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## Use of Modeling in an ESL Writing Class

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### **Abstract:**

*The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of modeling utilized in an ESL writing class on the writing development, including English proficiency, rhetoric, and composing strategies, of two Taiwanese undergraduate students attending a Midwest university in the U. S. The triangulation of qualitative research methods for this study included field from classroom observations; semi-structured interviews, four interviews with both student participants and two with the instructor; and text analyses of the drafts for the first two essays and the mid-term exam by both students for this writing class. The results of data analyses suggest that modeling very possibly can offer students essential linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural resources and enhance not only their L2 writing abilities but also L2 reading abilities at the same time. Compared to novice writers, the effect of such modeling instruction was more obvious to intermediate writers in expanding their repertoire of rhetorical knowledge, composing strategies than in than English proficiency.*

**Keywords:** Modeling, ESL Writing, instructional conversation

### **1. Introduction**

In Applebee's study (1981), about one third of the secondary teachers assumed that examining how expert or experienced writers write to understand the features of good writing examples could help less-experienced writers produce better writing. This use of writing models, which Hillocks (1986; 1995) labeled the "presentational model," or "text modeling" by Cumming (1995) is in contrast with natural process, advocated by Murray, Graves, Calkins, and some other writing theorists, and environmental mode, proposed by Hillocks. The major distinction between the product-focused presentational mode and the process-oriented instructional modes of writing, including natural process and environmental mode, lies in the kinds of knowledge that these modes of writing instruction can nourish. The presentational mode in teaching writing tends to include "declarative knowledge of form" (Hillocks, 1986); in contrast, both process-oriented modes of writing instruction emphasize the general writing process (Hillocks, 1995) though the environmental mode also recognizes the importance of "task-specific" declarative knowledge of form and procedural knowledge of form and content. Based on the synthesis of his research on these three modes, Hillocks indicated that presentational mode had the least impact in changing students' writing.

However, Cumming (1995) states that modeling refers to the writing that teachers display for helping students to learn, including the textual, cognitive, and social aspects of composing.

#### *1.1. Text Modeling*

Many ESL (English as a second language) teachers assume that it is important to provide students with model texts that closely resemble the types of texts required in learners' academic studies (Horowitz, 1986; Swales, 1990). The text modeling includes the format of syntactic paradigms, essays written by professional authors, or specific rhetorical patterns, which students are asked to analyze and emulate in their own writing. When utilizing text modeling, teachers need to avoid fragmenting writing tasks and promoting knowledge-telling instead of knowledge-transformation.

Fragmenting writing tasks very likely mean turning the process of composing into routine steps or language manipulation exercises, as in controlled composition or sentence building exercises. Instead, conducting modeling at the rhetorical level of text discourse initiates students into the norms of academic writing, while preserving the integral complexity of written composition for academic discourse (Cumming, 1989; 1995). That is, using instructional modeling holistically can provide students with writing prompts to determine appropriate goals, complex representations, uses of their existing knowledge, and ongoing decision when composing.

#### *1.2. Cognitive Modeling*

Cognitive modeling aims to make less-experienced writers be aware of and capable of practicing the complex mental functions during the composing process. This type of modeling requires teachers or experienced writers to demonstrate how they write in order to guide beginning writers practice this type of thinking process when writing. This is because to better understand planning, decision making, or revising activities for developing their writing competence, students need explicit modeling of the cognitive process of composing. It is not possible for students to retrieve such cognitive activities of composing processes through reading text models alone. Cognitive

modeling usually includes “showing” in order to enhance certain thinking strategies that good writers use for writing. Examples of cognitive modeling include the whole-class composing aloud on a given topic, teachers composing in front of the whole class, and more capable peers composing aloud within groups.

Furthermore, the features of different writing tasks would require different thinking process. For instance, analytical writing requires more extensive and complex thinking processes than summary writing (Cumming, 1986; Durst, 1987).

### 1.3. Social Modeling

This type of modeling in teaching writing, involving creating contexts for writing, can foster students’ expertise and the purposeful use of writing. A workshop-like environment is an example of this approach. This classroom-process approach provides the social development of academic writing ability by including well-designed writing tasks with specific academic writing purposes that are relevant to students’ academic or professional concerns. Furthermore, this approach includes group work, providing students with another “scaffolding” to accomplish their projects through helping one another. Examples include group projects, email writing, or some other interactive dialogue journals creating helpful social contexts and interactions for literate communication. Thus, students can develop control over their own learning, thinking, and writing processes.

### 1.4. Explicit Teaching

The explicit writing instruction through these three types of modeling may help students, especially minority or international students, learn and acquire the norms of community discourse either through interactions with texts as syntactic levels only, with texts at rhetorical levels, with teachers’ or peers’ thinking skills, or with workshop-like environment. However, Freedman (1993) argued that explicit teaching, such as modeling, in teaching languages might not be as helpful as what Cumming (1995) claimed. She argued that many of the shared cultural or institutional norms that shape and constrain the distinctive genres are invisible. “They are not perceived because the context is invisible, transparently bound to the ordinary and the everyday” (Freed and Broadhead, 1987, p. 162), reported in Freedman (1993, p. 231). Hence, it is a problem when initiating freshman into communities, since the degree to which the knowledge of participants in knowledge communities is tacit (McCarthy & Fishman, 1991). Since it is difficult for us to articulate the differences of the knowledge of those who are community members and those who are not, Freedman questioned the possibility of explicit teaching.

Krashen commented in his book, *Writing* (1984), that explicit teaching and conscious learning are not possible, except for a limited number of features. First of all, Krashen assumed that the rules of our language are too complex to be fully described, even not by Chomsky. Second, there are too many complex rules to be taught explicitly to students in the context of writing or language. Third, it’s his key conception about teaching and learning. Krashen does not believe that learning which involves conscious learning of rules will result in acquisition which entails the unconscious inference of rules on the basis of exposure to the target language. This is because he assumes that learning and acquisition are separate processes, resulting in different types of knowledge. At best, learning can only carry out the functions of monitoring and editing in small percentage of the rules of language which only include the most general obvious features of format and organization as well as specific editing rules. In short, writing competence does not come from the learning of forms, but subconsciously acquired (p. 20).

Explicit teaching might be dangerous because through learning students according to Krashen (1984) can call on a limited number of language rules, but at the same time they might misapply or overuse these language rules. The other danger is related to the non-insider status of those who attempt to explicate the tacit genre knowledge that only “insiders” can acquire to their students. Therefore, Krashen assumes that even trained writing specialists are not able to teach highly motivated students appropriately about these language uses, due to their non-insider status. Moreover, what language knowledge that we know might be much more than we can say; hence, explicit teaching might have possibilities of preventing students from enacting with their tacit knowledge of languages.

However, Mike Rose (1983) proposed that it is teacher’s job to “determine the organizational patterns of our students in academic discourse, and slowly and systematically teach these patterns” (p. 122). He reported that many remedial students do not have much experience in academic reading or writing before attending colleges; therefore, they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop mature schemata of expected academic discourse. Without such academic schemata, they will not be able to produce the expected organization, “a product feature resulting from appropriate discourse schemata” (p. 121). Thus, he claims the importance for writing teachers to help students learn what coherent, extended texts should be like; otherwise, students who are less-experienced writers cannot write a coherent, extended text.

Like Cumming’s comments on modeling for teaching writing, Rose assumed that those organizational patterns should not be “conceived as or taught as modes or discourse or as rigid frameworks, but simultaneously as strategies by which one explores information and structure by which one organizes” (p. 122). Therefore, he considered that the teaching of these patterns will not restrict students’ “freedom to learn this strategies/structure” (p. 122); instead, such learning will help them to learn more discourse options. He contended that without knowing these organizational patterns, much academic discourse will be beyond these students.

Hillocks (1986) recognized the need of explicit writing instruction to promote writer’s knowledge, “especially procedural knowledge related to form and to the analysis of data” (p. 88). Nevertheless, according to his own meta-analysis of experimental treatments, the use of model compositions is more effective than teaching grammar and more effective than free writing, but not significantly greater than those for free writing. In his study, writing programs using writing models simply required students to learn to identify forms, not procedures to produce standard expository forms. That is, neither the textbooks nor the writing teachers “teach students how to generate and evaluate a thesis statement, a plan, or how to select and evaluate the data to support the thesis” (p. 82). Hillocks pointed

out that many students, less-experienced writers, could barely understand the essays in their college textbooks, not to mention how to internalize the structure in order to learn the anticipated way of academic writing (p. 83).

Furthermore, Smagorinsky's study (1991) suggests that students who are taught solely through the study of model essays have great difficulties to upgrade their writing satisfactorily. Smagorinsky utilized protocol analysis to contrast the effects of instruction in models, general procedure, and task-specific procedures on the composing process of students' writing essays requiring students to define abstract concepts such as "friendship" or "leadership." The students in the groups of model treatment only studied, labeled, and evaluated additional models of definition essays, not including "explicit procedures for generating the elements of a definition (criteria, examples, and contrasting examples (p. 359). These students had neither learned the structure of the essay nor thought clearly in generating their ideas. Meanwhile, students out of the treatments groups of general procedures and task-specific procedures had acquired procedural knowledge of forms to produce the expected elements emphasized in the model essays. In this way, both procedural treatments enhanced the students' critical thinking about the concepts being defined, while task-specific procedures had a stronger effect on students' purposeful composing (p. 359).

### *1.5. Paradigm Shift in Teaching and Learning*

The shifts of the studies in psychology, from behaviorism to maturationism and from maturationism to social constructivism, have redefined teaching of and learning and carry a considerable impact on the teaching and learning of writing, including curriculum design and roles of teachers and learners. Behaviorists believe in knowledge transmission, which is a result of reinforcement, practice, and external motivation (Fostnot, 1996, p. 8). The curriculum is relatively linear and skills-based, believing that learning can occur through careful observations, listening to teachers' explanations and engaging in decontextualized exercises. Teachers are the only authoritarians, responsible for modeling, demonstrating and reinforcing targeted knowledge transmission, and learners are quiet and passive followers, listeners, and observers. The design of this skills-based curriculum is based on a sequence, dividing the direct instruction of predetermined knowledge, from easy to more complex, due to the belief that before introducing more advanced materials, students need to be trained to learn the prerequisite skills.

Maturationism regards that learning depends on learners' developmental stages (Fosnot, 1996). However, with cognitive structure, the result of development, maturationism views learners as active meaning-makers and interpreters of experience. Therefore, age is the major predictor of behavior maturation, and the teacher's role is to prepare a developmental appropriate environment and the curriculum is based on "the analysis of the cognitive requirements of learners and then matched to the learners' stages of development" (p. 10).

Social constructivism, fundamentally non-positivist, is opposite to behaviorism and maturationism although constructivism originated from cognitive science (Fostnot, 1996, p. 10). From this perspective, knowledge is constructed within social contexts for "concept development and deep understanding," rather than transmitted, and "learning is in advance of development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89). Different from Piaget's viewpoint that development constrains learning, Vygotsky proposes that development occurs when children learn general concept and principles that can be applied to new tasks and problems.

Bruner (1987) indicated that the concept of ZPD (zone of proximal development" connects a wide range of Vygotsky's learning and development concepts.

Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able operate only when the child interacts with people in his environments and with his peers. Thus learning is necessary and universal aspect of the process of development culturally organized, especially human, psychological functions. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 80)

Vygotsky introduced ZPD as a different approach to view the relationship between learning and environment. He argued that in terms of development children have two levels, when solving problems, one is the actual level of development, which refers to what they can do alone, and the other is the potential level, which refers to what the can do with assistance. The ZPD refers to the distance between children's actual and potential levels of development, as determined through problem-solving. From social constructivist perspective, thus, dragging learners out of their actual level of development to jointly construct their potential level of development with their teachers or peers is the most effective approach of learning and teaching. In this circumstance, dialogues are useful tools to boost learners to attain their ZPD. Bruner putting an emphasis on modeling claimed that these dialogues serve as instructional scaffolding, which offers learners a climb to their next steps through offering them hints and props before children can manage their own tasks.

Wertsch (1985) believes that providing learners with contextualized, interpersonal interactions, which are usually semantically mediated social processes, can enhance our understanding about the emergence of internal functioning. That is, social interactions through the use of sign system are central to the notion of ZPD because the intellectual skills that learners acquire are directly related to how they interact with the others in problem-solving circumstances. Learners internalize and transform the help from the others and eventually apply these problem-solving strategies to dealing with subsequent problems.

Despite its tendency to confine the teaching and learning within the syntactic scope, modeling seems to have its promising potentials in upgrading students' writing ability especially for less-experienced writers to get a clear sense of the anticipated ways of reading, ways of writing, and most importantly ways of thinking. However, the use of models can help students' writing development is not empirically clear.

### 1.6. Purpose of Research

- i. To study the application of modeling in ESL writing
- ii. To study the effect of modeling in ESL students' writing development

## 2. Research Methodology

This qualitative study was to explore how modeling can be applied in an ESL writing class and investigate the possible effect, if any, of such instructional approach on the writing development of two ESL student participants in this study. A purposeful sampling was conducted in selecting two participants, two Taiwanese undergraduate students, Vivian and Johnny, pseudonyms. After junior high school in Taiwan, Vivian, twenty-one years old, attended a five-year junior college of commerce, and Johnny, nineteen years old, is a high-school graduate. Before this quarter, both of them had been in the U. S. for six months. Vivian took courses at Boston University and Johnny attended the ESL summer program at this Mid-west university. The course instructor had lived in Hong Kong for fourteen years and has been teaching ESL writing over two decades. The triangulation of methods for this study included field from classroom observations; semi-structured interviews, four interviews with both Vivian and Johnny and two with the instructor; and text analyses of the drafts for the first two essays and the mid-term exam by Vivian and Johnny for this writing class.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Why using Modeling in Such an ESL Context

#### 3.1.1. Asian Students' Learning Styles

In most Asian countries, imitation has an important role in the educational system, since most people believe in knowledge-transmission, rather than knowledge- transformation. This phenomenon may be due to the annual national exams in most Asian countries; thus, it is essential for teachers to prepare students with expected, accurate, way of reading and writing, which are usually decoding/bottom-up and decontextualized processes. Therefore, the use of modeling is rather prevalent. The instructor had taught in Hong Kong for many years, is very conscious about what the learning styles and strategies of his students from H.K. are like. He assumed that this is his job to help them out, bridge the gap between students' writing ability and the expected target that they are supposed to achieve. In spite of the controversy over modeling, he intended to help his struggling students from being lost.

- Instructor: So, of the first part of this course, I focus on presentational mode [modeling]. That's most the students have been working through most of their lives, looking for a model.... This is how they are. That is how they have been taught to learn. How can I work with that? What can I bring to the writing classroom to help them?

Though this instructor worried that his student might use the writing models as the only models of the so-called good writing, he also worried that these students were struggling with their reading and writing assignments.

#### 3.1.2. Students' Diverse Backgrounds

Using presentational mode (modeling) is due to the huge diversity among ESL students, in terms of length of time of studying English and English writing. Most of them might have learned English for seven, eight years, but it can be possible that they might not have any so-called English writing courses before. However, for some of them, this 107.01 might be their third or fourth writing course. For this complex situation, there is no way to standardize students' back grounds and situations. Hence, presentational mode can be one way to go.

#### 3.1.3. Competence before Performance

For these intermediate ESL writers, their lack of linguistic and cultural resources makes them stuck in their writing. "I have many ideas, but I don't know how to express them appropriately in English." This is a common expression among this group of students who have not acquired the language intuitive and, more importantly, the appropriateness of using this language, learning the culture that the language represents. For many students, taking such an English writing class for the first time, they might need a solid starting point to begin with.

- Instructor: There is an expression of throwing someone into the deep water. In the L2 writing class, probably the first thing called a writing class that many students from the 107.01 class have even taken in English. Before throwing students into the deep water you have to prepare something for them.

If you say to students, "Write an essay and bring it to me next Tuesday." What does it mean to students who are from Taiwan? I have five-hundred-word essay due next Tuesday. Where do I start? What can I put here? What can I put there? It's kind of complicated issue.

So I'm trying to give them some ideas and how to organize papers though this is not the only way to do it...If you are writing in second language, and no one has ever taught you about writing. How are you going to start with it? What are the readers expecting, things like thesis statements, topic sentences, and so forth?

#### 3.1.4. Building Necessary Foundation

Another reason for using presentational mode during the first five or six weeks is to help students build up certain basic foundations for the second phase of the class, which is more inductive-oriented, modified version of environmental mode, which demands more independent problem-solving reading-writing tasks. That is, to be a more competent problem-solver of their reading and writing

problems, students need to possess certain foundation to have a sense of what the basic norms of good writing are like. In addition, without foundations built through the presentational/deductive approach, students would have become confused in the course had started with the environmental mode.

### 3.1.5. A More Effective Way to Learn the Organization of Western Thoughts

People do not organize their thoughts in the same way as the others do. The instructor pointed out that even the way how we organize our thoughts in one language might not be the same as we do in the other language. However, giving students' a model can assist them in getting a clearer sense of what the criteria of good writing, which students have been searching for, can possibly be. At the same time, they can understand sooner how people in this culture organize their thoughts; what the appropriate way of organizing their thoughts is. At least, modeling can help students in getting a concrete sense of what a clearly-established, well-organized, and well-supported writing looks like.

Instructor: ...for 107, I hope we can expose students to a Western rhetoric context through reading and writing texts to clear, well-organized, and well-supported papers.

We can begin with ideas about what those things mean, what sort of things would be in the paper to make it clear, to make it well-organized, to make it well-supported, and well-developed. And, so I want to provide these things. It's hard to provide these things without presentational mode.

### 3.1.6. Mid-term and Final Exams for 107.01

The mid-term and final exams for 107 are not only to assess their writing ability, but to give them chances to practice writing without all the other type of resources, like tutorials, the use of dictionary, multi-drafts, and plenty of time, to see if they can still develop their thoughts and support their ideas. In short, these exams are to prepare them for the essay exams which are required in the other courses that they are taking.

Furthermore, since there are exams for this course, when selecting materials, designing the curriculum, and things to do for this class, the instructor claimed that they have to anticipate the exams. Hence, presentational mode makes it possible to include examinable things in the use of modeling and explicit teaching, because when teachers holistically grading students' papers, they need to look for certain things that they all agree on, such as thesis statement, topic sentences, and so forth.

### 3.1.7. General Core Elements of Writing

Preparing ESL undergraduate students for their future academic writing is more like a guessing game, nevertheless, there are certain general core elements of writing, which a Western academic audience would anticipate, not a genre, but a fundamental and simpler thing, like basic rhetoric format, ESL writing teachers can stay with and students would need to know as well. According to some 107.01 students, they revealed that they applied what writing strategies that they had learned out of this class to the writing of the papers for the other courses.

- Instructor: When I do tutorials with students, I like to ask them what kind of writing assignment that they have. Many students of the 107 class are taking UVC courses, which are introductory courses to learn more about this university, how to use this, how to use that. I have a lot of students telling me what we are doing in 107 can be applied to the UVC papers.

### 3.2. The Approaches of using Modeling in this ESL Class

According to the course instructor, the goal of this 107.01 class is to prepare students to write a clearly, well-organized and well-supported paper. To achieve this target, this instructor claimed that he adopted a dual instructional approach. During the first five or six weeks or so, he would use deductive approach, which is more presentation-oriented, and for the last four weeks or so, he would make a shift, depending on students' development of their writing abilities, to inductive approach, which is similar to George Hillock's environmental mode of writing instruction (1995). In short, during the first stage of the class, through using deductive approach, he intended to equip students with basic foundations, which would be essential to prepare students for the second stage of the class, inductive approach, in which he planned to create a learning environment for students to acquire language, reading, and writing competence.

- Instructor: During the first five, six weeks or so, I put a lot of emphasis on so-called teacher talk. I did a lot of talking, introducing a lot of aspects of writing. And then look at the last four weeks. As what I call a writing lab, in which students work with peers on their collaborative essay, writing summaries and so forth. Look at the first six weeks. I try to establish the foundation for them. Now I want to see what they can do on with that foundation. I try to pull back a little bit and not so much teacher-talk. So, what I'm trying to pull back a little bit, and do not do much teacher talk. So, what I'm trying not to do is to intervene their ideas if it's unnecessary.

For this instructor, though it is like a guessing game to predict what students' writing needs are, especially undergraduate level, due to the diverse expectations and assumptions about what students have to write, a number of general things can be taught to satisfy the general writing needs, regardless whatever departments students belong to.

- Instructor: So, again, we are trying to stay with certain things that students would need to know. It's not a genre, but simpler fundamental things. Like shape the introductory paragraph, like put the literature review somewhere, probably earlier parts of your paper. Like have some shape of the paragraph.

According to my classroom observations, these general core elements of good academic writing consist of a well-established thesis statement and topic sentences, well-supported and well-organized introductory paragraphs, summary paragraphs (only limited to papers of responding to literary texts), body paragraphs, appropriate quotations, concluding paragraphs. However, the inclusion of procedural knowledge of form had moved this ESL writing instruction go beyond the identification of declarative knowledge of form. Take the second paper, which was a paper of comparison and contrast, for instance. Selecting and organizing points of comparison and appropriate quotations out of reading texts had confused many students of this class. Thus, the instructor brought in an incomplete writing sample, which included a rough introductory paragraph and several points of comparison to invite these students to join him in composing aloud in order to get a clearer and more concrete experience of problem-solving skills in wrestling with writing problems, especially those of organizational patterns, at the rhetorical level, rather at the syntactic level.

Furthermore, one of the major dangers of using modeling in the teaching of writing is that students might end up assuming that the model is the only way doing writing. Though the instructor used modeling in his teaching of ESL writing, due to students' learning strategies, but he said,

- Instructor: but I always worry that they assume that's the only way to write something. Remember that in the interview that Johnny said that following teachers' sample as the correct way. This is worrying me.

Hence, this instructor reported that, before any assignment, though he would think a little bit about sampling, but how much presentational the teaching would be depended on how students responded to writing assignments. He intended to see how much independent that students could become in solving their reading and writing problems before his intervention with explicit teaching and writing samples, because he did not want to impose his blueprints on students.

- Instructor: Before any assignment, I'll think a bit about sampling. What kind of sampling I might do? I don't have a fixed plan for that, for I want to see how students respond to these assignments. You don't know ahead of time how they respond to them. In the class, you can see your reactions. Are they puzzled? Does it seem very clear or uncertain to them? I'm trying to gage their reactions to the assignment. And, I want to look at ideally their drafts. If I see a lot of students have very poor drafts, I'll realize that they are having difficulties with the assignments. I'll intervene and bring in writing sample, as well. But, I want to see how they first react to the assignments.

Furthermore, when to use writing sample is a critical question. Different writing assignments, different students, and different situations might reveal distinct needs of modeling in the classroom.

- Instructor: I don't want to be too prescriptive to them. For example, for the third composition [synthesis paper] that they are working right now, they haven't done any drafts yet, but I have already gone through one sample with the class. It's a synthesis assignment. It's a change from the previous papers, and it's the most complicated assignment. This time, I felt that I need to give them some directions to start. So, we are looking at another sample. So, again, I changed my procedure of sampling, because the assignment has changed and the situation has changed as well.

Apparently, from what indicated above, though this instructor emphasized the significance of teaching general core elements of writing, such as thesis statements, topic sentences, and certain organizational patterns to help students exemplify their opinions, for the demands of different writing assignments he came up with "task-specific" strategies in guiding students acquire necessary composing strategies.

### 3.3. *Effect of Modeling on Two ESL Students' Growth in Writing*

After having modeling their writing instruction, I use the written work of the first two essays and the mid-term exam of these two Taiwanese students to evaluate the effect of modeling on their growth, if any, in writing, including English proficiency, rhetoric, and their composing strategies.

Instructing procedural knowledge is effective in promoting composing strategies, but that it can be time-consuming makes it challenging. The general process procedures require teachers to devote considerable time to engage students in their writing and at the same time to achieve the quite a number of goals, including covering course content, teaching writing, teaching vocabulary, teaching grammar/syntax, teaching reading comprehension and literary understanding, promoting cultural literacy, encouraging global consciousness, preparing students to take standardized tests, and more. Hillocks' theory demands even greater time for teaching each type of writing.

...instruction in task-specific procedures requires teachers to spend a great deal of their planning time thinking about the knowledge one needs to engage in particular writing tasks, identifying procedures that writers can learn to produce them effectively, and designing activities that enable students to learn and practice the procedures (p. 359—360).

However, Smagorinsky (1991) proposes that combining general composing procedure with the study of model essays can be effective in promoting students' writing strategies. Smagorinsky uses the results of Hillocks' meta-analysis of experimental research—in which the use of models is more effective than that of free writing—to imply that studying model essays might strengthen the effects of general procedure. Particularly for tasks with a clear structure, "models appear to help illustrate relationship among ideas and increase among ideas and increase the effectiveness of the procedure." (p. 360)

### 3.3.1. Text Analyses

The major framework of the rationale, used to analyze both Vivian's and Jack's drafts of the first two essays and their mid-term papers, is based on the three domains of writer's knowledge that Myers and Spalding (1997) have included in their book, *Assessing Student Performance Grades 9-12*. Cognition, rhetoric and linguistics are the major concerns.

Cognition consists of strategies for fluent processing in basic decoding (refers to learning the code in reading) and encoding (refers to learning the code of writing), and strategies for metacognitive processing (thinking about thinking), including processes for initial understanding, putting ideas together (interpretation), connecting personal experience and text, summarizing and paraphrasing, and developing a critical stance.

Rhetoric refers to interactions among narrator, audience, subject and types of discourse (literary, information).

Linguistics/Conventions refers to three kinds of language structures and practices, text structure (paragraphs, meter, rhyme, figures of speech, Literary forms, and so forth), language structure (grammar), and conventions (mechanics, such as spelling, punctuation, usage, capitalization, and other editing forms (Myers & Spalding, 1997, p.xi-xvii)

### 3.3.2. Vivian's writing Development

The fact that Vivian was a good reader, who, to some extent, had a clear concept of the format of an essay, can be one of her advantages for developing her writing ability in English. However, her developing language proficiency in English had confined her in exemplifying her ideas appropriately.

Before this class, it seemed that Vivian had certain ideas about the format of an essay and the use of thesis statements and topic sentences. However, after in-class instruction, including modeling, of this course and the instructor's written comments and feedback at tutorials, apparently she had upgraded her writing ability in the movement of an introduction, clear establishment of a thesis statement, and exemplification, especially by using quotations. However, Vivian still needed to work more on establishing her topic sentences and exemplifying further of her controlling ideas.

Overall, the development and establishment of her ideas were fluent; however, she might need to work more on some of her sentence structures, sentence-level grammar, including verb tenses, the use of relative pronouns, and transitional connectors.

In terms of the growth of composing strategies, rhetorical knowledge and English proficiency, Vivian had made more obvious progress in composing strategies and rhetorical knowledge than English proficiency. As a matter of fact, her developing English proficiency, particularly in the use of vocabulary and certain sentence structure, somewhat obscured her ability in exemplifying her opinions extensively and coherently. Anyway, she did make apparent progress in learning more problem-solving strategies for planning and revising, and upgrading her writing ability demonstrated in her movement of an introductory paragraph, clear establishment of thesis statement, and exemplifications through using quotations.

### 3.3.2. Johnny's writing Development

Apparently, Johnny had trouble in his reading texts. He did not have a clear idea about the format of an essay (though he had a rough idea shown in the final draft of the second essay and the mid-term paper), so he used to start with rather rough writing plans, floating to wherever he thought that he could possibly go in developing and organizing his controlling ideas. Furthermore, his limited English proficiency caused him serious trouble in getting his points through. Thus, it was not a surprise to find that his controlling ideas were not clearly established and well-supported and that the organizations were not systematic.

Johnny did not have clear ideas about the format of an essay, the thesis statement, topic sentences and exemplifications by quotations or examples from the reading texts. Most of the time, his controlling ideas were not clearly stated and well-established, and the quotations or details, used to exemplify his opinions were vague or confusing. Thus, it was conjectured that Jack might not have much sense of audience, when composing. Compared to the drafts of the first essay, his final draft of the second essay demonstrated that he had acquired some ideas of the format of an essay, especially the movement from a general contest to more specific focus in the introduction; however, he was still vulnerable in establishing his thesis statement and topic sentences clearly and in exemplifying his opinions systematically and supportively.

In general, Johnny's English proficiency made him struggle a great deal when developing and organizing his controlling ideas in this foreign language. As indicated by his choppy sentences in his writing, he had problems with sentence structure, sentence-level grammar, including subject-verb agreement, tenses, the use of articles, and word forms, and the use of vocabulary, punctuation and spellings.

Johnny was a typical basic writer, who was severely confined by his limited English proficiency and motivation as well, rarely doing global revisions, and through organizational planning when drafting; instead, letting his writing float wherever his thoughts went. Hence, he had great difficulties in accomplishing clear, well-supported, and well-organized essays. However, compared to the drafts of his first essay, his final draft of the second essay showed that he had acquired some declarative knowledge of form and rather limited procedural knowledge of form though it was conjectured that his limited language proficiency and interests in writing made him vulnerable in clearly establishing thesis statements and topic sentences and in exemplifying his controlling ideas coherently and cohesively.

## **4. Discussions**

Due to the limited scope of using modeling in such an ESL setting that this mini- study could investigate, the results here can only be applied to reflect the pedagogical implications for this single 107.01 class.

The use of modeling or explicit teaching helped equip students with a pregenre to prepare them for general exceptions of their academic writing assignments, including clearly established thesis statements and topic sentences and well-supported and well-organized introductory, body and concluding paragraphs, was resonant with Krashen's (1984) argument that the most obvious and general features of format of organizations and editing rules can be learned.

However, despite that this instructor agreed that competence is before performance, his assumption that learning is before development is in different from what Krashen believed. Within this ESL classroom, it is believed that learning can stimulate development through the use of social interactions to internalize learners' development. The obvious progress that Vivian had made in upgrading her rhetorical knowledge and composing strategies showed the important needs of this type of learning, especially in promoting her procedural knowledge of form. Though Johnny only made limited progress in acquiring both declarative knowledge of and procedural knowledge of form, this type of instruction still enhanced his learning to some extent of both declarative and procedural knowledge of form.

Usually, conventionally, the fact that modeling may have the tendency of confining students' attention within the scope of textual domains is due to ignoring the cognitive and social parts of composing, (Cumming, 1995, p.381). However, according to Cumming, there is an increase attention of research paid to the effect of modeling on ESL students' writing development, especially in helping them get a clearer sense of the conventional norms of good writing. Modeling can also serve as their linguistic and cultural resources in American English, when at the same time easing the burning problems of their diverse background in English writing experiences. The instructional approach of using modeling is such an intermediate ESL writing class incorporated not only text modeling, but also social and cognitive modeling. That is, using Hiellocks' jargons of writers' knowledge, the writing instruction found in this mini-study has included both declarative knowledge of and procedural knowledge of form, demonstrated through the instructor or together with his students composing aloud or brainstorming on a given topic.

The types of modeling that this instructor conducted in the class could overlap or shift to one another frequently or even constantly, depending on the lesson plan, students' motivation and teachers' instructional strategies. According to Krashen, teacher's role is critical in making acquisition happen through his teaching strategies in making sure that students obtain sufficient exposure to written discourse and immersion into relevant learning contexts. However, students' intention, motivation, anxiety, and learning strategies can make all the differences as well in their writing development. Furthermore, to Krashen, pushing "students to produce meaningful discourse within authentic contexts through appropriate assignments and with appropriate feedback" can be critical as well.

The collaborative reading and writing assignment, in which teacher designed the teacher designed and facilitated this activity and students worked with peers to apply what they had learned during the previous period of time, can be an ideal example of such a learning environment, proposed by Krashen.

Time constraints can be an obstacle in providing students and the teacher sufficient time to think more carefully about the reading and writing that they did aloud in the class. Smagorinsky (1991) suggests that combining general procedure of composing process and the study of model can compensate the lack of declarative knowledge of form in the general procedure of composing process and be more time-saving. This can be a great idea for basic or beginning writers; I am wondering how effective this approach can be in helping advanced writers upgrade their writing ability without studying task-specific knowledge to meet the demands of specific writing tasks.

As for writing development, Vivian had clearly made more progress in composing strategies and upgrading her rhetorical knowledge than Johnny, whose writing development was confined by his own interests in writing and limited English proficiency though he did acquire some rhetorical knowledge and limited composing strategies. Vivian's growth in her declarative knowledge of and procedural knowledge of form promoted her growth in writing, Johnny had acquired some declarative knowledge of form, but his lack of sufficient procedural knowledge of form, which may be influenced by his limited English proficiency in understanding the reading texts, supposedly used as writing models, confined him from developing his composing strategies satisfactorily.

Furthermore, it is conjectured that the more apparent growth that Vivian had made in rhetoric and composing strategies than English proficiency after such an instructional approach, which incorporated the teaching of composing strategies, rhetoric, and grammar, might demonstrate that modeling can enhance more growth in composing strategies and rhetorical knowledge than second language proficiency, particularly during a limited period of time.

Anyway, it is important to note that there more many more visible or invisible factor, intervening their development of writing abilities. And, here, what the major instructional approach that this instructor used in this writing class, was based on different types of modeling, so, as a result, it is clear that the use of modeling (and the other parts of presentational mode) somewhat served as a necessary mediation in helping students to learn and acquire the norms of good writing and the primary thinking skills, especially in planning, revising, and mostly problem-solving, during reading and writing processes.

## 5. Conclusion

Vivian obviously utilized strategies derived from the social and cognitive skills of the composing process in writing and from the explicit talks of the procedural knowledge and declarative knowledge of form. Her progress in her writing in English revealed that the use of modeling in this class has great potentials in upgrading ESL students' writing and reading competence. However, there are several critical factors, needed to be attended. First of all, teachers need to analyze and create "task-specific" (Smagorinsky, 1991) activities that will allow students to upgrade their reading and writing abilities within a meaningful social context through "sufficient" exposure to written texts and immersion into the almost authentic and meaningful learning environment. On the other hand, concerning the interdependent relationship between teachers and students, learner's intention, including the reduction of anxiety, high motivation, sufficient problem-solving skills, in learning can make all the differences in their learning and developing of reading and



writing. Finally, allowing learners to have contact with the most authentic and meaningful learning context is fairly important as Krashen suggested, the mediation of appropriate assignment and feedback in upgrading their reading and writing competence.

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