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# *Cultures of Writing: An Ethnographic Comparison of L1 and L2 University Writing/Language Programs*

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Nonnative-speaking (NNS) undergraduates at U.S. universities frequently proceed from ESL or English for academic purposes writing classes directly into freshman composition. Although this sequence of events may be an effective means of getting students into the academic writing mainstream, there have been some suggestions to the contrary. Taking an ethnographic approach, this study describes the contrasting cultural norms of academic writing and academic writing instruction at a large U.S. university. It then compares these differing viewpoints in order to identify difficulties that NNSs might experience in proceeding from the former program to the latter.

As budgetary pressure increases on U.S. universities to mainstream L2 English writers as quickly as possible (Santos, 1992), a burgeoning literature suggests that L1 composition practices may be problematic for such writers. Thus, Scollon (1991) argues that the emphasis in certain L1 composition pedagogies on the development of a mature and self-expressive voice confounds Asian students because the individualism implicit in this concept does violence to these students' views of self. Similarly, Inghilleri (1989) finds the notion of discovering form in the process of writing (as advocated, e.g., by Murray, 1978) to be part of a hidden pedagogy that disadvantages L2 English writers vis-à-vis their native-writer peers. Work by Land and Whitley (1989), Santos (1992), and Silva (1993a, 1993b) likewise indicates that the academic success of L2 writers of English may be negatively affected by the uncritical application of L1 writing pedagogies to that population.

The present study seeks to identify some of the crucial differences between the practices of both thinking about and teaching writing in L1 versus L2 writing/language programs in U.S. universities. These

differences are viewed largely from a cultural perspective, that is, as part and parcel of the divergent social practices, or Discourses (Gee, 1990), of the L1 composition- versus ESL-teaching communities. Although these two differing world views may be masked by allegiance to superficially similar paradigms of writing and writing instruction, they are in fact the products of two distinct cultures—with their own oft-contrasting norms of what academic writing is, what constitutes good academic writing, and how the latter can best be communicated in the classroom.

## MOTIVATION AND METHODS

The starting point for this research project was a perceived problem. At the large U.S. university where this research was carried out, undergraduate nonnative speaker (NNS) writers were often required to proceed from writing classes in the university's ESL institute (hereafter English Language Program, or ELP) directly into a 2-semester composition sequence offered by the University Composition Program (UCP). As a teacher of ELP writing classes, the first author was alarmed to hear his UCP peers generally lamenting the poor writing abilities of NNS students who had made this transition. What was more, some of the very characteristics that the first author and his ELP colleagues stressed in their teaching of academic writing (e.g., the use of an overall deductive pattern of text organization) were singled out by UCP teachers as targets for criticism. Further discussion with both UCP and ELP instructors suggested that serious disjunctions existed in the ways the two programs conceptualized and taught writing. With the full cooperation of teachers and administrators in both programs, we undertook a comparative study to investigate these differences.

Ethnographic research methods (e.g., Spradley, 1979, 1980; Zaharlick & Green, 1991) were adopted in this study as the most appropriate means of examining educational institutions from a cultural perspective. Although, to our knowledge, no other ethnographically oriented research on university writing/language programs has yet been undertaken, an active tradition of applying such methods to the study of small-scale Western professional organizations (e.g., Agar, 1977; Geertz, 1983; Knorr-Cetina, 1983; Latour & Woolgar, 1986) provides ample precedent for our work.

The research questions guiding our investigation were broad ones. First and foremost, we wanted to know what attitudes and behaviors regarding academic writing and its teaching pervaded the organizations designed to teach it. That is, we were interested in the cultural

“thought-styles” (Fleck, 1979) or “conventions for construing reality” (Bizzell, 1982) existing in each program, in resulting program-level norms, and in the socialization practices (Watson-Gegeo, 1988) that led to the maintenance of these norms and conventions. Second and less centrally, we wanted to know how these more general concepts were manifested in teacher behavior, both in the classroom and beyond. The relative emphasis placed on understanding program-level world views rather than specific teacher practices followed from our reading of the educational ethnographic literature. This body of work overwhelmingly emphasizes the classroom and the interactions that take place within it, to the exclusion of higher-level loci of educational policy and control.

The research took place over a 10-month period corresponding approximately to the 1993–1994 school year. Each of the two researchers had extensive experience in one of the two programs studied—the first author as a full-time ELP teacher for 3 years and a faculty supervisor and teacher for 1, and the second author as a full-time UCP teacher for 3 years and an instructional coordinator/teacher for an additional 2. We devised a roughly symmetrical research plan that called for the researcher not connected with a particular program to conduct a series of observations and ethnographic interviews within that program, relying on the other researcher as a guide and native consultant/informant. As we gathered the data, we worked closely together to interpret them, and the outcome of this procedure served to guide further data collection and interpretation.

Six types of data were collected in the course of this study. First, we observed and participated in four teacher-orientation sessions (two per program). These were 1–3 hour sessions that were part of pre-semester orientation programs for new instructors in both the UCP and ELP. Second, we conducted seven ethnographic interviews (four for the ELP, three for the UCP) with administrators in both programs; these interviews lasted 1–2 1/2 hours each. Third, we conducted ethnographic interviews with six experienced writing teachers—three per program. These interviews lasted from 1 to approximately 2 1/2 hours each and focused partly on teacher-written comments on selected student essay drafts. Fourth, we observed one writing class for international students in each of the two programs, totaling 27 hours of observation in the UCP class and 20 hours in the ELP class. Each class was taught by one of the six experienced teachers we interviewed. Fifth, we collected various types of written documents from each program. These included teacher and student orientation handbooks, writing assignments, curricular materials, sample lesson plans, student essay drafts with teacher-written comments, program memos, course

and program descriptions, and self-studies and external evaluations. Finally, we recorded miscellaneous notes based on random ethnographic observations made by each researcher in her/his own program.

## THE CULTURE OF THE UCP

The UCP is a well-established and well-run composition program that is nationally recognized by its peers. As a political and economic entity it is freestanding within the Humanities division of the university's School of Letters, Arts and Sciences, having broken away from the English department in 1978. The program is staffed by a director, three academic directors, support staff, and approximately 90 instructors (93 for the 1993–1994 school year) at the assistant lecturer rank who are graduate students in English, linguistics, professional writing, religion, philosophy, and several other departments.<sup>1</sup> A small number of these instructors (12 in 1993–1994) also act as *instructional coordinators* who are directly responsible for supervising groups of three or four 1st-year instructors. Each UCP instructor is responsible for teaching one course (of no more than 22 students) per semester, as well as for putting in approximately 5 hours a week tutoring in the writing center. The overall enrollment of the UCP itself is more than 2,200 students per semester, with NNSs accounting for less than 20% of this number.

Partly because they are admitted to the university on the basis of scholastic promise, and partly for program-specific reasons such as the large number of sections needing to be taught each semester, the majority of UCP instructors do not have prior teaching experience. The UCP therefore mounts an intensive orientation/training program for new instructors at the beginning of each school year, as well as providing ongoing teacher development over the course of the year. These orientation and development sessions represent critical sites of socialization into the philosophy, curricular requirements, pedagogical techniques, and grading practices of the program.

The UCP offers five different courses for undergraduates—a 1-semester “basic writing” class, a two-course composition sequence for native English-speaking students (hereafter, 301–302), and a two-

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<sup>1</sup>Each academic director in the UCP manages a particular element of the program—curriculum, evaluation, or the writing center. In terms of experience, expertise, and job status, the UCP director positions are roughly equivalent to those occupying the supervisor position in the ELP (see section entitled The Culture of the ELP). However, academic directors in the UCP share instructor supervision responsibilities with the program's instructional coordinators.

course sequence, paralleling the native speaker (NS) courses, for NNS international students (311–312).<sup>2</sup> Undergraduates are required to complete the appropriate two-course sequence as a general requirement for graduation from the university.

Although native and nonnative English speakers are placed into separate classes in the UCP, the same course objectives, pedagogical approaches, curricula, and grading rubrics are used across these two groups. (One exception to this generalization exists in our data: UCP instructors reported being more lenient with NNSs' grammatical errors than with NSs' when grading.) Although instructors of NNS sections are required to have had previous experience teaching NS sections in the program, once assigned a NNS section they tend to receive the same assignment in future semesters. Instructors with prior ESL experience in particular are favored for assignments to NNS sections.

Course objectives for UCP classes are explicitly codified and constantly referred to by instructor and administrator alike. They are introduced in speech and writing, reviewed, and further explicated both during the new-instructor orientation and, for the benefit of students, at the beginning of all courses. In addition, administrators and coordinators make a concerted effort to ensure that these principles actually drive pedagogy and assessment in weekly meetings among themselves and with instructors. These objectives therefore act as central principles around which much of the activity of the UCP culture is organized. Course objectives for the two-course sequences are provided in Figure 1.

These objectives are realized in the classroom in various ways. In relation to Composition 301/311's first objective ("to develop a sound writing process . . .") observations and interviews revealed that instructors introduce various components of "the writing process"—such as invention and revision strategies—in the first half of the semester, and virtually all student writing goes through at least two drafts, with either instructors or peer evaluators offering comments on each draft. The other course objectives, however, lend themselves less readily to simple realization as, unlike process writing, they do not come with a set of pedagogical practices built in.

The other course objectives, however, are by no means neglected for this reason; thus, the second objective listed for 301/311, "critical

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<sup>2</sup>Our classroom observations in the UCP, as well as some of the other data collected, focused on first-semester (i.e., 311) classes. This focus is justified by the fact that these classes represented the primary site of student socialization into the practices of the UCP—practices that the student was assumed to have internalized and that could therefore be built on in the second-semester (312) class. This assumption is made explicit, for example, in Figure 1, Item II.

**FIGURE 1**

**Instructional Objectives for 301–302 and 311–312 Course Sequences**

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- I. **Composition 301 and 311** have three major objectives, each of which involves a number of other important skills and abilities:
1. To develop a sound writing process appropriate to academic writing. This means learning how
    - a. to develop and evaluate concepts to use in writing;
    - b. to organize and produce an initial draft efficiently; and
    - c. improve your first draft through revision and editing.
  2. To develop good critical thinking skills. This involves learning how
    - a. to analyze issues from a variety of perspectives;
    - b. to develop logical critiques and well-supported arguments; and
    - c. to use writing to aid your thinking and to increase your understanding of complex concepts.
  3. To gain familiarity with the conventions of academic discourse. This includes learning how
    - a. to address the conceptual expectations of academic audiences;
    - b. to meet basic formal and stylistic conventions of academic writing; and
    - c. to employ appropriate criteria to evaluate your own writing and that of your peers.
- II. **Composition 302 and 312** continue to foster those skills that were central to Composition 301 and 311: the development of a sound writing process, good critical thinking abilities, and an understanding of the conventions of academic discourse. In Composition 302 and 312, however, these skills form the foundation of a set of more specialized objectives:
1. To acquire competence in conducting intertextual argumentation and analysis. This includes learning how
    - a. to use ideas derived from outside readings appropriately within your own writing, so that these concepts support without supplanting your own ideas;
    - b. to orient your text to the theoretical perspectives of the discipline or field within which you are writing;
    - c. to anticipate and respond to potential counterarguments; and
    - d. to quote and document sources accurately and carefully.
  2. To cultivate strong academic reading skills. This means learning how
    - a. to read complex texts closely, to derive a full and detailed understanding of the information therein;
    - b. to read actively, to serve your own purposes and needs as a reader and writer; and
    - c. to read critically, weighing evidence, posing questions, and evaluating texts against a relevant social and conceptual background.
  3. To enhance your ability to produce more extended forms of academic writing. This includes learning how
    - a. to engage in a deeper and more complex analysis of issues and ideas;
    - b. to organize and maintain control over longer pieces of writing; and
    - c. to employ a more mature style, one that in tone and diction provides implicit reinforcement of your explicit claims.
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*Note.* From *Student Guide to the University Composition Program 1993–94*.

thinking,” appears to receive considerable attention at all levels of the program. Observation of class sessions, for example, revealed that teachers consistently prodded students to “deepen” their thinking on a topic (whether expressed in speaking or in writing)—to “go beyond” surface-level observations and “consider both sides of the issue.”

Teacher feedback on student essays also foregrounded these points, as seen in the following comments recorded on a written-response form.<sup>3</sup>

1. COGENCY: You should probably consider the fact that Benetton's ads are not very effective in the U.S. Further, you need to be more convincing as to how Benetton appeals to the "upper class."

SUPPORT: Provide further insight into how the company's ads are effective! Don't just describe what the ads do.

GENERAL COMMENTS AND GRADE: Good start. You need to be sure you're aware of the other side. Anticipate questions and argue for why you are right. It seems that you end up simply describing the company's goals. [Grade:] C. [WC1]<sup>4</sup>

In interviews, UCP administrators and veteran instructors likewise underscored the importance of developing critical thinking skills. In describing the program's general role in the university, for example, one administrator elaborated on the importance of critical thinking as expressed in Point 1.2.a in Figure 1:

2. Well, I think this is one of the reasons that we focus on argumentative and analytical writing, but I think that is it's a logic of good reasons—[you] openly declare your position in a rational form and you support it. You consider your opinion in the context of other opinions. It isn't adversarial, however—it is one that tries to have some consideration of your own feelings, the fact that your position may be wrong, that the other position has reasons that need to be given some weight, so on. I think these kinds of argumentative presuppositions are part of just the general belief in intellectual honesty, and [you] admit you've made an error, you don't try to conceal it, you point it out and [ ] you don't accept ideas just because they sound good at the start. [IA2]<sup>5</sup>

An additional means by which the UCP encourages complexity of thought—and an element of the UCP curriculum that is considered

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<sup>3</sup>This form consisted of a set of standard terms—written in capital letters and underlined as in Example 1—used to respond to and evaluate essays across the UCP. The other standard terms featured on this form were Control, Addressing the Issue, Style, and Grammar and Mechanics, although the teacher had no comments on these points.

<sup>4</sup>All data cited in this study are coded according to the following system, corresponding to the data types described in the Motivations and Methods section: first letter—C = classroom observation; I = ethnographic interview; O = orientation session; W = written document; N = ethnographic notes; second letter—observation/interview/session/document/note identification letter; numbers—transcript or publication page numbers.

<sup>5</sup>In quotations of spoken interview data in this paper, the following transcription conventions are used: . . . = intervening text has been removed; [ ] = unintelligible (as recorded) speech; *italics* = emphasis marking via raised voice pitch, quality, and/or volume. To make the interview data read more easily, double dashes, commas, and periods have been added and speech dysfluencies removed; for the same reason, grammatical elements that appear to have undergone ellipsis have occasionally been restored. These elements are placed in filled brackets.

central to the teaching of writing—is in the preparation of writing prompts, or *assignments* as they are referred to within the program. These are typically full-page descriptions composed of not only a specific writing task (closely resembling a standard writing prompt) but also a general statement of the purpose of the assignment, an introduction to the topic, a list of readings, and a schedule for the assignment's completion. One full day of the new-instructor orientation is devoted to the specifics of assignment writing, and an important part of the coordinators' ongoing duties is to check the assignments that new instructors prepare during their 1st year. Appendix A contains a typical "good" assignment—that is, one in which topic and task are formulated so that their complexity and open-endedness are emphasized, and in which demands are made (in the final paragraph) for a complex and original written response.<sup>6</sup>

The third and final objective of the 301/311 course, "to gain familiarity with the conventions of academic discourse," is in some ways perhaps the most difficult to realize. UCP teachers and administrators generally recognize that academic discourse is not a unitary phenomenon and that the choice of any particular pedagogical model may be open to criticism for that reason. The model that the program has chosen to adopt is the *analytical argumentative essay*, as succinctly defined by one UCP administrator (see also Example 2 above):

3. In terms of the current model that we use, clearly we are in both of our courses or in all of our courses attempting to get the student to write strong analytical argumentative writing with a good strong thesis that propels the reader through the rest of the paper, good strong use of evidence—all those types of things that you would think of. [IB3]

Other terms that are habitually used to describe the UCP's model of academic writing are *issues-oriented*, *thesis-driven*, and *intertextual*. These terms appear to function as code words or technical vocabulary for program instructors and administrators. Notably, however, the analytical argumentative essay is frequently defined by these same groups oppositionally (i.e., in terms of what it is not). This phenomenon reflects a larger ongoing debate in the field of rhetoric/composition as to the "best" approach to teaching writing (see Johns, 1990; Santos, 1992). Thus program administrators very frequently draw a contrast between their own version of academic discourse and the writing resulting from *vitalist* theories and practices of composition. The latter approach, as described by one UCP administrator,

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<sup>6</sup>This assignment was both part of a standard set of curricular materials that all new instructors use during the first 5 weeks of the semester and the first regular writing assignment given to students by the veteran UCP instructor whose class we observed.

4. is just the notion that you do lots of free writing, and you do lots of confessional and self-expressive writing, and that's the way to get people to write better . . . . But I don't think that kind of writing—for one thing it's very egotistical in a sense—and I think that's one of the associations they make in the English department, kind of a romantic legacy there—that what counts is *my* idea and *my* truth, and it's not a very humanitarian dialogical ethos [ ]. That's inconsistent with what I would see as what universities [should do]—if you consider that rationality is intersubjective rather than subjective. [IA8]

UCP administrators tend to class early proponents of process writing such as Peter Elbow, James Britton, and Ken Macrorie in this vitalist camp, which they usually describe as fostering the writing of “personal narrative.” At the same time, program administrators acknowledge the contributions of the vitalist group to their own approach to academic writing, especially in the emphasis on writing as a process and the notion of the *workshop approach* to teaching writing (i.e., wherein instructors act as facilitators and consultants rather than authoritative transmitters of knowledge); both of these influences are considered to be of major pedagogical importance to the UCP.

An additional kind of contrast used to define the UCP's approach to academic writing oppositionally concerns rhetorical form. In this regard the *five-paragraph essay* is considered anathema to the full and natural development of ideas and, as a result, is highly proscribed by UCP personnel. One program administrator defines the five-paragraph essay form as follows:

5. You have an intro, conclusion, body paragraphs, the thesis that divides up some sort of topic in three sections, each of which is handled by the appropriate first, second, and final paragraph. It's a very mechanical form . . . it limits [but] I think it's possibly useful in a certain set of [ ] students with instructors that are teaching 30, 35 students in our junior high school. But it seems to me almost crippling [to] the ability to think—I mean the world does not neatly parse itself into three sections on every topic. [IA9]

A term that is almost exclusively applied in the UCP to this five-paragraph essay format is *formulaic*. As evidenced in the UCP's general assessment rubric (see Figure 2 below for excerpts), overly formulaic organization is an important signifier of D work. Similarly, in a set exercise (more fully described below) that is used to socialize both new instructors and students into the program's standards of assessment, a model essay is strongly criticized and receives a grade of C largely on account of its basic formulaicity. Discussing this essay as part of the larger exercise, conducted during new-instructor orientation, one

coordinator advised her charges, “The minute you see a five-paragraph essay, it’s in the C range” (OA2).<sup>7</sup>

In opposition to the five-paragraph format, the approach to rhetorical form advocated by the UCP is based on the idea that

6. If, as Wayne Booth has argued, “form is satisfied expectation,” then the structure of a work is to be evaluated in terms of its effectiveness in raising and satisfying expectations within the reader. This provides a useful way to nudge students beyond formulaic patterns of arrangement and to tempt them into experimenting with forms that will elicit more interesting expectations that in turn may be satisfied in a more compelling fashion. [WG1.6]

This quotation from the *1993 Orientation Notebook*—the basic guide to UCP practices and procedures that new instructors receive during their initial training—extends the rhetorical notion that form should serve the writer’s purpose instead of the other way around. In particular, it highlights the reader-writer transaction, in which “traditional product-based structural features such as thesis statements, topic sentences, and transitions may be presented as . . . cueing devices” [WG1.6]. Thus, students should be encouraged to employ such devices in order to signal the audience that, inter alia, a central claim is being made or a new perspective considered.

At the same time, UCP personnel seem to prefer a certain implicitness or subtlety to the writings their students produce, on the basis that the most convincing form of persuasion/argumentation is not always the most direct one. For example, in addition to advocating the explicit cueing devices mentioned above, the *Orientation Notebook* endorses connotative stylistic elements such as imagery, metaphor, and personification as devices that can effectively provide implicit cues. The fact that subtlety of approach, implicitness, and even a certain emphasis on style are encouraged in the program is made clear in the socialization procedure mentioned previously, wherein both new instructors and students (at different times) are asked to grade a set of model essays with reference to the UCP’s assessment rubric. Although participants are encouraged to discuss their reasons for giving the grades they decide on, the UCP staff has in fact already assigned a grade to each essay, and the activity leader concludes discussion on each paper by announcing and giving the rationale behind this grade. The essay evaluated most highly by the program in this exercise—the only A paper—is one that depends on moderately inductive organiza-

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<sup>7</sup>It is not always clear, however, that an absolute requirement for the five-paragraph essay form is that it consist of five paragraphs. The model essay referred to here, for example, actually had six paragraphs, although it was clearly organized into three separate paragraph points.

tion and that is written in a comparatively sophisticated style, starting off with an extended metaphor. When we observed this essay being discussed in a class as part of the larger exercise, the instructor called special attention to the initial use of metaphor and then commented that, although the beginning was “interesting,” it could perhaps be seen as not as “clear or straightforward” as that of a model essay considered earlier. She then added, however, “The better essays are often the ones I have to read again—the ones that make me stop and think. The ones that make me say ‘Wow!’ ” (CA14). Later, in wrapping up the exercise, this instructor once again called attention to the effectiveness of the A essay’s “implicit approach,”<sup>8</sup> and comments she made in other class sessions similarly reinforced the value of implicitness and subtlety.

To conclude this brief portrait of the UCP culture, excerpts from the programwide grading rubric are given in Figure 2 by way of summarization. The two sets of descriptors presented there instantiate many of the characteristics of the UCP described above (for example, its emphasis on critical thinking/complexity and style, and its proscription of “formulaic organization”), and the reader is invited to examine these descriptors as cultural artifacts in their own right. It need only be added that the rubric is taken quite seriously throughout the UCP as a means by which grading can be done as validly and reliably as possible.<sup>9</sup>

## THE CULTURE OF THE ELP

Housed in the university’s School of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the ELP, like the UCP, is a widely recognized program that is free of departmental affiliation. Founded in 1959, the ELP is responsible for testing the English-language skills of incoming NNS students and for providing instruction to those students whose performance does not meet certain minimum standards.<sup>10</sup> This program is run by a director, an assistant director responsible for nonacademic affairs, five faculty

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<sup>8</sup>In the case cited earlier of a separate iteration of this same exercise, the coordinator in charge made comments on this essay that closely echoed the ones described here. That is, she praised the essay for being, among other things, “very subtle.”

<sup>9</sup>Notable in passing in the A rubric are (a) the abundance of metaphors of control and power and (b) the stylized word-play (“thoughtful and thought-provoking,” “full (and fully convincing) support”). Full rubrics are available from the authors.

<sup>10</sup>New international students at the university are administered an in-house English proficiency test that includes a 10-minute oral interview, a 30-minute essay, and three TOEFL-like grammar/vocabulary components. Students are placed according to their performance on this exam and, if they have tested into the program, are reevaluated during the 1st week of classes.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Full Assessment Rubrics for D and A Writing**

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**D (NO PASS) WRITING will offer a limited argument/analysis in response to the assignment, marked by several of the following weaknesses . . .**

**An implausible, unclear, incomplete, or inconsistent argument or analysis.** The paper lacks the cogency and purpose necessary for competent college-level writing; the paper fails to exhibit careful thinking.

**Inadequate, unconvincing, irrelevant, or derivative support.** The paper accumulates (often paragraph by paragraph) derivative and/or anecdotal examples without integrating them into a focused argument/analysis. The author relies on inappropriate—or weak—examples or reasoning to support the overall discussion. If sources are used, the author may piece together writing from secondary sources without using it in the service of his or her own argument or point of view. Alternatively, the author may not include enough material or detail to support the purpose of the paper.

**Flaws in organization, paragraph development, or logical transition.** The paper lacks structural fluency: organizational flaws cause a lack of overall coherence, undermining the paper's purpose. The reader is too often puzzled by the course the paper takes, or the paper relies too exclusively on formulaic organization, thereby becoming stilted and predictable.

**Does not address the issue(s) set forth in the assignment seriously or thoughtfully.** The paper treats the issue(s) simplistically; the argument/analysis generally overlooks the complexity of the issue(s) raised. The author doesn't care enough about the subject or the reader's expectations and may fail to respond to all aspects of the writing task.

**An inappropriate style or tone.** The style and tone detract from the purpose and are inappropriate in terms of the academic discourse community.

**Flaws in syntax, grammar, usage, or spelling.** Mechanical errors detract from the paper's purpose or interfere with the reader's comprehension. Significant problems in wording or syntax make the writing unclear or confusing.

**A WRITING will . . .**

**Present a cogent and insightful argument/analysis.** The author responds to the assigned topic in a consistently forceful manner that is not only thoughtful but thought-provoking.

**Provide compelling support for the overall argument/analysis.** The argument or analysis receives full (and fully convincing) support; the author includes enough judiciously chosen materials or details to emphatically support what he or she is trying to do. When the author employs sources, he or she is critical and confident concerning their use, and employs them to further his or her own authority and point of view.

**Develop its argument or analysis with organizational clarity and logical force.** The author controls the writer-reader transaction both explicitly and implicitly.

**Demonstrate sophisticated exploration of the issue(s) set forth in the assignment.** The author is able to negotiate the complexities of the issue(s) raised in a provocative, controlled manner. The author fully responds to the writing task, demonstrating a mature knowledge about the subject and a judicious sense of its impact on the reader.

**Employ a style that reinforces the paper's effectiveness and advances its purpose within the context of the academic discourse community.**

**Display maturity in sentence, variety, grammar, spelling, and usage.** Surface errors are virtually nonexistent; the reader is left free to enjoy the author's style and tone and the intellectual force of the writing.

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supervisors, support staff, and (in 1993–1994) 22 instructors. As with the UCP, ELP instructors are graduate students hired at the assistant lecturer rank—most are enrolled in master's or PhD programs in the university's School of Education or linguistics department. Virtually all instructors have had some ESL teaching experience before joining the ELP, where the normal teaching load is two courses per semester.

Like UCP administrators, but unlike that program's instructional coordinators, ELP supervisors are not normally graduate students. Rather, they are university faculty who have been chosen for their ESL experience and knowledge in curriculum development; teacher training; and writing, reading, or spoken language instruction. Each supervisor is in charge of one or more course levels (see below) and is responsible for designing the curriculum used, as well as for supervising all instructors who teach, at those levels. Supervisors are also typically responsible for teaching one or more class sections at the levels they supervise. Like the UCP, the ELP conducts an intensive 2-week training period before the beginning of the school year, during which supervisors socialize new instructors into various aspects of ELP culture. Thus the overall instructional philosophy of the program; approaches to teaching reading, writing, and speaking; and classroom management all receive extensive coverage during this period.

In terms of its overall function in the university, the ELP sees itself, according to its director, as offering communicatively based language instruction in order

7. to raise students whose level of English—international students of course, second language speakers of English—whose English is not adequate for full-time university work to the level where they can do such work. [IG1]

Fulfilling this goal, according to one supervisor, includes not only fostering the “develop[ment of] fundamental skills, but a range of study skills that will be useful to them [i.e., the students] in their various classes” (IF1). The study skills mentioned here include note-taking, summarizing, using the library efficiently, and active reading strategies such as predicting and guessing. Regarding the “fundamental skills,” two types of courses are offered in the ELP: those that treat the four traditional skill areas together and those that focus on single skills, such as academic writing. True to its communicatively based self-image, however, in its courses the ELP provides extensive practice in actually using these language skills in naturalistic contexts, which in the case of four-skills courses leads to an “integrated skills” approach. That is, as is assumed to be the case in the academic classroom, “[the skills are] all mixed in together and there is a sort of natural progression from reading to speaking to writing about a particular topic” (IF2). Going

hand in hand with this approach is the use of content-based syllabi; that is, the language skills are put to use on a series of topics and associated materials that “can be dealt with in an academic way” (IG2). Other pedagogical practices reflecting the influence of communicative language teaching in the ELP include (a) an emphasis on group work and learner-centered instruction, (b) the use of authentic (i.e., unadapted) texts, and (c) the deemphasis of grammatical instruction and correction.

Unlike the UCP, the ELP offers a number of courses at four different proficiency levels. Further, both undergraduate and graduate students are taught in the program, although (in terms of numbers at least—see Figure 3) the two groups are generally segregated. Figure 3 presents a schematic of the ELP program, briefly describing the sequence of course work by undergraduate/graduate status and major area, including details of proficiency level, skills focus, and total number of students for each course. Examination of the diagram will reinforce an important difference between the UCP and the ELP that bears restating here—that writing, as just one of several skills regarded necessary for the academic success of NNS students, receives a good deal less emphasis overall in the latter program.

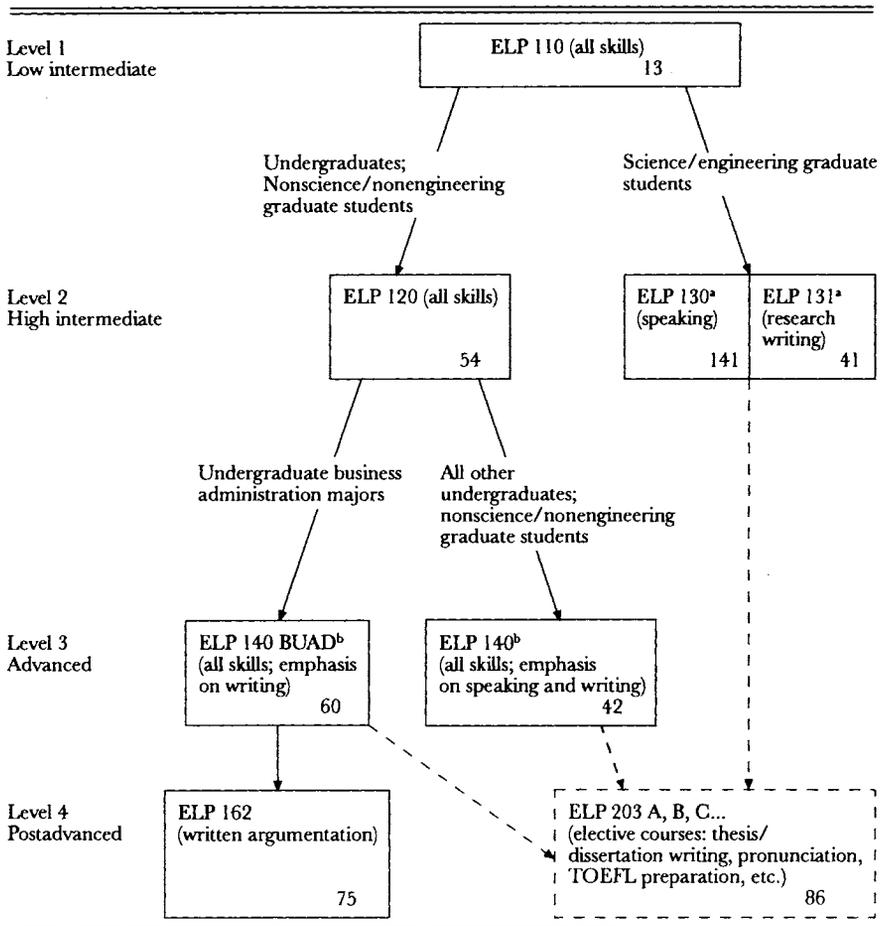
Given the two different types of skills focus and the wide range of course levels, academic writing is also treated differently—and to some extent is variably defined—in different parts of the ELP. Although definitional matters are discussed in more depth below, we note here that classes at the higher levels tend to emphasize the academic essay as the main written genre whereas lower-level courses tend to divide the time devoted to writing among essays and other academic literacy tasks such as note-taking, summarizing, and paraphrasing. In regard to the different ways in which writing is treated at the various course levels, it is generally the case that the higher the course level, the greater the proportion of curriculum and assessment devoted to writing.

At the institutional level, the ELP professes primary allegiance to the “process approach” to teaching academic writing. That is, the ELP has, in the words of one supervisor:

8. adopted the process approach to writing, which means that in contrast to the traditional mode of writing instruction where a student is presented with a text that serves as a model to be imitated, we instead set a task, and then give them an opportunity to try and respond to that particular prompt, and then help them through several stages of redrafting to polish and revise that draft. [IF23]

Reasons given by supervisors and instructors for preferring this pedagogy over others are (a) that writers generally discover what they

**FIGURE 3**  
**Structure of the English Language Program**



*Note.* Students enter at Levels 1–4 depending on proficiency test scores. Numbers in the lower right-hand corners of boxes indicate the numbers of students in each course during the fall 1993 semester (total, including two groups not described here, is 706). Dotted lines indicate voluntary enrollment options in elective courses. <sup>a</sup>ELP 130–131 is a required two-course sequence. Courses may be taken in either order. <sup>b</sup>Not depicted here are ELP 138 and 139, remedial support courses taken concurrently with 140-level courses by students judged below level in writing (138) or speaking (139).

mean and how to express it only in the process of writing and (b) that it helps students “to break out of this . . . ‘If I can’t write a perfect sentence, there’s no way I’m going to write a perfect paper’” (IH8). That process writing really is the main vehicle for writing instruction in the ELP is indicated by the fact that both days of the new-instructor orientation period devoted to teaching writing deal centrally with the writing process. Thus, the 1st day’s workshop, entitled *Introducing the Writing Process*, gives an overview of the process approach and models strategies for “prewriting” and “drafting,” and the 2nd day’s session, *Responding to Academic Writing*, is concerned largely with the activity described in its title. More specifically, in both the latter workshop and elsewhere in the ELP particular emphasis is put on responding as a primary means of leading students to develop and shape their written product in academically acceptable ways.

In its use of the writing process, then, as a major principle organizing the teaching of writing, the ELP does not appear to differ qualitatively from the UCP. When it comes, however, to actually defining the academic writing that ELP personnel describe themselves as teaching, they are a good deal less explicit—and in some senses less unified—than their UCP counterparts. Taking the latter point first, much of the variability in a common definition has to do with two simple facts: (a) as mentioned above, writing instruction at the lower levels is given over partly to note-taking, summarizing, and related academic literacy tasks; and (b) English for specific purposes courses, including ones that focus explicitly on technical/scientific writing, make up part of the ELP curriculum. These exceptions aside, however, ELP staff appear to share a model of academic writing for pedagogical purposes, albeit a less than fully articulated one.<sup>11</sup> In the words of one supervisor, this is “the classic academic essay style,” a notion he elaborated on as follows:

9. [Students should] be able to compose an original composition expressing their point of view which is well organized and, well, I was going to say “argued” though it is not always argumentative, so they have to be able to shape their ideas in a form that is considered proper in academic settings. [IF7]

The “proper” form referred to here—as other remarks by this individual strongly suggest—is almost certainly a straight deductive rhetorical structure. A second supervisor described this form in more detail

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<sup>11</sup>The contrast here with the UCP is striking; whereas the UCP’s approach to writing is heavily—even exhaustively—documented in almost every area, ELP writing practices are largely implicit. Interestingly, one ELP supervisor referred to the latter practices in his interview as part of “an oral tradition.”

when he talked about the prebusiness writing class he was supervising and teaching:

10. I insist that students state a thesis, what in business writing class we call proposition—we even have particular names for these things—that [they] state it early on in the essay, that it becomes a controlling statement—it controls the rest of the essay—that a small set of arguments follows that broad, general statement, and that those arguments should directly support that proposition. And that then within the particular paragraphs—I won't say a single paragraph because I don't believe that—but within the paragraphs that are allotted to those more specific arguments, I guess I would say subarguments and certainly support for the arguments is featured. So there is a top-down form here. [IH4]

Apart from the terms *argument* and possibly *proposition*—suggesting a subgenre of academic writing that does not obtain programwide—these remarks offer a fairly accurate characterization of the deductive essay format generally advocated within the ELP. The approach is encouraged through various classroom activities, one of which is peer response to essay drafts. Peer responding generally takes place with the aid of a feedback form (see Figure 4) that guides response in a deductive direction.

The most important means of guiding students toward the deductive essay format, however, appears to be the use of teacher comments on student drafts. Thus the statement in Example 10 above was made in the context of a discussion of the supervisor's commenting practices, and this statement accorded closely with his actual comments on student papers. Other ELP personnel likewise professed a commitment to commenting on essays in similarly directive ways. The potential contradiction between these practices and the tenet of process writing that students discover their own meaning and form in the writing process is minimized in the minds of ELP teachers by the shared sense that they are basically reacting to student writing in their comments, rather than directing students a priori how or what to write. The supervisor quoted in Example 10 made this point explicitly later in the same interview. Referring to his own training in the ELP at a time when he had been a graduate student instructor, he said:

11. I was taught not to present students with form a priori. I was taught to have students write something and then at that point, once there's some kind of a product, to work through fairly nondirect means—nondirect in the sense that we don't say, "Here's the form, now fit what you've written into the form," [but] more like through written feedback or conferencing [to] try to get the students to mold it into a shape that

**FIGURE 4**  
**ELP Peer Response Form for Essay Writing**

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*Directions:* Evaluate your own or another student's essay, using the guidelines below. Read and answer each question in turn.

- |   | Circle one |
|---|------------|
| 1. Does the essay have a title?   | Yes No     |
| a. Does the title express the author's point of view?   | Yes No     |
| 2. Is there an introductory paragraph?  | Yes No     |
| a. If "yes," does the introduction contain background information about the controversy?                                      | Yes No     |
| 1. If "yes," does the background information make you want to read more about the subject?                                    | Yes No     |
| b. If there is an introduction, does it contain a clear statement of the author's point of view (i.e., a "thesis statement")? | Yes No     |
| 1. If there is such a statement, does it also indicate the arguments that will be presented in the body of the essay?         | Yes No     |
| 3. How many supporting arguments are presented, and what are they? (list and number them below)                               |            |
| a. Are the arguments dealt with in separate paragraphs?   | Yes No     |
| 1. Does all the information in a particular paragraph deal with the argument presented in that paragraph?                     | Yes No     |
| 2. Is there enough supporting detail in each argument (facts, examples)?  | Yes No     |
| b. Do the arguments proceed smoothly and logically from one to the next?  | Yes No     |
| 1. Are transitional phrases used for this purpose?  | Yes No     |
| 4. Does the essay have a conclusion?  | Yes No     |
| a. Does the conclusion summarize the points made in the body?   | Yes No     |

**NOTE:** If you can answer "yes" to all of the yes/no questions above, you have probably written a very good paper.

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was acceptable. And that shape was certainly for me the deductively organized essay. [IH6]

All ELP personnel interviewed were in agreement on why the deductive essay format was purveyed in the program. Some teachers even defended it while evincing clear knowledge of its drawbacks:

12. If something is done deductively and seems to be only following a pattern—a kind of fill-in-the-slot pattern—it can be tedious and boring and awful to read. However, it serves a purpose and my feeling from in terms of the kinds of things that students—I guess in the Business School—I was thinking more of even with the classes I take, often that is the kind of thing that the professors are comfortable with and want, something that clearly spells out this is what so and so says, here is where I agree, here is where I disagree, this is what I think. [IJ13]

The general understanding among ELP teachers and supervisors is that NNS students need some form in which to express themselves

academically, even if not a particularly sophisticated or attractive one. They assume that ELP students, concurrently enrolled for the most part in non-ESL classes, would need to have such a form available for immediate use in writing academic essays and essay exams. The deductively organized essay is therefore seen as an efficient solution to this problem.

Aside from the deductive format, several other types of rhetorical structures are also occasionally encouraged in ELP essay writing. These forms are typically variations on the compare and contrast, problem-solution, and collection of descriptions (Carrell, 1984) themes, as specified in a writing prompt. However, students are often advised to overlay a deductive format on these structures if one is not present in a draft—either through teacher feedback or the application of peer/self-response guides like that in Figure 4.

As a means of partly summarizing some of the characteristics of ELP writing described above, a set of typical writing prompts is given in Appendix B. These prompts were given out by teachers at the high-intermediate level after students had spent several classes reading about U.S. family life and discussing it in relation to family life in their own cultures. By way also of introducing the explicit comparison of the UCP and ELP cultures of writing that follows, we ask the reader to compare these writing prompts to the UCP assignment in Appendix A.

## COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION

Two university cultures of writing have now been described in some detail. In this section we compare these cultures directly, examining contrasting norms and practices that may affect student success both within and across programs.

A first potentially problematic difference concerns the kinds of cultural knowledge each program assumes on the part of its students. As a program wholly devoted to NNSs, the ELP appears to make two pragmatic assumptions: (a) that its students have native competence in at least one (typically East Asian) culture and (b) that students do not have native competence in “American culture.”<sup>12</sup> In response to the second of these assumptions, the ELP appears to offer a curriculum

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<sup>12</sup>By bracketing the notion of American culture, we wish to acknowledge the many critiques of the monolithic American culture myth that exist in current scholarship. At the same time, we consider the notion of an American culture—in this case more specifically definable as “a generalized, somewhat ideal version of U.S. middle-class norms and values”—a necessary convenience in the present analysis. That is, we adopt the idea as a provisional concept or working definition only.

that is not predicated on native/near-native American cultural competence. In contrast—but not surprisingly given that NNSs make up less than 20% of its clientele—the UCP seems to assume a significant amount of cultural knowledge specific to the “American”—or at least a “Western”—way of life.

Critical thinking, for example, is one important area where cultural presuppositions appear to be operating. In particular, the UCP’s version of critical thinking seems to assume a cultural ecology in which school-based writing is frequently viewed and practiced not so much as a mode of communication or information inscription, but rather as a tool for intellectual exploration, an avenue for debate and dialectic, and even an instantiation of democratic principles (see, for instance, Example 2 above). What is more, the inculcation and assessment of critical thinking in the UCP appear to presuppose articulated (if implicit) understandings of culture-specific and culturally enshrined concepts, such as “insightfulness,” “forcefulness,” “thoughtfulness,” and “cogency,” as they figure, for instance, in the first item of the A rubric in Figure 2 or the final paragraph of Appendix A.

One might argue that these basic cultural assumptions and values are what is being taught in the UCP under the rubric of critical thinking, rather than what is being presupposed. There is little, if any, evidence in our data of teaching at the level of basic cultural assumptions (as advocated, for example, by Delpit, 1988). The plausibility of this claim is further mitigated by a significant body of research (see, e.g., Gee, 1990; Heath, 1983, 1986; Wells, 1985) indicating that socialization into middle-class “essayist literacy” (Scollon & Scollon, 1981) begins at home in early childhood, is powerfully reinforced through the elementary/high school years, and is unconsciously assumed of literate middle-class adults in higher education and beyond. Thus, teachers at various levels who have traditionally been thought of as teaching skills such as critical thinking *de novo* may in fact be providing mainstream students opportunities for rehearsal, refinement, and performance based on competences the latter have been acquiring all their lives.<sup>13</sup>

These same general points also apply to culturally defined and culturally valued notions like “originality/creativity” and “logic/rationality” (see Kaplan, 1988) inasmuch as they figure—explicitly or implicitly—as necessary background knowledge for success in the UCP. If, instead of being available to all freshman writers equally, such “commonsense”

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<sup>13</sup>This critique of educational notions such as *critical thinking* (and in fact any social practice that involves the literate development of “metadiscoursal” abilities—see Gee, 1990; Wells, 1985) is typically aimed at explaining the differential success of various racial/social class groups in the U.S. educational system, especially in the contexts of primary and secondary education. In terms of the present discussion, however, where cultural assumptions are so clearly differential between NSs and NNSs, the gap is even clearer.

notions are part of a larger “mainstream” American set of social practices, a pedagogy based substantially on them can only serve to disadvantage NNSs.<sup>14</sup>

Finally in regard to the different cultural-knowledge backgrounds, each program seems to assume, we do not intend to claim that the ELP, in contrast to the UCP, itself follows pedagogical practices that are in any sense *acultural*. The cultural assumptions behind process writing, for example, have been well explicated by Delpit (1988) and Inghilleri (1989). Rather, we have suggested that the ELP does not assume implicit cultural knowledge of the sort outlined above as a necessary (if tacit) precondition for instruction.

A second (but closely related) area of difference between the ELP and the UCP involves what could almost be called the *metagoals* of the two programs. That is, although both programs are immediately concerned with preparing students to write (and in the case of the ELP, also to read and speak) academically, they approach that goal in different ways. The ELP appears to emphasize the relatively straightforward teaching of strategies—in writing these include a simplified writing process (e.g., see Example 8 above) and especially the deductively organized essay form. The probable motivation for this “strategic approach” was described above in our discussion of the deductive form: At least at the higher levels, ELP instructors feel obligated to provide immediately usable aids to their students because they know that these students have to function simultaneously in the academic classroom.

The UCP, on the other hand, although it does not appear to overlook its students’ immediate academic-course needs, concerns itself substantially with writing development. That is, in encouraging students to reach beyond their current abilities—to constantly strive for greater “depth” in their thought and writing, for example—UCP personnel seem to advocate a moderately *developmental approach* to learning to write academically. This aspect of UCP culture is enshrined in the two-course sequences that represent the bulk of the program’s classes. As shown in Figure 1, whereas the first course focuses on the writing process, critical thinking, and academic discourse conventions, the second course adds on to these objectives intertextual concerns (i.e., citing and working with other texts), academic reading, and attention to longer and even deeper analysis of issues.

A third area of difference between the two programs is directly

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<sup>14</sup>Culturally valenced terms like *logic* occasionally appear also in ELP materials (e.g., Figure 4, Item 3.b). We have no evidence, however, that such concepts form an important part of the program. For UCP personnel, on the other hand, logic and rationality appear to play important roles—as seen, for instance, in Example 2 above—in the way they conceptualize and possibly teach writing.

related to the first two. This difference concerns the programs' contrasting expectations for the form and content of written work. The ELP seems to advocate a norm of writing that might be termed *workpersonlike prose*. Characteristics of this mode of writing appear to include (a) that it is aimed primarily at the clear, straightforward communication of facts and ideas; (b) that it is relatively easy to learn and thus usable on a more or less immediate basis; and (c) that it depends significantly on a rigid deductive structure.

The first of these points, suggested more or less directly in our data (see, for instance, Examples 9 and 11 and Figure 4), would also seem to follow from the ELP's commitment to communicative language teaching. That this language teaching approach has its own "cultural" background will be discussed below, but certainly one of its main tenets is that basic communication is the foremost purpose of both language and language teaching (Brumfit, 1984; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The second characteristic of the workpersonlike approach to writing—ease of learnability/usability—depends largely on a sense that students have immediate writing needs in their academic classes and should therefore be given some tools to deal with these needs. To take the tool metaphor one step farther, students therefore become *workpersons*, or *technicians*, of writing. The third characteristic of workpersonlike prose—the deductive essay format—is in fact just the kind of handy tool a technician of writing might seem to need. Eminently teachable (whether directly or indirectly), it solves the problem of getting into the students' hands an easily deployable approach to academic writing.

Note, however, that there is also an obvious danger associated with turning student writers into writing technicians. The danger, of course, is that once having acquired a handy tool of written expression, students will adopt it to the exclusion of all others, applying it without regard to its suitability in specific cases. This problem is not unlike the one that the UCP's proscription of the five-paragraph essay appears designed to solve (see Example 5 and below).

If the ELP promotes workpersonlike prose, the UCP in contrast might be said to purvey sophisticated thought and expression. That is, with its emphasis at the content level on complexity of thought and critical "insight," and its emphasis at the formal level on structure as dependent on rhetorical purpose and on both explicit and implicit forms of expression, the UCP appears to advocate writing that will be judged not only as an accurately communicating message but also as a rhetorically effective piece.

The UCP's rejection of the five-paragraph essay and the ELP's advocacy of what appears to be a virtually identical form, the deductive essay format, clearly illustrate the contrast under discussion here. In the UCP culture, this form acts almost as a symbol of bad student

writing—formulaic, stilted, mechanical, predictable, and thus crippling to the very thought that the program seeks to encourage. At least in theoretical terms, there does not seem to be even the possibility of depth or insight if content is expressed in this form. For the ELP on the other hand, the deductive essay format is an extremely serviceable template for those who, academically speaking, “have no way of expressing themselves” (IH1). Depending on the two programs’ very different goals—superficially similar in that both claim to teach academic writing—this form is either salvation or suicide.

A fourth and final difference between these two divergent cultures of writing concerns the academic-culture foundations on which they themselves rest. For the UCP this foundation is the disciplinary matrix of rhetoric/composition, for the ELP it is applied linguistics.

That rhetoric/composition is the UCP’s mother discipline is clearly evident in our data, though there is no space here for a complete discussion of the point. UCP administrators allude constantly to their placement in the field, sometimes even referring to their institution as a “rhetoric program.” In addition, the *Orientation Notebook*—the most complete statement of UCP program practices and policies—draws heavily on the field, and pedagogical principles and techniques are borrowed eclectically from it, whether classical notions like the *Aristotelian appeals* (see Appendix A) or modern ones like the *Burkean pentad*, a prewriting/invention device.<sup>15</sup>

The ELP connection with applied linguistics is also clear—although not nearly as foregrounded—in the data we have collected. Like rhetoric/composition an interdisciplinary endeavor, applied linguistics can be seen as the source, by and large, of communicative approaches to language teaching. As a program that identifies closely with the communicative approach—which indeed has contributed substantially to developments at the academic end of it—the ELP therefore has a major link with applied linguistics. Nor is it surprising that literally all the administrators (including supervisors) have applied linguistic backgrounds, and every program director since the ELP’s inception has been an applied linguist.

The divergent academic foundations of the two programs have larger consequences for the way writing is thought of and taught within them—and this divergence may explain variation in some of the areas already discussed in this article. For example, applied linguists have tended to think of themselves as scientists and their work as primarily descriptive and quantitative (Santos, 1992). Although this perception may conflict substantially with the realities of L2 teaching

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<sup>15</sup>One UCP administrator also mentioned a disciplinary connection with applied linguistics, although he gave much more attention to the influence of rhetoric.

and research, it nonetheless has had paradigm status in the field. It also appears to have many implications for ELP practice—the insistence in the ELP that classroom texts (in whatever mode) be “authentic”—and the social science–like nature of the topics treated in content-based courses are just two obvious examples. More importantly, the straightforward deductive approach to writing in the ELP may well reflect perceptions of how scientists (or at least social scientists) express themselves in the written mode.

The rhetoric-based UCP, on the other hand, proceeds from a discipline that, although its current make-up is heterogeneous, has a background in the humanities. Until the start of the present century, rhetoric was a staple of the liberal arts (Berlin, 1987; Kinneavy, 1971), and even though work in the field has now gone far beyond its original base, it is still rare to find highly quantitative research, for example, in rhetoric/composition journals such as *College Composition and Communication* or *Rhetoric Review*. Similarly, rhetoricians do not shy away (even theoretically) from prescriptivism—rather, as the vast majority of composition textbooks show, it is an organic element in the field. Finally, where applied linguists tend to see the goal of writing instruction as the ability to communicate clearly, rhetoricians have a grander goal. According to Berlin (1987), “in teaching writing we [i.e., rhetoricians] are providing students with guidance in seeing and structuring their experience, with a set of tacit rules about distinguishing truth from falsity, reality from illusion” (p. 7).

All of these characteristic influences—humanism, prescriptivism, and (closely related to both) a belief that writing instruction is at base epistemological and ethical—lend a distinctive flavor to writing programs that take sustenance from rhetoric. The UCP appears to be one of these.

If the contrast we have drawn above is at all accurate—if the UCP and ELP do in fact promote very different conceptions of academic writing—it would seem vitally important for each program to know in detail what the other’s goals and expectations are. Although one would not expect whole cultures to change on the basis of such knowledge, the raising of consciousness on both sides is bound to result in better articulation. Such articulation would inevitably smooth the transition from the ELP to the UCP, which, although not systematically investigated in our study, is anecdotally well attested as a sometimes difficult one.<sup>16</sup> Concerning the problem that the UCP’s cultural-knowl-

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<sup>16</sup>Such anecdotal evidence comes from two sources: UCP teachers and students themselves. In informal interactions, our own students (some of whom were taking courses in the two programs simultaneously or had taken them back-to-back) sometimes voiced the sentiment that differences in the writing expected by the two programs was “confusing.” Alexander,

edge assumptions may represent for NNSs, explicit instruction in relevant cultural “rules” and assumptions—as advocated by Delpit (1988)—might constitute a partial solution.

## CONCLUSION AND APPLICATIONS

Our findings reveal that the theoretical backgrounds and classroom practices of the UCP and ELP diverge in nontrivial ways. In discussing these differences, we have indicated how they may negatively affect students both within and across programs. We end by briefly restating the potential negative effects of these differences and speculating on circumstances that may blunt their overall harmfulness to some degree.

First, we have suggested that the UCP presupposes cultural knowledge that cannot be reasonably attributed to, and holds expectations that cannot reasonably be met by, many nonnative speakers of English. The reason for these gaps is simple—as a program based primarily in a field that has concerned itself overwhelmingly with English as a first language and whose clientele is in fact at least four-fifths native speakers, the program is modeled on the norm of a cultural/linguistic native (or near-native) student. The kinds of knowledge such students are tacitly expected to have include considerable familiarity with native patterns for structuring discourse, knowledge of native norms of communicative behavior, and some understanding of writing (or communication in general) as a heuristic, self-defining activity. We assume that students lacking these concepts would find the UCP an often difficult place to be.

Second, and independent of our first point, we believe that NNS students crossing over from the ELP to the UCP will experience a significant disjuncture between the way each program conceptualizes writing. That is, some of the very approaches to writing that are rewarded in the former appear to be stigmatized in the latter. However, we speculate that this situation could also benefit both instructor and student. For instructors, deductively organized student essays provide at least a known quantity to work with—a take-off point from which to begin teaching writing the UCP way. Students writing deductively structured essays on entering the UCP may be preferable to students—for example, non-Western NNSs previously exposed to an extreme

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a Ukrainian student of the first author, elaborated on this point by stating that in the UCP one “had to have style” whereas his ELP written argumentation class was more concerned with “argument” (NC1). We have also frequently heard UCP teachers complaining about their NNS students’ dependence on the five-paragraph essay.

process-writing approach (Scollon, 1991)—who come in using no recognizable discourse structure to speak of. On the part of students, there is the obvious advantage of learning two differing modes of academic writing. As a solution to immediate writing needs and a tool for clear (if pedestrian) written communication, the ELP's strategic approach clearly has its uses. As a longer-term effort to foster thoughtful, skillful writing—and writing that does not depend on a prefabricated rhetorical structure—the UCP's developmental approach also has a valuable contribution to make. Taken together, as indeed the two programs are by a substantial number of NNSs, they may in fact cover a spectrum of writing needs that neither program can deal with individually.

Finally, we speculate that a substantial amount of the difference between these two programs—and perhaps a fair amount of the LI cultural knowledge the UCP appears to presuppose of NNS students—may be mediated by some instructors in their classrooms. That is, competent instructors in both programs may perhaps adapt curriculum and pedagogy to suit their classes to some degree, at least partly making up for the gaps just mentioned. In particular, the UCP practice of identifying instructors for NNS sections with an interest or background in teaching NNSs may partially mitigate unreasonable expectations. However, this possibility of adjustment relieves neither the UCP of responsibility for providing a curriculum that adequately matches NNS's abilities and needs, nor either program of the obligation to work closely together to make crossover between them as smooth and as easy as possible.

In conclusion, we call for purposeful articulation among any and all intrauniversity writing programs that NNS writers must transit for academic success. We also call on such programs to examine their theoretical assumptions and curricular practices vis-à-vis NNS students. To navigate the diverse cultural territories of university writing—and to come out safely on the other side as writers—our students can do with no less.

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# APPENDIX A

## Sample UCP Assignment

### **Assignment: The Uses of Enticement: What Becomes an Advertisement Most?**

#### *Purpose*

Advertising represents one of the most creative and imaginative forms of communication in our culture, and one purpose of this assignment is simply to enjoy the opportunity to analyze some interesting ads. But this assignment is also intended to give you practice in the writing process (in invention, planning, and revision) and to introduce two important rhetorical concepts: the Aristotelian appeals and the distinction between persuasion and identification.

#### *Readings*

This assignment calls for you to “read” advertisements, and you will be asked to purchase two magazines and bring them to class on Wednesday, January 19th. You may also use TV advertisements, following the precis format described on the other side of this sheet.

#### *Topic*

The first advertisement published in America was simply a short prose description of a piece of land someone wanted to sell, but since that time advertising has evolved quite considerably. Today, in fact, it's rare to find an ad that merely describes the goods being sold; instead, modern advertising has developed a range of appeals that seem to have only a tangential relationship to the actual product. Some ads, for example, appeal to important cultural stereotypes (the rugged individuality of the Marlboro man), others play off or against stereotypes (the chic rebelliousness of Virginia Slims ads), and still others work by appealing not to the consumer's *real* needs or personality but to his or her fantasy self, the popular and attractive person the consumer will become once he or she purchases the product being advertised.

This assignment, then, is directed not simply at advertisements but at *an interesting type of advertising appeal*, one that is clever or enticing, relatively original, and one that you find deserving of careful analysis. To illustrate your analysis, you may use one or more ads, and these may come from current (September 1993 or later) magazines or from current television. The ads may represent a single advertising campaign (one of a particular brand), or they may be ads for different brands of the same product type, or for entirely different products.

#### *Writing Task*

Select an ad or ads that illustrate a kind of advertising appeal that you would like to write about. Carefully analyze the type of appeal illustrated in the ad(s) and then respond to the following writing task in a 4–5 page essay:

*Why do you find this type of advertising appeal particularly interesting, noteworthy, or effective?*

The cogency of your writing will depend upon your ability to identify and articulate an insightful claim as to how advertising functions. For this reason, do your best to go beyond obvious or commonplace kinds of appeals and seek instead to add something new and pertinent to our understanding of advertising. Similarly, do not focus on Virginia Slims or Marlboro ads unless you are confident you can contribute something innovative to what is a very long history of analysis.

Rough Draft Due: Friday, January 28

Submission Draft Due: Monday, January 31

## APPENDIX B

### Sample ELP Writing Prompt

#### WRITING ASSIGNMENT

*Directions:* Answer one of the following questions, using 2–3 pages of double-spaced writing.

1. Describe and give specific examples of how the values of equality and individual freedom are seen in many American families? [sic] Also, give your opinion of the importance of these values within the family unit.
2. By taking a position either for or against give your opinion whether married women should work or not. Be sure to back up your opinions with specific examples either from the American culture or your own culture.
3. “Eldercare” has become a complex issue in the 1980s–1990s. Describe some of the problems that must be overcome by an ordinary family in order for the elderly parents (or family members) to be fully cared for. You may use examples/types of problems taken from the American culture and/or your own culture.