



**Writing Lab Report:
Working with International Students
May 18, 2015 to May 7, 2016**

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Overview

This report provides details of the following Writing Lab programs for international students:

- **One-to-one writing consultations**

The mainstay of Writing Lab programs is the individual consultation with a tutor. During 2015-2016, an average of 71% of visitors self-identified as internationals. Writers can work with tutors on any aspect of their writing. Besides generalist tutors, the Writing Lab has tutors who are specially trained to work with ENGL 106 students and tutors who are specially trained to work with business documents. (Page 5)

- **PLaCE: Programs for undergraduate students**

The Purdue Language and Cultural Exchange (PLaCE) provides language support for incoming international undergraduates. With funding from PLaCE, the Writing Lab conducted several programs to support international undergraduates (Page 6):

- ✓ Monthly writing workshops
- ✓ Weekly Proofreading Practice sessions
- ✓ Writing Fellow for an online History course
- ✓ Spring Break short-workshops
- ✓ Undergraduate writing groups
- ✓ Faculty & Instructor guide
- ✓ Conversation Group materials development
- ✓ OWL resource revisions
- ✓ New books for the ESL self-study shelves
- ✓ Interview-based writing videos

- **Language study for international clients**

In addition to English writing help, the Writing Lab provides opportunities for international clients to work on English language skills via self-study with books or software. (Page 14)

- **Daily Conversation Groups**

The Writing Lab offers daily conversation groups throughout the semester. Attendees can stop by any of the times that fit their schedule. They spend one hour talking with a trained facilitator and fellow group members about a variety of topics. (Page 15)

- **Training for tutors who work with international students**

All tutors in the Writing Lab participate in a variety of formal and informal training sessions. During the 2015-2016 academic year, tutors received ESL training as part of pre-service coursework and during regular staff meetings. In addition, all tutors participated in an intensive ESL training program during the spring semester. (Page 16)

- **Programs for graduate student writing**
The Writing Lab offered a spring break workshop for international graduate students. In addition, we offered general writing workshops which were attended by many international graduate students and visiting scholars. (Page 19)
- **Campus and community interactions**
The Writing Lab often collaborates with individuals at Purdue and elsewhere on topics related to second language writing. (Page 19)
- **Research about International Students in the Writing Lab**
As part of an academic unit at Purdue, the Writing Lab staff participates in many types of research projects. Recent projects specific to international writers included a project on training tutors to work with second language writers and a project that compared what writers (primarily international) requested, what tutors offered, and what documents needed. (Page 21)

The initial section of this report offers some background material that helps to explain the realities facing the Writing Lab today, followed by a detailed explanation of the programs listed above and an evaluation of their successes over the past year. **For information about general Writing Lab programs for everyone at Purdue, read the main annual report found on the website:** <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/annualreports>

Background

Many Writing Lab visitors are international students or scholars. They come for programs such as Conversation Group or Writing Workshops, which are specifically for second language (L2) speakers, but they also come for regular writing consultations which are available to all faculty, staff, and students at Purdue. During Summer and Fall 2015, 70% of consultations were with self-identified L2 writers. During Spring 2016, 72% of consultations were with international writers (Table 1 shows a comparison of international usage over the last few years). The 2015-2016 data is reported by semester rather than academic year due to our move to online scheduling after the fall semester.

Percentage of Writing Lab Visitors Who Are International	
2012-2013	71.84%
2013-2014	77%
2015 (summer and fall)	70%
2016 (spring)	72%

Table 1: Comparison of International Student Visits

Writing Lab visits by international students tend to mirror trends on campus. For the last few years, for instance, increased enrollment of Chinese students has resulted in increased numbers of Chinese students visiting the Writing Lab. Table 2 shows the total number of visits from the top seven countries for the year.

Country	Summer & Fall '15	Spring '16 ¹	Totals
China	1163	878	2041
United States	873	600	1473
South Korea	279	223	502
India	107	54	161
Japan	92	47	139
Taiwan	64	70	134
Colombia	81	30	111

¹Spring numbers exclude Conversation Groups due to the change to online scheduling at the start of spring semester.

Table 2: International Use of the Writing Lab, May 18, 2015 – May 7, 2016

Because of this high volume of international traffic, it does not make sense to have specialized L2 tutors; instead, the Writing Lab provides intensive ESL training for all of the tutors. The details of this training may be found in the relevant section (Page 16). Briefly, the training covers material related to the sentence-level issues L2 writers often request help with—grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure—as well as addressing the cultural aspects of L2 writing and of conferencing with an L2 writer.

The remainder of this report provides more detailed information on the work the Writing Lab does with international students, on the professional development we offer to our tutors in the area of second language writing, and on the assistance we offer to the campus-at-large in the form of instructor consultations and other presentations.

One-to-One Consultations

One-to-one consultations are the most common reason for international students to visit the Writing Lab. As of Spring 2016, appointments are either thirty or sixty minutes long by the writer's choice. Also as of Spring 2016, appointments are made with our new online schedule system, and students may choose to have an in-person tutorial or an online tutorial. Writers will work with one of our skilled consultants (see Page 16 for information about the training tutors receive). In the spring semester, we had eighteen graduate consultants (seventeen from English and one from comparative literature) and twenty-two undergraduate consultants (any

major at Purdue). During Summer and Fall 2015, 70% of consultations occurred with self-identified L2 writers. During Spring 2016, 72% of consultations were with international writers. Table 3 shows international client use by classification. Slightly more undergraduates than graduates come to the Lab for consultations on their papers.

International Consultations by Classification			
	Undergraduate	Graduate	Other
Summer/Fall 2015	898	532	71
Spring 2016	977	629	85

Table 3: International Classification Data, May 18, 2015 – May 7, 2016

The Writing Lab routinely collects tutorial evaluations from writers (see Table 4 for details from Spring 2016). Because these are collected anonymously, we do not correlate particular

Consultation Evaluations	Student Responses	Percentage
The tutor explained ideas to me in a way I can understand and use.		
Strongly Agree	190	86%
Agree	26	12%
Disagree	5	2%
The tutor addressed my concerns.		
Strongly Agree	188	85%
Agree	30	14%
Disagree	2	1%
Strongly Disagree	1	.5%
The tutor made me feel comfortable and respected during my tutorial.		
Strongly Agree	195	88%
Agree	22	10%
Disagree	3	1%

Table 4: Consultation Evaluations for Domestic & International Writers, January 11, 2016 – May 6, 2016

responses with particular students and therefore cannot specifically say how our international writers evaluate our tutorial services. However, students overwhelmingly offer positive evaluations about the help they receive and the quality of the tutors' skills in working with all writers. Given the high level of satisfaction expressed by writers and the high percentage of international students who use the Writing Lab, it seems likely that the majority of the international writers are among the majority offering positive evaluations.

PLaCE: Programs for Undergraduate Students

The Writing Lab introduced a number of programs during the 2015-2016 academic year as part of our support for the Purdue Language and Culture Exchange (PLaCE). These are explained in detail below. The programs were staffed with graduate students in the English Department. In addition, one graduate student each semester served in a coordinator position, working on various special projects under the direction of the ESL Specialist.

For summer 2015, Patrick Love served as the PLaCE Coordinator. He worked on a number of workshops, developed OWL content, led a Pop Culture Snack Chat (renamed TV Snack Chat), and started work on a faculty and instructor resource guide. During Fall 2015, Ashley Velasquez took over as PLaCE OWL and Workshop Development Coordinator. She developed and conducted workshops, wrote and distributed a survey asking about faculty experiences with L2 writers and their writing, and continued work on the faculty resource.

Tyler Carter took over as ESL Outreach Coordinator for Spring 2016. He conducted a needs assessment among PLaCE and 106i instructors and determined that no special workshops beyond those regularly-offered by the Writing Lab needed to be developed. This allowed him to focus his time on the faculty resource the two previous coordinators had attempted. He developed a complete *Faculty and Instructor Guide for Working with ESL Student Writers*, including a flowchart for identifying types of errors that require the most attention (see below for a detailed explanation of this).

The following list provides brief explanations and assessments of the various projects conducted as “PLaCE Projects” during the 2015-2016 academic year.

- **Monthly writing workshops**

During Summer 2015, Patrick offered two workshops: Improving Your Grammar, and Academic Writing in America. The grammar workshop was very popular, but attended by mostly graduate students. The academic writing workshop was attended by fewer students overall, and they were entirely graduate students.

During Fall 2015, Ashley developed and conducted a series of monthly writing workshops for international undergraduates. The workshop Power Points and notes were added to the OWL for future use by other instructors and students. Topics were as follows:

- ✓ MS Word bells & whistles part 1: Using grammar and spell checkers effectively
- ✓ Can we really use THOSE words? How to effectively use slang, idioms, & stock phrases in academic writing
- ✓ HELP! I don't know what to write about: Generating research topics & questions

Attendance at these workshops was sparse. Programs for undergraduates seem to suffer from similar problems: students lack time to attend due to the burden of working in an L2 being added to general academic workload; a time of day never fits everyone's

schedules; and undergraduates tend to have less motivation than graduate students when it comes to seeking extra language help.

- **Weekly Proofreading Practice sessions**

Proofreading Practice was held weekly during the spring semester (11 weeks total), with a goal of helping writers learn to proofread their own documents in general while receiving help with a particular document. The sessions were staffed by five English Department graduate students, with two or three being present at any one time. Drop-in sessions took place on Friday afternoons to take advantage of time that the Writing Lab does not usually have other consultations available. Prior to the start of this program, the tutors spent some time learning to use a color coding system to mark errors in documents and some time learning how to help writers apply strategies to proofread their own documents.

During a Proofreading Practice session, a tutor would read a portion of a writer's document and mark errors according to the color-coding system. The writer would then use the code to self-correct as many of those errors as possible. The tutor then helped the writer with any remaining marked errors, demonstrating corrections, teaching rules, etc., as relevant to the particular error. The tutor and the writer also discussed ways to proofread for similar errors throughout the document. Depending on the number of attendees, the tutor might then mark another portion of the same document, and the process would repeat.

The Proofreading Practice sessions had a total of 37 visits by 20 individual attendees. See Table 5 for a breakdown of individual attendees by classification.

Proofreading Practice Individual Attendees by Classification				
Undergraduate	Graduate	Visiting Scholar	Staff	Total
5	11	3	1	20

Table 5: Proofreading Practice Attendance by Classification, Spring Semester 2016

Overall, attendees rated the experience positively, agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements:

- ✓ This workshop made me able to spot my errors more quickly.
- ✓ This workshop gave me a better understanding of how to locate errors in the future.
- ✓ This workshop has helped me feel more confident about proofreading papers on my own.

Sample responses to the following write-in questions also indicate that attendees found the sessions useful.

What would have made the workshop more effective?

- ✓ *It's perfect already.*
- ✓ *More time periods during the week. I would definitely come every week.*
- ✓ *Color guide is very helpful.*

What did you learn today that will help you with future writing projects?

- ✓ *Common mistakes that I always made.*
- ✓ *Word choice. Rephrase sentences in a better way.*
- ✓ *Usage of prepositions, punctuation.*
- ✓ *Be confident and be aware that I'm not fighting alone.*

The tutors who worked in this program also offered feedback on the efficacy of the sessions:

- ✓ *The color-coding system was golden--such a helpful way to visually represent the issues/instances to the writers.*
- ✓ *Students [who came 2 or more Fridays] became more comfortable with the protocol and making their own corrections.*
- ✓ *The color-coding system is effective and fun.*
- ✓ *People I worked with tended to like that [the color-coding system] forced them to attempt to fix their errors.*
- ✓ *Writers seemed able to correct about half of their errors once I marked them.*
- ✓ *I was surprised how valuable the people who DID come found the proofreading sessions.*
- ✓ *Mostly, I spent my time helping STEM students polish scientific papers. There were a few oddball documents, though. I remember one person who occasionally brought in personal correspondence for us to look at. Those were fun.*

Overall, the general consensus seems to be that the sessions were useful and should be continued in the future.

- **Writing Fellow for an online History course**

At the request of Dorothee Bouquet, a continuing lecturer in the history department, the Writing Lab piloted a program of assigning a Writing Fellow to work with the international students in one of her online history courses. The students were required to write weekly discussion posts based on historical documents. Students who received below a certain grade on an assignment were invited to meet one-on-one with Rebekah Sims, the Writing Fellow, to discuss how to revise. A successful revision could earn them a revised/improved grade for that assignment. The rationale behind this program was that discussing and revising writing assignments would help students master writing

skills and the historical knowledge being taught in the course, and that offering credit for doing so would encourage already-busy students to prioritize this sort of learning. Rebekah held fifteen tutorials over the course of the spring semester. Six students used the program once; one student had four tutorials, one had three, and one had two. The majority of students who took advantage of this opportunity to work on their writing (7) had an initial grade of F on the assignment in question. Two had a B, three a C, and three did not specify an initial grade. Table 6 details the main areas of difficulty:

Student Concerns	# of Requests
Understanding the assignment	5
Content development/Support of a main idea	8
Thesis/argument	10
Logical sequences/Organization	5
Citations	9
Grammar/Mechanics	2
Focusing on the subject	4
Addressing an audience	1
Using sources/Research skills	2

Table 6: Number of students requesting each area of concern, Spring Semester 2016

Rebekah made two specific assessments of the program's effectiveness:

- ✓ *Students who came multiple times showed the most growth in writing.*
- ✓ *Tutoring via Google doc resulted in less revision. . . . Overall, live tutoring seems more effective.* [Only students with schedule conflicts were permitted to request the virtual tutoring.]

She also noted that some general difficulties were shared among the group of writers.

These included the following:

- ✓ Difficulty understanding historical documents
- ✓ Few reading strategies to overcome the difficulty
- ✓ Difficulty understanding nuances of the assignment prompt
- ✓ Lack of knowledge of genre conventions for the type of assignment
- ✓ Confusion about citation and plagiarism

For the future, Rebekah offered a number of recommendations for similar programs that might be conducted. These include help with both initial understanding of materials as well as help with the writing itself:

- ✓ A reading/discussion group to help with understanding the historical documents
- ✓ A sample response with commentary (e.g., identify the thesis, the evidence, citations) to help with understanding the genre conventions
- ✓ Sample thesis statements with commentary indicating the elements that make a strong thesis
- ✓ Sample questions with commentary to explain the component parts and how to address them
- ✓ One-on-one tutoring as needed for writing support

• **Spring Break Short-Workshops**

Over spring break, the Writing Lab offered three-day writing workshops for international students. “Cracking the Codes of College: Language Choice in Composition and Conversation” helped undergraduates learn to recognize, use, and master the language of their assignments, instructors, and classmates. “Scholarly Writing for International Graduate Students” helped writers transform previous research into a conference paper or first draft of a scholarly journal article.

The workshops were developed and taught by English Department graduate students with input from the Writing Lab ESL Specialist as needed. Lauren Mallet and Arielle McKee taught the undergraduate workshop; Michelle Campbell and Ji-young Shin taught the graduate workshop. Each workshop included lessons, activities, and practice in the morning, followed by conversation over a lunch provided by the Writing Lab. In the afternoon, writers had the option to stay and write or to confer individually with the instructors.

The workshops had an attendance limit of ten to allow more focus on writers’ actual in-progress documents. Despite being offered over spring break, the workshops were popular. In particular, the graduate workshop filled up almost immediately and had a very long waiting list. See Table 7 for information about attendance.

Short-Workshop Attendance					
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Afternoon Session	Wait List
Cracking the Codes of College	5	5	4	3	0
Scholarly Writing for Grad Students	11	10	9	12	37

Table 7: Short-Workshop Attendance, March 14-16, 2016

End-of-course evaluations demonstrated that, in general, attendees found the workshops very useful. With only one exception, all participants indicated that they would attend similar workshops held over Purdue breaks (e.g., spring break, winter break).

- ✓ All attendees indicated that it was important to include lunch and/or snacks in a workshop of this nature.
- ✓ Adjectives used to describe the instructors included the following: well-prepared, knowledgeable, excellent, very helpful, awesome, and really nice/kind/helpful.
- ✓ Suggestions for improving the graduate workshop included the following: increase the length, focus on more specific topics, offer a more advanced workshop with a STEM focus.
- ✓ Suggestions for improving the undergraduate workshop included the following: add in-class practice in editing, allow more individual practice, have more workshops with different topics held during weekends or holidays.

The workshop instructors also offered their assessments of the program:

Most of our students were junior and senior undergraduate students who were interested in specific writing skill exercises more so than the cultural/conversational/compositional framework we had planned. We received particular requests for practice on “technical writing,” “research papers,” “transition words,” “academic verbs,” and “slang words.” We adapted our lesson plans to accommodate these requests, a successful approach I thought. One of the highlights of the workshop, for me, was a conversation we had about the lack of interactions/friendships/community between international and domestic students at Purdue. This informal conversation developed out of a more formal discussion on slang words used by Purdue students. Another time that I came to value was lunch; it gave us an opportunity to connect and communicate as a “workshop community.” . . . The ideal workshop, in my mind, provides a combination of structured exercise/practice and more open-ended discussion opportunities. On the final class day, a number of our students continued to work together in the Writing Lab. That was a good sign. (Lauren Mallet, Undergraduate Workshop Instructor)

I was surprised initially at the demographic composition of the workshop. We had eleven students attend on the first day, nine of which were women. The students had diverse language backgrounds and nationalities, including several students from Colombia and Turkey, and the majority were from STEM disciplines. I wonder if the gender and nationality of graduate students played a large role in their self-selection for the workshop given the disparate ratio of men to women in STEM and at Purdue in general. For example, I wonder if international women in men-dominated disciplines are more aware or are more criticized for their real

or perceived language and writing deficiencies, both for English in general and for academic writing in English at the graduate level. Perhaps this is a demographic that needs more attention at Purdue University, as they seemed to be over-represented in this workshop. . . . I think the optional writing times were good for the students, and I think they should remain part of the workshop in the future. . . . Overall, I thought the workshop went exceedingly well. I think that the workshop either 1) needs more time or 2) needs to be divided into levels, such as basic, intermediate, and advanced. We tried to cover too much in too little time, and activities that could have really helped students were the things that suffered as a result. (Michelle Campbell, Graduate Workshop Instructor)

- **Undergraduate writing groups**

During the spring semester, the Writing Lab offered undergraduate writing groups to international students. The goal was to have groups formed of 6-8 undergraduates meeting with a trained Writing Lab tutor. The groups would discuss their writing with one another. Authors would receive valuable feedback for revising, and everyone would learn how to offer help to fellow writers.

Unfortunately, only a single writer actually attended a group. Others expressed interest but never showed up. Joseph Forte, a graduate student in the English department, met with this individual one-on-one weekly (ten sessions total) for one hour each week. They worked on three major projects: a literature review, an annotated bibliography, and an end-of-semester presentation. In addition, they worked on a number of minor assignments. One of the major problems the writer had was simply understanding the assignment, an undertaking that was additionally hindered by language fluency issues.

Despite the change in plan from group meeting to individual meeting, the writing “group” proved helpful to the writer. The results of this “group” seem to indicate that regular, one-on-one meetings are valuable for international undergraduates for general English as well as writing skills. According to Joe’s assessment, the writer improved over the workshop of the semester in two specific ways:

- ✓ She went from being able to focus only on language fluency issues to being able to discuss more conceptual aspects of writing.
- ✓ She went from needing Joe to point out errors to being able to correct her own errors before Joe could point them out.

- **Faculty & Instructor Resource**

The major undertaking this year was the creation of a detailed *Faculty and Instructor Guide for Working with ESL Student Writers*. The majority of the content work was completed by Tyler Carter, Spring ESL Outreach Coordinator. Over the summer, Anthony Sutton did the layout and design work for turning the material into a physical booklet. This document offers guidance about assessing the writing of L2 students at

Purdue, and it bases this guidance in current research in the fields of Second Language Study and Composition, among others. Readers of the guide can expect to learn relevant background information about the international student writers at Purdue, to receive tips for working with these writers, and to learn best practices for commenting on writing assignments. In addition, a reference list provides direction for those interested in learning more about the topic and a Feedback Flowchart offers a systematic, easy-to-follow procedure for addressing error in student writing. Paper copies of the booklet may be requested from the Writing Lab, and a .pdf version of the faculty guide is available on the Purdue OWL:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/facultyguide>

- **Conversation Group Materials Development**

Experienced conversation group leaders developed resources to use during conversation groups. Each resource included a list of possible angles for discussing the particular topic, a list of idioms related to the topic, a list of discussion questions, and two activities with detailed explanations and lists of necessary advance preparation.

The following general topics were the focus of these newly-developed resources:

- ✓ Compliments & Insults
- ✓ Culture Shock
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Government & Politics
- ✓ Jobs
- ✓ Law & Crime
- ✓ Movies
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Relationships

- **OWL Resource Revisions**

A number of existing OWL pages were extensively revised this year to improve their clarity for L2 writers. These updates include improved use of examples and explanatory material, rewording existing text to make it more ESL-friendly, and some formatting.

Maryam Ghafoor worked on the majority of these pages, with input from the ESL Specialist. The following pages were updated:

- ✓ Adjectives and Adverbs (a series of 3 pages)
- ✓ Finding Common Errors
- ✓ Passive Verb Tenses
- ✓ Prepositions for Time
- ✓ Revising for Cohesion
- ✓ Sequence of Verb Tenses

- **Self-study books**

A number of resources were added to our ESL bookshelf. See the section on Language Study for International Clients below for a detailed list of titles.

- **Interview-Based Writing Videos**

The Writing Lab has produced a series of short videos about how Purdue students tackle their writing projects and how they use the Writing Lab for help. Each video in the series shows clips from several different Purdue students, including a number of international students, who talk about their writing practices and experiences at Purdue. The videos in the series are available on the OWL at the following locations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDt5DUZJhyM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qjo7wx0vi6c>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_FwtvsUXA0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCJxc6yr0JM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmp5RWyoK3o>

Language Study for International Clients

The Writing Lab offers a number of services for writers looking to improve their English language ability as well as their writing ability.

- A selection of ESL software that can be used any time the Writing Lab is open
- An ESL Library with books for tutor and instructor use. New books for tutor use are as follows:
 - ✓ *Fostering International Student Success in Higher Education*
 - ✓ *Response to Student Writing: Implications for Second Language Students*
 - ✓ *Teaching Language: From Grammar to Grammmaring*
 - ✓ *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design, 2nd ed.*
 - ✓ *Crossing Customs: International Students Write on U.S. College Life and Culture*
 - ✓ *Vocabulary Myths*
 - ✓ *Tutoring Second Language Writers*
 - ✓ *The Elements of International English Style*
 - ✓ *Language, Culture, Identity, and Citizenship in College Classrooms and Communities*
 - ✓ *Effective Curriculum for Teaching L2 Writing*
 - ✓ *ESL Readers and Writers in Higher Education*
 - ✓ *Teaching English Grammar to Speakers of Other Languages*
 - ✓ *Translingual Practice*
- An ESL library with books for student use. New books for student use are as follows:
 - ✓ *The Ultimate Phrasal Book, 2nd ed.*
 - ✓ *Writing Clearly: Grammar for Editing, 3rd ed.*
 - ✓ *Academic Writing for Graduate Students, 3rd ed.* [multiple copies for use in workshops]

- ✓ *A Troubleshooting Guide for Writers, 7th ed.*
- ✓ *A Commonsense Guide to Grammar and Usage, 7th ed.*
- A list of language tutors for hire
- An Academic Resources document that lists up-to-date information about language classes and programs at Purdue and in the surrounding community. Copies of this document and of the tutor list are available as pdf. Email vkennell@purdue.edu to request copies.

Daily Conversation Groups

The Writing Lab holds daily Conversation Groups where attendees practice English (listening, speaking, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and cultural information). Weekly topics vary by semester and are broad enough that each day can focus on a different aspect of the topic. One day per week has been designated “TV Snack Chat.” Participants view selected, discuss what they have viewed (the primary focus tends to be vocabulary and culture), and share American snack foods. Table 8 shows attendance by academic classification. Table 9 provides a summary of evaluations from spring semester. See the website for information about current groups: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/esl>

Conversation Group Attendance by Classification			
Undergraduate	Graduate	Other ¹	Total
96	147	142	385

¹The Other category includes Visiting Scholars.

Table 8: Conversation Group Attendance, May 18, 2015-May 7, 2016

Student Evaluations of ESL Conversation Groups	Student Responses	Percentage
How effective was your conversation group leader at encouraging everyone to participate?		
Effective	48	92%
Somewhat effective	4	8%
Not effective	0	0%
How accurate is the following statement? I felt comfortable speaking in the Conversation Group today?		
Accurate	52	100%
Somewhat accurate	0	0%
Not accurate	0	0%

Table 9: Conversation Group Evaluations, January 11 – April 30, 2016

Training for Tutors Who Work with International Students

Tutors in the Writing Lab have varied levels of expertise in L2 writing. Some have no prior experience; others have been trained extensively in teaching ESL. Most tutors are somewhere in between. Table 10 shows the variation in years of experience among all tutors. Table 11 shows the varied knowledge base among tutors on topics related to tutoring second language writers.

Experience Working with International Students in Any Capacity		
	GTAs	UTAs/BWCs
1 year ¹	0%	35%
2-5 years (Purdue only)	36%	41%
2-5 years (Anywhere)	43%	12%
5+ years	21%	12%
UTA/BWC Non-Tutoring Experiences with International Students		
As a classmate		100%
In-class group projects		88%
Personal friendship		76%

¹All GTAs have taught ENGL 106 prior to working in the Writing Lab, which almost guarantees they will have worked with international students at least 1 year prior to tutoring. UTAs/BWCs begin working in the spring semester of the academic year they are hired, so for this group, 1 year of experience most likely means 1 semester.

Table 10: Tutor Experiences with International Students, May 18, 2015-May 6, 2016

Topics in which tutors had little or no knowledge/skill prior to Writing Lab training		
	GTAs	UTAs/BWCs
Cultural issues of assessing L2 writing	8%	63%
Cultural differences in global aspects of writing	42%	63%
Second language acquisition	33%	50%
Cultural issues of conferencing with L2 writers	25%	63%
Grammar problems	17%	56%
Vocabulary problems	42%	44%

Table 11: Differences in knowledge/skill levels among tutors, May 18, 2015 – May 6, 2016

In order to increase tutoring effectiveness with L2 writers, all tutors participate in various types of training to provide them with some expertise in L2 writing and tutoring. Undergrad tutors receive some ESL training during their pre-service practicum, ENGL 390a or 390b. Graduate tutors receive some ESL training during ENGL 502, the practicum they take concurrently with their first semester of tutoring. In addition, several staff meetings per year address issues related to L2 tutoring.

The primary method of tutor professional development for L2 writing is the spring semester intensive ESL training program. Each tutor spends one hour per week working on independent-study style modules on a variety of ESL-related topics. Each module includes theoretical readings and practical activities, and each module allows for self-reflection and discussion with other staff. Topics for the 2015-2016 year included the following:

- Discourse Analysis—A Closer Look at Tutor Talk
- Attitudes and Assumptions
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Cultural Impacts on Writing
- Grammar & Proofreading
- Grammar Requests—What They Might Mean
- Plagiarism
- Second Language Acquisition
- Tutoring
- Vocabulary & Sentences

Each year, tutors are encouraged to anonymously evaluate the program and offer suggestions for future training. Comments from tutors about the training program generally demonstrate the relevance and usefulness it has for their day-to-day tutoring experiences:

- Comments from undergraduate tutors (UTA/BWCs)
 - ✓ *I thought the ESL training was very useful and was essential to me improving as a tutor. As a first semester tutor, I felt extremely unprepared to work with ESL students. The training prepared me for those types of tutorials.*
 - ✓ *My favorite parts of ESL training were the ones that were directly discussing the cultural differences among international students.*
 - ✓ *I learned more about why a non-native speaker might choose to express and structure their sentences and paragraphs differently from someone who is used to the American standards of writing.*
 - ✓ *In one of my sessions, I had a hard time understanding what [the student I was tutoring] was trying to say in his writing because the sentences did not make sense. He struggled with word choice and sentence structure. I used the skills provided in the ESL training to talk to him about what he was trying to say.*

- Comments from graduate tutors (GTAs)
 - ✓ *This semester, I feel like I've improved my vocabulary when talking to students about their writing. I am better able to explain recurring issues clearly and with terminology students are familiar with.*
 - ✓ *Overall, the ESL Intensive Training has made me more aware of the variety of cultural concerns that are possibly at play in any given tutorial; from gendered expectations to various levels of assertiveness to different rhetorical backgrounds to issues L2 writers face with grammar, vocabulary and syntax, I think it has given me more sensitive "radar" for what some international students might be going through with their writing assignments, L2 acquisition, and/or interactions one-on-one with an American tutor.*
 - ✓ *The first training module helped me discern in sessions when it can be helpful to teach a student something, and when it can be helpful to ask them to try something on their own.*

Programs for Graduate Student Writing

The Writing Lab ran one program specifically for international graduate students—the Spring Break Workshop (see PLaCE projects, page 10, for more details). International graduate students and visiting scholars tend to be highly invested in improving their English and writing skills. Note, for instance, that the workshop filled to capacity and had a waiting list almost immediately once the sign-up page was available. In addition, all those who signed up actually attended the workshop.

In addition to the Workshop, international graduate students often attended our general workshops, which are open to all Purdue students, staff, and faculty. For instance, the spring¹ workshops were attended exclusively by graduate students or visiting scholars, and all but one attendee were international students.

Spring workshops: MLA/APA Style & Avoiding Plagiarism (2 of 2 international)
 Grammar Workshop 1: Common Errors (1 of 1 international)
 Grammar Workshop 2: Word Choice (7 of 7 international)
 Academic Writing for Graduate Students (6 of 7 international)

For more information about programs open to all graduate students (domestic as well as international) see the Writing Lab's Annual Report which can be accessed at the following link: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/writinglab/annualreports>

¹ Due to employee turnover and the change to online scheduling, data for fall workshops is unavailable.

Campus and Community Interactions

The Writing Lab regularly works with various individuals and units on campus to support writing efforts generally. We also serve as a source of information about L2 writing specifically. Each year, I consult with a wide range of programs, staff, and instructors at Purdue; community members; and individuals from other academic institutions to share ideas, offer advice, collaborate on projects, and provide information about L2 writing. The following list provides details about the who and what of these interactions, and it offers a glimpse into the range of possibility for collaborating across campus.

- Dan Kenzie, English graduate student—attended one session of his Mentor Group meeting to share information about ESL writers in the classroom and to field questions
- Kyongson Park, 106i & ENGL 620 instructor—made arrangements for allowing the whole 106i class to attend a Writing Lab workshop; attended ENGL 620 class to introduce Writing Lab services to them and to answer questions about improving language skills
- SLS graduate students—talked about a proposal to help L2 writers and whether it might fit with Writing Lab programs
- Gracemarie Mike, Graduate student—discussed potential collaboration between Writing Lab PLaCE projects and the Mechanical Engineering course she worked with
- Thilo B., ECE graduate student—discussed how to broaden his vocabulary
- Jonathan M., undergraduate student in AGR 201—email conversation about how best to allow his Cultural Immersion Project group to attend a conversation group
- Andrew Y., undergraduate tutor—worked with him to arrange practical hours in the Writing Lab for a TEFL certificate he was undertaking; was interviewed for a poster session he presented at the ECWCA conference
- Alan K., 106i student—was interviewed for his course project
- Marisa H., undergraduate student—discussed her options for volunteering with Conversation Group as part of her pursuit of the DiversiKey certificate
- Matthew Allen, PLaCE Coordinator—information-sharing conversations about PLaCE GS plans and how the Writing Lab might support them
- Heather Day, ESL instructor in a local program—discussed problems and solutions for the language help needed by international students at Purdue
- Brett Swann, College of Engineering Administration staff member—discussed language resources for a new faculty member's spouse
- Michael Linnes, Mechanical Engineering Graduate Communications Coordinator—discussed training for TAs who must grade ESL writing and shared the sort of training I do with Writing Lab tutors
- Victoria Loong, Asian American Cultural Center—discussed ways that the Writing Lab and the AAACC could collaborate in the future
- Joanne Lax (College of Engineering Graduate Student Communication Specialist), Lynn Hegewald (First-year Engineering Instructional Support Coordinator), Case Tompkins (CE Continuing Lecturer), Gracemarie Mike (ME Writing Enhancement Program), Brooke Parks (ECE Interpersonal Communications Specialist), Michael Linnes (ME Graduate Communications/Research Coordinator)—meet and greet to share information about

our respective positions, needs for ESL writing support across the College of Engineering, etc.

- Brooke Parks, ECE Interpersonal Communications Specialist—gave a presentation to her incoming ECE graduate students about the Writing Lab’s help for international students; discussed the grammar portion of a course she designed at a previous institution
- Michael Salvo, Director, Professional Writing Program—discussed how the Writing Lab might visit PW mentoring sessions to share strategies for valuing international students in writing settings
- Dorothee Bouquet, Continuing Lecturer in History—discussed writing help for international students in her online course and developed Writing Fellows program for the course
- Undergraduate Students in ENGL 390A and ENGL 390B—met with a small number of undergraduates who were collecting information for research projects; attended their end-of-semester poster session and discussed their projects with them
- OWL Mail—answered questions from around the world about ESL writing
- Afghan Junior Faculty Program visiting scholars (with Tammy Conard-Salvo)—discussed ESL training for writing center tutors, programs we offer, etc.
- Jamie DiOrio, Immaculata University—email conversation about her Grammar Guru program
- Abdoul Rjoub, Jordan University of Science and Technology (with Tammy Conard-Salvo)—discussed how a writing center there might improve their services and how he might personally improve his English
- Michelle Eodice, Director of University of Oklahoma Writing Center—discussed qualifications for ESL specialists in writing centers
- Marc Cummings, Jefferson Community & Technical College (Louisville, KY)—email conversation about ESL course options, their success in preparing students for mainstream composition courses, etc.
- Drop-in visitor from China—showed the Writing Lab space, explained our services, and discussed her colleague’s plans for setting up a writing center in China
- Paul Lee, ESL program in Florida—email and phone conversation about motivating adult ESL learners

Research about International Students in the Writing Lab

Staff in the Writing Lab, including tutoring staff, conduct research on a regular basis. Often this results in conference presentations or publications. Current, ongoing research projects specific to L2 writers include the following:

- Research on the needs of tutors for specialized expertise in L2 writing (see Page 16 for details about the Writing Lab’s intensive ESL training program for tutors).
- Research on the disconnects between the type of help L2 writers request verbally, the type of help they receive during a tutorial (regardless of what they negotiate with the

tutor prior to starting), and the type of work that could be done to improve the paper itself.

Conference Presentations:

Kennell, V.R. (April, 2016). "I worried about pretty much everything': Training tutors to work with L2writers." Individual presentation. East Central Writing Centers Association Conference, Alliance, OH.

Kennell, V.R. (Forthcoming, October, 2016). "I had to discard initial assumptions': Equipping writing center tutors with expertise in second language writing." Individual presentation. Symposium on Second Language Writing, Tempe, AZ.

Kennell, V.R., & Elliot, A. (Forthcoming, October, 2016). "Training tutors to work with L2 writers: Methods and Materials, Principles and Practices." Workshop Presentation. International Writing Centers Association Conference, Denver, CO.