how native English-speaking business professors evaluate university ESL students' English writing. She found that business professors, though aware of the form of the message, focus more on content, which implies that ESL students will benefit more if the writing instruction they receive in ESL writing classrooms focuses their attention on producing not only well-organized, reasonably grammatically correct essays, but also information-rich, factually correct essays. As Wright points out, authentic academic writing, as opposed to ordinary composition topics, will better accommodate the needs of ELI students and help prepare them for academic writing. Students, in her opinion, need to be more challenged at writing on topics more central to their academic and intellectual lives, rather than just being applauded for their ability to write on interesting but nonacademic topics. **(Question: Is the ELI 73 class not doing this? I think we are, along with other goals such as helping students develop fluency)**

Contrastive rhetoric may be an area the writing instructors in ELI writing should delve into. Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) conducted a case study of four international graduate students learning to write according to American academic norms. Their results suggest that international students need assistance in adjusting to the requirements of their new academic environments, since they all bring different writing experiences and cultures with them to U.S. classrooms. Additionally,

students from the same country may share common problem areas. ELI writing teachers can assist students by explicitly specifying various rhetorical patterns and academic writing conventions. Common academic discourse, basic organizational patterns and phrases for introducing, concluding, summarizing, comparing, and so forth can be directly addressed in classroom instruction and practice. These are not meant to be rigid and confining, but are intended to facilitate clear communication and to assist students in producing successful compositions that meet the expectations of the English-speaking academic community.

[NOTE: The following goals for ELI 73, taken from your grid above, appear to address this:

- *learn about the differences between personal and university writing**
- *learn to create arguments, argue a point of view**
- *learn to structure various types of university writing (e.g. book review, lab report, outline, research paper, article critique, essay exam, etc.)]**

Processing writing leads to a product. Therefore, the essentials that guide a piece of writing to its acceptance in the academic community should also be stressed. According to the survey, two of the common writing tasks ELI 73 students do are short-answer and essay exams. In such situations, students are required to produce writing which has clear, convincing content, clear organization, and standard grammar within a limited amount of time. The speed or fluency students write with has important consequences on the grades they receive. More class time could be allotted to help students develop fluency. **[I wonder if a “hedge” would help here. For example, “Thus, one important area, which ELI 73 already addresses, is the development of fluency. There may be groups of students who need particular help in developing fluency, so flexibility about the extent to which this aspect of writing is covered is important.” As stated above, it would be easy for an ELI teacher or administrator to ask you to provide data about how much class time is currently devoted to fluency, and how much more time should be devoted, and whether this is consistent for all students in ELI 73 or dependent on their strengths and weaknesses?]** Students in ELI 73 face the immediate challenge of producing a research paper for their content course requirement. They do not need much instruction on creative writing as explicit guidelines for organizing their ideas in accordance with the common conventions of academia.

Another issue with regard to process writing emerges from an interview with a student. In the writing class, students write several drafts and make revisions for the class, but once outside the

classroom, students, especially those whose English writing is not so good, do not have the time or motivation to write subsequent drafts. Thus, writing instruction should make it a priority to help students acquire fluency in writing so that they can apply the revising, proofreading, and editing skills they have learned in ELI 73. **[Perhaps students should also be more aware of time-management skills, and the importance of following a process approach and getting feedback on their writing – focusing on their fluency will not necessarily change the motivation to write drafts and get feedback.]**

As Horwitz (1987) notes, what learners perceive they are learning and what they need to learn strongly influences their receptiveness to learning. Students in EAP writing classes should not be passive recipients of writing instruction, but valuable sources of teaching material and teaching activities. If students are left out in the process of curriculum design and development, such curriculum is very likely to fail. A mismatch between students' and the teachers' agendas could vitiate students' motivation to learn and improve. **[How does this connect to ELI 73?]**

Based on my research and studies cited in this paper, I believe ELI would benefit from surveying faculty on students' writing needs and investigating students' perceived needs in writing. ELI 73 instructors should continue to justify the philosophy behind the writing course to students. Once the students realize the usefulness of the writing skills they are to acquire in class, they will participate in class with much more enthusiasm and practice the skills in their authentic academic writing. Inquiries are to be made before class about students' academic histories and needs, as well as their anticipated writing tasks. In so doing, ELI can facilitate students' acquisition of writing ability by evaluating how students' experiences in ELI writing courses relate to and contribute to their writing requirements in their fields. **Excellent points in this paragraph – I think we are doing these things, though.**

NOTE: None of this discussion really looks at key differences between grads and undergrads, but talks about writing in general. I wonder if you need more discussion about how the two groups could be tracked (either in separate sections or, which is probably more within the constraints we face, separate tracks of instruction and assignments for the grads and undergrads that are enrolled in the same section of ELI 73]

Limitations

Conclusion

References

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AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR ELI 73

Investigator: Fang-I Li, M.A. student
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. James Dean Brown
Department of Second Language Studies

The purpose of this research is to analyze the learning needs that distinguish the separate and/or overlapping goals of undergraduate students and graduate students in the ELI 73 course. If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. The total process will take about fifteen minutes. Your anonymity will be preserved 100%. Only the investigator will have access to data, and the data will be used only for research purposes. All answers to the questionnaire will be kept completely confidential and will not affect your grade in the ELI 73 writing course in any way. You may ask questions about the research at any time. You may also withdraw from the study at any time.

Participant

I certify that I have read and understand the above, that I have been given satisfactory answers to any questions about the research, and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the research at any time, without any prejudice.

I agree to be part of this study with the understanding that such permission does not take away any of my rights, nor does it release the investigator or the institution from liability or negligence.

If I cannot obtain satisfactory answers to my questions, or have comments or complaints about my participation in this study, I may contact: Committee on Human Studies (CHS), University of Hawaii, 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822. Phone: (808) 956-5007

(print your name)

(date)

(signature)

QUESTIONNAIRE ON ACADEMIC WRITING

To help the ELI keep up with changes in students' academic writing needs, I am conducting a survey on the type of writing skills needed by University of Hawaii international students whose native language is not English. Your answers on this questionnaire will greatly help me and the ELI.

Note: These questions deal only with the English you must use in writing in your studies at UH-Manoa. They do not include problems you may have outside of the university (for example, writing a resume or personal communication).

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO YOUR ELI INSTRUCTOR.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE!!

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Current Student Status: () Undergraduate () Graduate

Major: _____

Native Language: _____ Age: _____ Sex: F / M

Time in U.S.: _____ years and _____ months

Time at University of Hawaii at Manoa: _____ semesters

Time at other American colleges/universities: _____ semesters

Check the types of writing you do in your regular UH-Manoa classes:

_____ an argumentative paper	_____ a research paper	_____ a reaction paper
_____ a lab report	_____ short answers in exams	_____ essay exams
_____ a critique	_____ a summary-analysis	_____ a literature review
_____ a book report	Others: _____	

Choose the three areas you feel a need to improve in your writing (from the most urgent to urgent)

_____ 1) fluency 2) accuracy 3) reasoning and evidence 4) sentence structure
 5) paragraph structure 6) word choice 7) mechanics and form

List three aspects of academic writing you are most concerned about:

Do you think ELI 73 should be divided to separate sections for undergraduate and graduate students?

() Yes () No If yes, why? _____

If ELI 73 had separate sections for undergraduate and graduate students, how willing would you be to adjust your schedule to take it?

Very willing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very unwilling

If you are willing to participate in a confidential interview, please provide the following information:

Name: _____ e-mail address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Time convenient for the interview: _____

Your assistance is highly appreciated.

Please read the following directions:

There are two questions for each of the skills listed below. The first question asks if you need to use a

particular skill in your regular UH-Manoa classes. Your choices are () Yes () No () Not sure. The second question asks if you think a particular skill needs to be practiced in an English academic writing course. Your choices are () Yes () No () Not sure. Please check () Not sure if you don't know what the skill is or if you don't know whether there is a need to practice it.

	Do you need to use this skill in any of your regular UH-Manoa classes?			Do you think this skill needs to be taught in ELI 73 writing course?		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
WRITING SKILLS						
<u>Prewriting</u>						
1. Understand the assignment	()	()	()	()	()	()
2. Identify the audience	()	()	()	()	()	()
3. Decide on the purpose of the essay	()	()	()	()	()	()
4. Choose a subject that you are interested in	()	()	()	()	()	()
5. Narrow the subject to a topic (title)	()	()	()	()	()	()
6. Collect ideas about the topic	()	()	()	()	()	()
7. Use idea generating strategies such as listing, brainstorming, clustering, flow chart, etc.	()	()	()	()	()	()
8. List details that will interest the audience	()	()	()	()	()	()
9. Use library skills	()	()	()	()	()	()
<u>Drafting:</u>						
10. Plan the ideas and the structure of the paper	()	()	()	()	()	()
11. Write an introduction	()	()	()	()	()	()
12. Write a thesis statement of opinion/intent	()	()	()	()	()	()
13. Write body paragraph topic sentences and headings	()	()	()	()	()	()
14. Write supporting sentences	()	()	()	()	()	()
15. Write concluding sentences	()	()	()	()	()	()
16. Move smoothly from one paragraph to another	()	()	()	()	()	()

Do you need to use this skill in any of your regular UH-Manoa classes? Do you think this skill needs to be taught in ELI 73 writing course?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
17. Write a conclusion (summary, solution, prediction, recommendation)	()	()	()	()	()	()
18. Use coherence devices like transitional words and phrases or synonyms for controlling ideas	()	()	()	()	()	()
19. Reference or footnote others' idea	()	()	()	()	()	()
<u>Development: support ideas</u>						

- | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 20. Use specific details to explain general ideas | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 21. Use supporting techniques: facts, examples, physical description or personal experience | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 22. Use methods of development such as process, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, etc. | () | () | () | () | () | () |

Revision: look again, change and strengthen

- | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 23. Reconsider the needs of the audience | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 24. Reconsider the purpose(s) of the paper | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 25. Use brief, precise, accurate vocabulary | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 26. Detect logical fallacies | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 27. Peer revision | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 28. Editing/proofread for errors | () | () | () | () | () | () |

Grammar and Mechanics

- | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 29. Use language with precision | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 30. Avoid common errors of grammar and sentence structure | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 31. Strengthen writing through editing | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 32. Use correct citation form | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 33. Use correct punctuation | () | () | () | () | () | () |
| 34. Get help with final proofreading | () | () | () | () | () | () |