

The role of prior genre knowledge  
in the English for Academic Purposes classroom:  
A study of students' perceptions

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**“Just that writing is so hard” ~ (Alice, 28/03/2013)**

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“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

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### Notations and Abbreviations

EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FYC	First-year Composition
GBWI	Genre-based Writing Instruction
L1	First language
RGS	Rhetorical Genre Studies
TBLI	Theme-based language instruction
[ ]	Contains summary notes, editorial comments or clarification.
( )	Sensitive information replaced with an alias or a generic
AAA	All capital letters indicates louder volume
!	To signal excitement, passion or anger

## Glossary

**A (03:34):** An example of a time stamp used to indicate turn taking in the Participants' transcripts. The *A* indicates the speaker (Alice). The (03:34) indicates that this comment occurred at minute 3:34 of the interview.

**English for Academic Purposes (EAP):** “the language of school that students must interpret and use fluently... It is characterized by complex, symbolic, metaphoric, and technical vocabulary...knowledge of the less frequent vocabulary of English as well as the ability to interpret and produce increasingly complex written language” (Cummins & Man Yee-Fun, 2007, p. 801).

**Genre awareness:** the ability to recognize a genre but not necessarily produce it (Artemeva & Fox, 2010).

**L1 dominant bilingual:** an individual “whose proficiency in one language is higher than that in the other language(s)” (Butler & Hakuta, 2006, p. 115).

**Transfer:** a complex process of using prior knowledge in new context

### **Abstract**

The study explores English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students' perceptions of (a) their awareness and knowledge of written academic genres in the first languages (L1s) and in English, which they acquired in previous writing experiences and (b) the relationship between their prior L1, English, and current EAP writing. The qualitative empirical study uses a combination of Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approaches to genre as its theoretical framework. The data collected from eight participants include responses to a questionnaire and semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Interview transcripts were thematically coded using the analytical techniques informed by the modified constructivist grounded theory. The data analysis has revealed that the student participants' L1 genre knowledge is implicit, that they perceive their prior L1 and English academic writing experience as limited, and that they do not see any connection between their prior writing experiences and current EAP writing. The study suggests that such perceptions may hinder successful transfer of EAP students' prior genre awareness and knowledge to their current EAP practices. The implications for genre-based EAP pedagogy are discussed.

## 1. Introduction

“Developing academic proficiency in English is a gradual, protracted process.”  
(Crossman & Pinchbeck, 2012, p. 231)

### Background of the Study

The composition of the average Canadian university class is evolving to reflect a more global nature of higher education. Universities are actively attracting international students and that, coupled with the increased levels of immigration, has created a large increase in the numbers of non-native English speakers in Canadian universities (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Fox, Cheng, Berman, Song & Myles, 2006). According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2013), the number of international students in 2012 topped 100,000, reflecting an increase of 60% from 2004. Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (2011) provides the number of international students in Canadian universities as 116,890 in 2010, with approximately 40% or more than 46,000 of them attending universities in Ontario. This dramatic increase in the number of international students is also occurring in other major English speaking countries including the United States, where the numbers have increased to over 580,000 by 2007 and the United Kingdom where international students now make up 13% of the British student population (Tardy, 2009).

Another group of students joining the international students in the EAP and ESL classes in Canadian universities is the Generation 1.5 students. Generation 1.5 students are foreign-born citizens of English speaking countries, who came to the English speaking countries at a young age (Foin & Lange, 2007; Garnett, 2012; Kim & Duff, 2012; Thonus, 2003). In his study of 17 academic articles, Garnett (2012) found that this

term was rarely used in Canadian literature. Consequently, it is difficult to identify the numbers of Generation 1.5 students in Canadian primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. According to the 2006 Census, 252,000 people immigrated to Canada, which has been a relatively constant number over the past 15 years. Statistics Canada does not report the number of school-aged immigrant children, but estimates that approximately 15% are between the ages of 15 and 24, or about 38,000 students (Statistics Canada, 2008). By combining the number of international and Generation 1.5 students, the total number of students perhaps needing language support services, like English as a Second Language (ESL) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes, in Canadian universities tops 150,000.

The international and Generation 1.5 students in the EAP programs represent a wide range of non-native speakers of English with different linguistic backgrounds, disciplinary knowledge, academic cultures and levels of education, from high school to graduate school. It is therefore challenging for the instructors and the EAP programs to create curricula that address all of the students' differences and help learners adapt their writing to meet the requirements of the EAP and other current disciplinary courses.

For some of the international students and many of the Generation 1.5 students, English may now be their primary language for daily communication. However, they may still face some difficulties in producing the required academic texts and communicating at a high level in a university context in Canadian and American schools (Dooley, 2010; Kim & Duff, 2012; Raymond & Des Brisay, 2000; Schechter, 2012; Tardy, 2009). These speakers require some form of support to aid in their acculturation into the Canadian academic and social culture. One form of support found in most Canadian

universities is the EAP program. The purpose of the EAP classes is to provide the students with the language proficiency and linguistic knowledge needed to succeed in their chosen academic majors (Cheng, Myles, & Curtis, 2004). For many of the EAP students, this may be their first time living in a predominantly English speaking country, their first time away from home, and their first time in a Western university. Therefore, EAP students are facing not only linguistic challenges, but also challenges in the new Canadian and academic culture.

Even the advanced EAP students, who appear to have the linguistic knowledge needed to understand the writing assignments and produce the required text, still exhibit some difficulties producing the academic English papers. As has been shown (Littlewood & Liu, 1996; Sasaki, 2001; Söter, 2001; Tardy, 2009; Wee, Sim & Jusoff, 2009), this perceived lack of academic English writing experience may leave the students feeling unprepared to face the linguistic demands of their EAP course. This raises a question of the possibility of transfer of skills, strategies, or familiarity with specific types of academic writing from the students' L1s to English.

The concept of transfer (Ellis, 1997) as related to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers to any impact the English language learners (ELL) L1s has on their acquisition of an additional language. Negative transfer, where the learner's L1 impedes or causes problems for the learner, and positive transfer, where the learner's L1 helps his/her to more easily understand the new language because of similarities between the two languages (Ellis, 1997), could both be reflected in the learner's English academic writing. I wondered if some of the difficulties faced by EAP students in producing the required appropriate texts could be in some way related to transfer or lack of transfer of

their awareness and knowledge of academic writing from their prior L1s and English academic writing experiences. Tardy (2009) also recognized that international students might face various barriers to their success in an English university, including their English proficiency, the ability to communicate and understand both written and spoken English, and their prior academic writing experiences. In order to identify factors affecting the EAP students' production of the target texts in the EAP classroom, I first needed to determine the nature of the EAP students' academic writing experiences.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study focuses on ELLs enrolled in an EAP program at a mid-size Canadian university. As a former teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) overseas, and a teaching EAP assistant and EAP instructor in a Canadian university's EAP program, I have noticed over the years that EAP students often claim to be inexperienced academic writers. Even though examinations of the EAP students' perceptions of their academic writing experiences and the value and purposes of the EAP courses have received little attention in the literature (Dooley, 2010), as a practicing EAP teacher I became interested in considering the students' perceptions of their prior L1 and English academic writing experiences and the relationship between these prior writing experiences and their EAP writing. How could, I thought, EAP students with undergraduate or Master's degrees from their home countries possibly be inexperienced academic writers in their L1? In addition to their prior L1 writing experiences, the EAP students also have prior academic writing experiences in English. All of the EAP students in my classes have indicated to me that they took a significant number of English language classes in their home countries and in Canada prior to entering the EAP class. However, EAP students do not

seem to acknowledge those experiences and their role in their EAP writing. Since they indeed wrote academically in the past, either in their L1s or in English, or in both languages, this might be more of an issue of students' perceptions of their prior academic writing than a report on their actual experience.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the EAP students' (a) awareness of their L1s and prior English writing experiences, (b) perceptions of their prior writing experiences and possible connections (if any) between these experiences and their writing in the EAP class, and (c) the effects of EAP on students' perceptions of the English language in order to identify the values and purposes students attribute to EAP courses. The investigation focuses, in particular, on students' perceptions of their knowledge and awareness of recurrent and recognizable types of writing (i.e., genres) (Devitt, 2004; Millet, 1984) in their L1 and English.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What genre knowledge and awareness do the students reportedly bring with them into the EAP class from their L1 and prior English education?
2. What, if any, connections do the students perceive between their prior L1 and English genre knowledge and awareness, and the current EAP writing requirements?
3. How does EAP class affect the students' perceptions of English?

The research study designed to seek answers to the research questions is presented in the thesis as follows: Chapter 2 situates this study with its theoretical framework in the discussion of current literature. Chapter 3 presents the study design and describes data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 discusses the research findings and the conclusion,

Chapter 5, provides a summary of the study, along with the study's implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter situates my research in the fields of genre studies, genre-based pedagogies, transfer, and English for Academic Purposes. I begin with an introduction to the theories relating to genre studies and the definitions of genre. Next, I discuss the literature related to transfer of genre awareness and knowledge within and across the disciplines and across languages. Following that, I provide a discussion of EAP courses and current EAP research. Lastly, I include an introduction to the research into beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge (BAK) of EAP instructors and the students.

### **Theoretical Framework for This Study**

In the past 30 years, genre studies has attracted attention of many researchers looking at writing in professions, education, business and other spheres of human activity (e.g., Amidon, 2005; Bawarshi, 2003; Bhatia, 1993; Chen & Hyon, 2005; Devitt, 1991; Forman, & Rymer, 1999). This high level of interest in genre studies was reflected in the most recent genre conference, *Genre 2012: Rethinking Genre 20 Years Later*, hosted by Carleton University that attracted hundreds of scholars from around the world. In general, genre studies helps researchers to investigate questions concerning discourse and its role in communication and examine the ways in which writers (or speakers) act meaningfully in order to achieve the goals set out by the community (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). Within the context of EAP and writing studies, increasing attention has been paid to genre awareness and genre-based pedagogies (e.g., Hyland, 2002, 2003, 2004b; Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002, 2003; Paltridge, 2001). Several approaches to the study of genres and genre pedagogies have been developed over the past decades. In this study, I draw on

two Anglophone approaches, that is, English for Specific Purpose (ESP) and Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS).

### **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)**

ESP is the genre studies tradition originating with Swales and Fanning's (1980) work on the variety of the English language used in the medical laboratory. Their work focused on the language used in medical textbooks and manuals in order to develop a pedagogy, which would help non-native English speaking medical laboratory technicians and medical students to become effective professional communicators in English.

Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) define ESP as focusing on “studying and teaching specialized varieties of English [further referred to as genres], most often to non-native speakers of English, in advanced academic and professional settings” (p. 41). ESP developed alongside English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, usually in a non-English speaking country (Flowerdew, 2002).

A genre is defined by Swales (1990) as “comprising a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p. 58) or as “communicative vehicles for the achievement of goals” (p. 46). These communicative purposes or goals must be “recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community” (p. 58), where a discourse community is defined as a group of people with a shared or common goal that is achieved through communication. Swales (1990) proposes six characteristics of a discourse community, that is, it needs a set of common public goals; must have the ability to communicate to the other members; has some form of information exchange where the members must participate; needs to have at least one

genre that is identified as belonging to or identifying the group; should have their own jargon and vocabulary; needs to have a balance between experts and novices (pp. 25-27). In addition, the names given to the genres often come from the members of the discourse community (Swales, 1990, p. 58).

The main goal of the ESP pedagogy is to raise students' awareness of the communicative purpose, social context, and textual and rhetorical conventions of the genre (Swales, 1990), where by rhetorical conventions are agreed upon manners of effectively accomplishing a purpose through language, and these rhetorical conventions vary in different discourse communities and genres. This awareness is developed through the explicit analysis of the genres in the classroom (Tardy, 2009). One specific subsection of ESP is EAP, with its focus on the teaching and research of academic English, or "the language of school that students must interpret and use fluently" (Cummins & Man Yee-Fun, 2007, p. 801). By its nature, EAP focuses on helping learners to acquire the language skills needed to be successful in their chosen academic fields (Johns, 2013, p. 6). For this reason, many EAP researchers focus on pedagogy or teaching methods that apply ESP research to classroom teaching (Basturkmen, 2006, 2010; Feak & Swales, 2009, 2011; Hyland, 2004b; Swales & Feak 2000, 2004, 2011).

ESP genre analysis focuses on the regular occurrence of rhetorical and linguistic patterns, that allow researchers and teachers to distinguish one text type from another, leading to the creation of models or exemplars that are recognized as such by the discourse community (Swales, 1990, p. 58). ESP genre analysis is rooted in Swales's (1990) rhetorical move/step analysis (see, for example, his *Create-a-Research Space*

[CARS] model for research article introductions, p. 141). In this Swalesian genre analysis, a move is a “defined and bounded communicative act that is designed to achieve one main communicative objective” (Swales & Feak, 2000, p. 35). Thus, each move serves a specific purpose. This form of genre analysis has been used to generate models that can in turn be used as a tool for teaching, thus using the ESP genre analysis as a heuristic tool for the analysis and development of genre based classroom materials (Flowerdew, 2002; Johns, 1997; 2002; Swales & Feak, 2004).

### **Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS)**

Rhetorical Genre Studies, also known as the North American Genre School or New Rhetoric genre theory, originated in North America. The most important feature of RGS is its primary focus on recurrent patterns of the social context and the view of textual patterns as realizations of underlying regularities (Artemeva & Freedman, 2006). In her seminal work *Genre as Social Action*, Miller (1984) defines genre as “a typified rhetorical action based in recurrent situations” (p. 151). This description does not focus on the genre’s textual features or the textual realization of the genre but on the genre’s role as an action (Miller, 1984). The RGS definition of genre focuses on the interrelationship between the text and its context, including the purpose, audience, and exigence (need). Miller (1984) defines exigence as a “socially recognized... form of social knowledge—a mutual construing of objects, events, interests, and purposes that not only links them but also makes them what they are: an objectified social need” (p. 157). Adam and Artemeva (2002) explain the genre “includes a multitude of things—the exigencies which bring about the need for some form of discourse, the ways in which we actually compose it, whether we collaborate in order to do so, when we read it, why, how,

and where” (p. 180). Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré (1999) defined the situation or social environment of genre as “a shared, communally available, culturally defined reality” (p. 18).

Therefore, a genre is created in response to an underlying need, or exigency. Although the genre is responding to this need, it might not be doing so in a single fixed manner. Freedman (1999) suggests genres are not rules but sets of choices where “human agents continually enact genres, and during such enactment they have the opportunity to challenge and change these genres, thereby opening the possibility of resistance and subversion” (p. 765). Genres guide the user by supplying the sets of appropriate responses that the “human agent” chooses at each step of the genre’s production and by this action or the enactment of choice, genres can, as Miller (1984) says, “change, evolve, and decay”(p. 163). However, for the discourse community to perceive or recognize the genre, it needs to be, as Schryer (1994) indicates, “stabilized-for-now or stabilized enough site of social or ideological action” (p. 108).

The key idea within RGS is that genre is responding to social context, or as Freedman (1999) states echoing Miller, genres are “typified actions in response to recurring social contexts” (p. 764). Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) similarly identify genre as having “become increasingly defined as ways of recognizing, responding to, acting meaningfully and consequentially within, and helping to reproduce recurrent situations” (p. 3). In RGS, the focus on genre as action is expressed by Schryer’s (1995) use of genre as a verb: “we genre our way through social interactions, choosing the correct form in response to each communicative situation we encounter” (as cited in Adam &

Artemeva, 2002, p. 181). The most poetic description of genre comes from Bazerman (1997) who suggests genres are “not just forms. Genres are forms of life, ways of being” (p. 9). Bazerman goes on to suggest, “Genres shape the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact” (p. 19). In this way, genre is comparable to a balloon filled with water, as the balloon gives shape to the water; it is also shaped by the water. That is, genres shape the context to which they are responding and, at the same time, are shaped by the context.

Genre knowledge is not only concerned with a set of steps to complete or a form to take, but also focuses on the when and how it is appropriate to produce the genre. Knowing what to write is only important if one knows to write it at an appropriate time because, as Freedman (1994) explains, to produce genres “at inappropriate places and times is to run the risk of having them ruled out” (p. 59). Having knowledge of a particular genre gives the learner an understanding of the situation the genre responds to and the genre's textual realization, and, importantly, the “keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community” (Miller, 1984, p. 165). It can also give the writer a sense of membership in the community of discourse (Giltrow, 2002).

At their roots, the definitions and descriptions above all focus on genres in terms of being actions situated in a social context, reoccurring, and being understood by the people who use them in a shared social context and for a shared purpose. Russell (1997) suggests thinking of this social context as “an ongoing dynamic accomplishment of people acting together with shared tools, including – most powerfully – writing” (p. 508).

**Bringing the genre traditions together.** Both ESP and RGS have a distinct view of genre. However, Swales (2009) confirms a narrowing of the gap between ESP and RGS: “what had become known as the genre movement had coalesced somewhat, with the result that the divisions among the . . . traditions have become much less sharp—even if they have not entirely disappeared” (p. 4). Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) are also trying to bring schools of genre together with their unifying explanation of genre as:

a teaching tool, particularly as a way to develop students’ awareness of how rhetorical conventions are meaningfully connected to social practices and how, as a result, genre knowledge can help students recognize and adapt more effectively and critically to new writing contexts. (p. 314)

Written rhetoric was traditionally seen a persuasive form of discourse meant to sway the reader to the author’s point of view (Conner, 1996). Rhetoric is defined by Swales (1990) as “the use of language to accomplish something” (p. 6), or as Ilie (2006) suggests, rhetoric is the “art of effective expression” (p. 575). Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) are combining concepts that, in the past, were seen as the purview of the separate schools of genre studies, including the focus on teaching and instruction (ESP) with the concept of genre as “social practice” (RGS).

In this study, I follow Tardy's (2009, 2011) call for combining ESP and RGS perspectives and draw on both the ESP and RGS traditions of genre analysis. Such a combined perspective is feasible because of their complementary and somewhat overlapping perspectives on genre. A combination of these complementary approaches,

RSG and ESP, promises to be useful in examining the students' perceptions of the role of their prior genre knowledge in the English for Academic Purposes classroom.

**Genre versus Text Type.** A single text can be labelled as representing a specific genre or text type. Biber suggests that genres characterize “texts on the basis of external criteria, such as a text that is written or spoken by a particular person, for a particular audience, in a particular context, for a particular purpose, and viewed by the discourse community as being an example of the particular genre” and contrasts this notion of genre with the concept of the text type, which he describes as “representing rhetorical modes [repeated methods or patterns of presenting discourse] such as 'problem-solution,' 'exposition,' or 'argument' type texts that are similar in terms of internal discourse patterns, irrespective of genre” (as cited in Paltridge, 2002, pp. 73-74). I follow this distinction proposed by Biber further in the thesis.

**Genre awareness and knowledge in L1 and English.** The focus of this study is on an examination of the genre awareness and knowledge as perceived by EAP students. There have been few studies on genre awareness and knowledge transfer across languages, as most of the studies examine the transfer of this knowledge within a single language. For example, Tardy (2006) examined 60 studies that investigated how writers learn genres in the L1 and English and found that studies tended to focus on only the L1 or English but not both. Only a few studies have examined the cross-linguistic transfer, or the transfer of genre knowledge from one language to another. For example, Gentil (2011) does reflect on questions related to biliteracy, the study of literacy across two languages, and cross-linguistic transfer of genre knowledge or genres in L1 and L2 writing, and suggests the theoretical concept of genre competence that allows to better

understand the phenomenon of biliteracy (p. 15). The concept of genre competency draws on Tardy's (2009) model of genre knowledge, and the notions of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), and common underlying proficiency (CUP) (Cummins, 2000). Genre competence was also discussed by Artemeva and Fox (2010) in their study of genre awareness, transfer, and utilization by engineering students enrolled in an engineering communication skills course. Artemeva and Fox explored the relationship between the students' genre awareness and their ability to produce the genre, and further developed the concept of disciplinary genre competence as the ability to complete the required action and produce the genre. They define "'creative' understanding, or 'embodied experience,' ... as disciplinary genre competence" (Artemeva & Fox, 2010, p. 482).

### **Transfer of Learning**

**Transfer of genre knowledge and awareness.** Addressing the issue of transfer of learning in an educational context, Nowacek (2011) asks the question, "Why and how do students connect learning from one domain with learning in another domain and how can teachers facilitate such connections" (p. 3)? In this section, I discuss if and/or how genre awareness and knowledge that the EAP students gain in their L1s or through their prior English academic writing experiences may help EAP students with their current academic English writing in the EAP class. I start by discussing the transfer of genre knowledge and awareness within the L1 and within English for ELLs, and then consider the possibility of cross-linguistic transfer from the EAP students' L1s to English. The next section of this chapter discusses what, if anything can and is being transferred.

Then, I examine the factors that can affect the transfer, and finally, focus on the implications of this literature review.

The literature on transfer of genre awareness and knowledge appears to form three clear groups in terms of the languages used in the transfer, with the majority of the papers addressing transfer within English or from one L1 English context to another L1 English context (e.g., Artemeva & Fox, 2010; Brent, 2010; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). Artemeva and Fox (2010) and Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) both look at native English speakers and the transfer from high school classes into first year university classes. Artemeva and Fox (2010) looked at engineering students while Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) looked at American high school students entering a first year composition class (FYC). In the field of writing studies, one of the best-examined groups of students is the FYC students in US universities. This group was the central focus of the work by Reiff and Bawarshi (2011), whose study was the largest empirical study reviewed, involving 117 students from two major US universities, University of Tennessee (UT) and the University of Washington (UW). Other L1 – L1 transfer studies focus on the transfer of learning from school to the workplace (Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Paré, 1999; Toumi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003).

Transfer within the learners' L2 is an additional area of interest (Cheng, 2007; James, 2010). The reason for this interest in L2-L2 transfer is that these studies look at how L2 speakers utilize, in their other disciplinary courses, the knowledge learned in their EAP class. This is an important area of research as it addresses the question of the effectiveness of the current pedagogy in the EAP classroom and could indicate how these classes could be more successful in preparing L2 students for future writing activities. The main reason for the larger number of studies on this L1-L1 and L2-L2 transfer is that

researchers are interested to learn if the skills and knowledge gained in various writing courses, like the American FYC (First-year composition) courses, may transfer to the students' other disciplinary courses or how knowledge gained in one context may transfer to another context.

The role of genre knowledge in L1 and L2 writing has been the focus of many studies investigating transfer of genre knowledge from FYC to other disciplinary classes (e.g., Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Wardle, 2007), genre-based pedagogies (e.g., Cheng, 2007; Devitt, 2004; Gebhard & Harman, 2011; Hyland, 2007; Johns, 2011), and, fewer, on the transfer of genre knowledge from the EAP class to other disciplinary classes (James, 2010). There appears to be only a limited number of publications that address the transfer of genre knowledge between a learner's L1 and L2. The issue of cross-linguistic genre knowledge transfer was addressed by Mein (2012), who found that although there was a great focus on learning genres by English writers, much less has been done on L1 genre knowledge and its use by ELLs in their academic writing. In fact, it appears that only one empirical study so far has explicitly examined transfer of genre awareness and knowledge from L1 to English (Mein, 2012). Mein presents a case study with only a single participant, a Mexican graduate student studying in the U.S., in which she examines the transfer from non-academic genres in the participant's L1 (Spanish) into academic genres in English.

Gentil (2011) examines similar L1 to L2 transfer. While Gentil acknowledges that most studies of genre in second language writing have mainly focused on the genre knowledge in the L2, he suggests that in any genre research involving biliterate students, that is, those who are literate in two languages, there needs to be a focus on the writers'

L1 and L2 genre knowledge and its transfer. His work focuses on the interaction between genre knowledge and language proficiency in biliterate writers. One reason for this focus is, as Gentil indicates, that genre knowledge held in common by two languages may be “acquired in one language and used in another language” (p. 7). In order to understand this type of transfer, the first step would be to gain an understanding of “what kinds of prior knowledge they [students] bring to the writing situation at hand so as to help them draw upon it as they develop the knowledge domain that they lack to accomplish that genre” (p. 19). Gentil also advocates the possible transfer of this genre knowledge across languages. However, for this transfer to occur, certain conditions need to be met, including the writer having sufficient L2 proficiency to realize the genre in the L2 and that the social and cultural expectations for the genre are similar in the L1 and the L2 (p. 15). Kobayashi and Rinnert (2013) in their study of the writing knowledge in multiliterate writers have noted how this biliteracy genre perspective is helpful in identifying and explaining the relationships between the writers' writing knowledge in their various languages.

Gentil's (2011) study supports this study's goal to examine the EAP students' L1 and English genre awareness and knowledge to gain a better understanding of the writing produced in an EAP class. Another key aspect of his study is the explanation of the requirement for a genre to exist in two languages, something potentially of interest for this study. Brent (2011) adds to the discussion on transfer of learning new and different ways of conceiving of transfer outside of the traditional concepts. He discusses transfer of rhetorical knowledge across disciplines, “near transfer”, and transfer from university into the professional workplace, “far transfer” (p. 397), although he doubts that far

transfer is likely. Even though he views transfer as unlikely, this is not to suggest that Brent sees transfer as impossible. He introduces different ways of looking at knowledge transfer. One such way comes from Smart and Brown (2002), who look at transfer as the reapplication of old knowledge in a new situation. If students have learned to write a specific text, for example a business letter, in one situation, then they would only need to learn how the business letter is different in the new context, thus, the prior learning acts as a foundation to the new learning. Although Brent (2011) suggests that transfer is difficult to see or prove, he observes that transfer may happen, “given the right conditions and a sufficiently expanded notion of what it means to transfer learning across” different contexts (p. 409).

The apparent lack of empirical research in the area of transfer of prior L1 genre awareness and knowledge to the EAP students’ writing indicates a need for studies that would raise questions about this type of the cross-linguistic transfer. One of the goals of this study is to address L1-L2 genre knowledge and awareness transfer and thus add to the growing body of literature in the research area.

**What, if anything, can be transferred?** This section discusses what may actually be transferred. Positive and negative transfer of genres has been discussed by several scholars (e.g., Artemeva, 2009; Brent, 2011; Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Paré, 1999; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011), where by positive transfer is understood as transfer that assists students in their acquisition of new genres based on their prior genre knowledge, and negative transfer is understood as transfer where the prior genre knowledge impedes students' acquisition of new genres. Researchers have suggested that there are two possibilities of genre transfer. The first possibility is the transfer of the entire genre by

the students who have been labelled border guarders (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). These students transfer the entire genre, partially due to a lack of confidence in their ability to select the appropriate strategies or in their abilities to adapt the genre to a new and different application. Due to this wholesale transfer of genres, the border guarders would sometimes try to apply a prior genre in an inappropriate manner and, therefore, they would be less likely to succeed (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). The students with a higher confidence level in their abilities would be able to select parts of genres or strategies from various genres to apply to a new writing task; Reiff and Bawarshi labelled these students border crossers. The more confident students would transfer strategies or parts of the genre in a more appropriate manner, and therefore frequently be more successful in the production of the new genre.

James (2010) examines the transfer of learning in 11 English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) students. Transfer of learning is defined by Marini & Genereux (1995) as the applying previously learned content and/or skills to aid in the acquisition of new content and/or skills. James was studying the transfer of learning to identify if some content or skills would transfer more readily than others would. He was also interested to see if the content or skills learned in the EGAP class would transfer into some disciplines better than into others. One possible limiting factor affecting this type of retrospective studies is that they rely on participants' self-reporting (James, 2010). The students are often not aware of any connection between their prior and current learning, which can lead to the misconception that learning did not transfer (James, 2010; Wardle, 2009). Although I do not study learning transfer in the same manner, there are similar limitations in the students' identification of their own utilization of prior L1 or

English genre knowledge in the new EAP written genre, and, to avoid misconceptions, I have triangulated my research (see Chapter 3, Methods, p. 34).

While the transfer of an entire genre may be rare, some researchers, including Artemeva and Fox (2010) and Devitt (2004), suggest that *genre awareness* can transfer. Artemeva and Fox define genre awareness in the form of the student's ability to recognize the genre but not necessarily produce it. They further suggest that unless the students have produced the genre before, they may not be able to produce it, even if they are aware of the genre. They also propose that genre competence, or experience in completing the actions required by the genre, could be transferred as well. Thus, genre awareness by itself is not a guarantee of successful genre production and what is needed is experience producing the genre.

Brent (2011) suggests that if entire genres do not transfer, then the only aspects that could transfer are general rhetorical strategies or an awareness of the genre. Mein (2012) notes that while genres may not transfer, lexico-grammatical and general rhetorical knowledge can transfer. However, the issue of the inappropriate utilization of the genre knowledge in different rhetorical situations and how to ensure that it does not occur remains (Freadman, 1994; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). In their discussions of transfer, Mein (2012) and Cheng (2007) agree that what may be transferring is the genre awareness and not genres.

James (2010) suggests that even specific content information does not transfer well, especially in *far-transfer*, which he defines as being across disciplines or from academic to professional setting (cf. Brent, 2011). He supports the idea of transfer but normally only the transfer of general language or writing skills. James indicates that

specific content or genres transfer occurs only rarely, and due to the complexity of the transfer process, would be difficult to identify. However, there are some factors that might affect potential transfer.

**Factors affecting the transfer.** As has been identified by scholars (e.g., Artemeva & Fox, 2010; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Brent, 2011; Devitt, 2007; Gentil, 2010; Nowacek, 2011; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011; Tardy, 2009), genre awareness, genre competence, and some rhetorical or lexico-grammatical knowledge may be transferred or utilized across contexts, disciplines, and even languages. It is important then to understand some of the factors that may affect this process. James (2010) and Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) identify the most important factor controlling the transfer of genre awareness and knowledge as the student's recognition or perception of the similarity of the new genre with the prior genre. In cases where the students do not identify this similarity, the only transfer that could occur would be general rhetorical knowledge or the knowledge of how to present the discourse in a way that appropriately meets the purpose and the context. Another issue with the transfer of genre knowledge is that the newly learned genre knowledge is not fully learned until the genre is produced by the learner in a situation where the stakes or outcomes are real to the learners (Tardy, 2009).

Gentil (2011), following the work of Cummins (2000), suggests that the learners' linguistic competence in the L2 is another factor that could affect the transfer. If the learners' competence were not at a sufficient level, then the students would not be able to realize the prior genre knowledge in their L2 writing. This concept is directly relevant to my study, as the EAP students need to have a sufficient level of L2 in order to transfer their prior genre knowledge. This suggests a question not yet addressed in the literature,

that is, what is the level or competence in L2 needed to transfer prior L1 genre knowledge to new L2 writing?

If a genre were to exist in two or more languages (Gentil, 2011), then this type of similar genres in the two languages would facilitate the learners' process of transferring their specific genre awareness and knowledge. However, this still would only occur if the learners were aware of the similarity. Again, as the student participants in my study are from widely divergent cultures, it may be difficult to identify any language crossing genres from the learners' L1s.

### **Pedagogy**

**EAP courses.** Research has focused on specific aspects of EAP courses: EAP curricula and pedagogy (e.g., Cheng, Myles, & Curtis, 2004; Littlewood, 2001), the needs and the expectations of both the EAP students and their instructors (e.g., Braine, 2001; Hyland, 1997; Spratt, 1999), the receptive skills, listening and reading, in the EAP classroom (e.g., Allison, Berry, & Lewkowicz, 1995; Flowerdew & Miller, 1992; Hyon 2001), writing instruction (e.g., Adam & Artemeva, 2002; James, 2010; Johns, 1995, 1997, 2008; Swales, 1990; Tardy, 2006, 2009), EAP student acculturation into Western academic and social cultures (Cheng & Fox, 2008), course efficacy (e.g., Fox, Cheng, Bermen, Song, & Myles, 2006; Fox, Cheng, & Zumbo, 2013), along with some more general issues or linguistic research (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002; Swales, 2001). Of the main schools of genre studies, ESP is “arguably the most influential in the teaching of the specialist varieties of English to L2 users and the most familiar one to ESP researchers and practitioners” (Cheng, 2006, p. 77). There is a wide range of research relating to teaching and learning of English for academic purposes (e.g., Allison, Berry,

& Lewkowicz, 1995; Braine, 2001; Dooley, 2010; Flowerdew, 2003; Flowerdew & Miller, 1992, 1995; Fox, 2009; Littlewood, 2001).

**Testing into the EAP program.** Although universities vary in their entrance requirements, some Canadian universities have two main pathways for entrance for non-native English speaking students. The first pathway involves direct entry for the student scoring higher than a specific target score on one of the key standardized tests of English, for example, the Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Assessment or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic Version. Another route for the international student to enter the university directly is to meet the requirement for a specific number of years of higher education at an English-medium school in an English speaking country.

If the students do not meet either requirement, then they must enter through one of the university's EAP courses. As long as students achieves a minimum score on one of the standardized tests of English they can test into one of the universities' levels of EAP. Once the students complete the most advanced EAP course successfully, they are permitted to join the general student population of the university with no further ESL requirement.

**What is taught in the EAP course?** Cheng, Myles and Curtis describe EAP classes as being “characterized by activities that simulate academic work; for example, reading academic texts and taking notes; writing research reports or essays; making formal seminar presentations” (as cited in Fox, Cheng, & Zumbo, 2013, p. 2). Thus, these courses try to simulate a disciplinary course in terms of the types of assignments

and the expectations of the teachers in both the students' work and their behavior. According to Spack (1988), EAP courses traditionally focused on central skills like describing, expressing causality, and other aspects of a universal academic literacy. Early views of EAP assumed that academic texts were "objective, rational and impersonal" and, accordingly, teachers provided students with a set of generic skills while not focusing on the variation in such texts (Hyland, 2004a, p. 4).

A common pedagogy for EAP classes is the theme-based language instruction (TBLI) (Myers, 1996). These classes do not use content based on the students' disciplines of study, because normally each EAP class contains students from different disciplines. Instead, the EAP instructor selects one or more main topics per term, with the goal of finding a theme of interest to the majority of the class. A secondary goal is to try to help the students to connect this thematic unit with their fields of study in some way (Myers, 1996). This is a difficult task because the interests, ages, cultures, and nationalities of the students vary greatly. Adam and Artemeva (2002) identify another issue with these "content" units, suggesting that they have been watered-down, rhetorically simplified themes and therefore no longer represent the complexity of real academic topics.

**Nature of EAP writing.** The writing in the EAP class is composed mostly of what is termed classroom genres, which are genres of academic writing with wide variations in form commonly found in the classroom environment, for example, an academic essay (Dudley-Evans, 2002; Freedman, 1995; Johns, 1997). One issue with the writing in universities, in general, as well as in EAP classes, is that "too much school writing is arhetorical: it lacks real readers and purposes and serves merely as a display of

other people's knowledge" (Paré, 2009, p. 8). Paré (2009) feels that much of the writing produced in schools serves no other purpose outside of displaying knowledge for the sole purpose of receiving a mark from the teacher. Hunt (1993) labels this type of arhetorical writing "textoid." When students are writing in a TBLI classroom, which is used in many EAP classrooms, the content of units is not usually related to the EAP students' majors or is not firmly situated in their disciplines and the social context of their disciplinary discourse communities. These students will have no choice but to produce "arhetorical" writing (Hunt, 1993). If the students are being taught how to write an engineering progress report in the engineering classroom, this report will be an example of arhetorical writing (cf. Artemeva & Fox, 2010). In the professional domain, an engineering progress report serves the purpose of communicating information related to the progress or stage of completion of a project and it may be read by many readers and may influence and/or generate many related documents. However, this same type of progress report generated by a student in the classroom is no longer an authentic engineering report, but is a sample of a classroom exercise genre, which requires the students to express the knowledge gained from the class, for the sole purpose of student evaluation by the teacher and the eventual production of a final course mark.

The difference between a genre written in the classroom and the same genre produced in the workplace is an example of what Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré (1999) identify as the dual nature of academic writing. The problem with such simulations of disciplinary or workplace writing activities in the classroom is they "fail to prepare students for professional writing because they cannot adequately replicate the local rhetorical complexity of workplace contexts" (p. 201). Another issue with these

simulations of disciplinary or workplace genres in the EAP classroom is that they tend to be produced individually, which ignores the more social nature of much of workplace writing. It is these types of differences that lead Dias, Freedman, Medwey, and Paré described the simulations of writing in a university classroom and in the actual workplace writing as being “worlds apart” (p. 3).

This does not indicate that the classroom writing is without value. It may not transfer well into the workplace but it does serve a real communicative purpose in the classroom, displaying the student’s ability to follow the guidelines of the teacher and producing an appropriate text, which meets the expectations of the teacher. That is, a research paper in the EAP class may not be similar to that produced in the students’ disciplinary classes but the EAP assignment still has value as it allows for a display of the EAP students’ ability to follow directions and produce the required text. However, it may not be teaching them about the writing in their discipline. Freedman (1988) states that to learn a language successfully, it must be used in “real” social contexts for “genuine” social purposes. Although the EAP classroom is a "real" academic context, the issue is the EAP students are learning to write a classroom genre that may not be even similar to the actual disciplinary writing in their majors and thus may not be applied or transferred to contexts outside of the EAP classroom.

**Genre-based pedagogies.** Flowerdew (1993) identifies two general schools of pedagogies, some that train and some that educate the learners. The train pedagogy refers to one that prepares the learner to accomplish a specific task, whereas the pedagogy that educates pedagogy focuses on preparing the learner to apply their learning in new situations.

In a training pedagogy, writing would be taught as a set of general writing skills. The view of writing as a general skill, which can be applied to many fields, is questioned by Reither and Vipond (1989), who observe, “there is only knowing how to write in certain genres for certain audiences on certain subjects in certain situations” (p. 866). Therefore, a more targeted approach to writing instruction is needed and genre-based pedagogies might provide a solution. Genre-based pedagogies in EAP writing instruction have become common as a form of instruction in schools and universities (Hyland, 2002, 2003, 2004b; Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002, 2003; Paltridge, 2001). Genre analysis leading to identification and description of genres is an important part of today’s genre research as it can provide models for EAP genre-based pedagogies including Genre-based Writing Instruction (GBWI) (Johns, 2011). However, Freedman (1994) suggested that explicit teaching of genres using models may not be effective and found that students in her study learned to write a new genre without models, explicit instruction, or any attempt by the students to explicitly understand the rules of the genre. According to Freedman, explicit instruction may not be effective or even necessary in the acquisition of a genre by the learners unless the learners possess the appropriate learning style and explicit discussion is presented to the students who are concurrently and actively engaged in a writing task.

Genre-based approaches are now becoming more common in the first and additional language English writing classes (Bawarshi 2003, Beaufort 2007, Devitt 2004, Tardy, 2009). In many composition courses in the US, like the FYC course, genre is now being reflected in the design of some textbooks and course syllabi (e.g., Devitt, Reiff, & Bawarshi, 2004). Tardy (2009) goes one step further to state that genre-based instruction is now the most common method used in ESL classrooms. One reason for the popularity

of ESP genre-based approaches is, as Hyland (2003) suggests: “Genre pedagogy is buttressed by the belief that learning is best accomplished through explicit awareness of language, rather than through experiment and exploration” (p. 27). This explicit focus on the language would not be part of an RGS based class. Bawarshi (2003) and Devitt (2004) also support the idea that a genre-based approach requires the students and teacher to analyze the structure of the target genres in the classroom. This focus on genre can be useful for the ELL. In describing her own experience with respect to teaching English, Tardy (2009) expresses the view that “Viewing these texts as genres, that is typified responses to repeated situational exigencies – seem to provide both me and my students with a useful heuristic for increasing their understanding of these writing demands” (p. 6). This idea that a focus on genre can help the learners is based on the belief that learners develop expertise in writing as they gain awareness of the context, function, and form of the text (Hyland, 2003). This belief is also reflected in the current use of genre in the new FYC course planning and materials (Devitt, Reiff, & Bawarshi, 2004; Tardy, 2009).

Genre-based pedagogy exists in two different forms. Johns (2008, 2011) describes two opposite ways to incorporate genre into the language classroom as genre acquisition (train) versus genre awareness (educate). In a “genre acquisition classroom,” specific teaching of a text type normally requires an exemplar. The focus of this type of classroom is to teach the students to replicate the model of the genre. Johns (2008) suggests the presentation of the highly structured five-paragraph essay in an EAP or writing class is an example of the genre acquisition classroom. The focus of the “genre awareness classroom” is the opposite of the genre acquisition classroom. Here, the

teacher focuses on the “the relationships among texts, their rhetorical purposes, and the broader contexts in which texts from a genre may appear” (Johns, 2011, p. 57). The purpose of this focus is to aid students in adapting and using their genre knowledge in changing circumstances. Genre awareness classes help the students to develop a flexible approach to using their genre knowledge, which is the opposite of the genre acquisition class where the focus is on replication of form. The genre awareness class is not common at this time although Johns (2008) proposes that a “carefully designed and scaffolded genre awareness program” is well suited for the instruction of novice writers. What is needed is more research on the topic of genre-based approaches in general. Cheng (2006) indicates that although the ESP approach to genre-based learning is becoming more common, it is still more focused on analyzing the learners’ needs and identifying the required genres, but has “relatively little to say about the actual learning by the learners who are consigned to learn in such an approach” (p. 77).

Finally, it is important to understand that learners’ texts are affected by numerous factors, including internal factors like prior writing experience, content knowledge, and cultural background, as well as external factors like teacher feedback and parental or financial pressures. There is also the effect of “intertextual” influences (Johns, 2011) including the other texts read and written by the author. Kristeva (1980) describes Intertextuality as the filtering of the writer’s meaning, through the messages provided by all of the other texts the reader and the writer have produced or read. Therefore, a genre of writing created by two authors in response to the same exigency and with the same communicative purpose within a discourse community will likely not be identical. As Russell (1997) put it, “genres predict – they do not determine – structure” (p. 522).

The stabilized-for-now, flexible nature of the genres has led some RGS scholars to question the possibility of explicitly teaching a genre (Freedman, 1993). Freedman argues that it is not possible to teach genres as if they were concrete structures given the flexible and ever changing “disciplinary ideologies” that generate the genres. Freedman and Medway (1994) agree with this question on explicit instruction of genres and observe, “unless genres are static, and why should they be, how can they be taught [explicitly]” (p. 9).

According to RGS scholars, the only way for a learner to learn and gain the ability to produce a genre is to be an actively participating member of the discourse community (Freedman, 1993; Spack, 1997). Freedman (1999) also wonders if explicit teaching of genres can be helpful to the students “because genres are dynamic, fluid and blurred, is it possible to extrapolate rules and regularities from one context (or situation type) to another” (p. 766). Even more significantly, can the “complex web of social, cultural, and rhetorical features to which genres respond be explicated at all or in a way that can be useful to learners” (p. 766)? The social settings that are linked to the creation or production of genres are highly complex, involving the writers, audiences, purposes, and other factors. How could this very complex net be reduced to a set of instructions? Freedman also wonders if the genre created in response to a specific context could be taught in a way that the learner would be able to apply that knowledge to a new setting. Freedman does see one benefit in the teacher gaining an understanding of RGS and that is to see the “vital link between language and life” (p. 767). Teachers should gain not only this understanding but also an awareness of the role their own beliefs play in their teaching.

This apparent dichotomy between ESP and RGS genre studies does not imply that the two cannot coexist in the same classroom. The ESP approach to teaching genres focuses on teaching the learner the form as demonstrated by a prototypical model, whereas the RGS approach focuses on raising the learners' awareness of the social context of the genre. However, these two apparently opposite views are compatible. I see the two schools of genre study at opposite ends of a continuum. During the initial stages of teaching a genre, ESP's focus on the model of the genre and its specific structures comforts the novice students (Hyland, 2004b; Johns, 2011). As the students gain in experience producing the genre the instructor could move towards the RGS end on the continuum by focusing more on the analysis of the genres "context, complex writing processes, and intertextuality" (Johns, 2011, p.64). This idea supports the creation of a pedagogy that incorporates both genre schools.

### **Beliefs, Assumptions and Knowledge**

Every teacher and learner enters the classroom with a set of beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (BAK) (Woods, 1996, 2003). Belief is defined by Woods (1996) as including the attitudes, values, and knowledge. Another key component of BAK is the assumptions made by the learner or teacher. For example, the teacher could assume that the learner has already mastered a specific language skill in a previous class and thus not touch on it in her class. Equally, the student can make assumptions about the purpose of an exercise or of the university EAP class and behave according to these assumptions.

**Conclusion**

This literature review has provided a window into the complicated world of the EAP class, genres, genre awareness and knowledge, learning transfer and additional language academic writing and has been a valuable step in situating the study of the student participants' perceptions of their prior L1 and English genre knowledge and awareness and its effects on their perceptions of academic writing and English.

The next chapter introduces the research approach and the design of the study.

### **3. Methods**

"The outcome of any serious research can only be to make two questions grow where only one grew before." ~Thorstein Veblen

#### **Research Approach and Design**

This chapter provides an explanation of the ethics protocol and the procedures of locating and selecting the student participants, presents the instruments of data collection, and reports on the data collected. The data analysis subsection focuses on the qualitative coding procedures for this study.

This qualitative empirical study uses emergent design (Dornyei, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008) and employs Modified Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006).

#### **Research Site**

This research took place in a mid-size Canadian university, with the data collection taking place over one semester.

#### **Ethics**

The study involves human participants. Such research requires permission from the university's Ethics Research Board, which was granted in the form of an ethics approval certificate prior to student participant recruitment (see Appendix B, p. 191). Before beginning interviews and other data collection, I met with the study participants to explain the nature of the study, what would be expected of them, and how I would protect their confidentiality. Copies of the Informed Consent Form were given out to the student participants (see Appendix C, p. 192) and the instructors (see Appendix D, p. 195). These were to be read before our next meeting. At that time, after confirming that the

participants had understood the form and that they had no further questions or concerns, I asked them to sign two consent forms. I kept one copy in a locked cabinet and the other was presented to the participant for their records.

### **Participants**

Participants in this study include students in an advanced EAP class and two EAP instructors. I had planned to give an oral invitation to participate to two EAP classes (see Appendix A, p. 189); however, after the first of the two planned student participant recruitment presentations, I received a sufficient number of responses and had no need in recruiting more student participants. Hence, student participants were recruited from a single advanced EAP class and presented a sample of convenience (Yin, 2011). Initially, convenience sampling was used to select the student participants, thus limiting the effects of any biased subjective factors (Dornyei, 2007). In convenience, or opportunity, sampling the main criterion for selecting the sample is the convenience to the researcher, with respect to location, and availability (Dornyei, 2007). The student participants who volunteered reflected a broad spectrum of the EAP classroom. As stated above in the subsection on Ethics, the student participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent form prior to entering into the study.

After the presentation, in which I explained my research and what the student participants would be asked to do in the study, I left my name and email address on the board and asked volunteers to contact me. This was done to grant the volunteers some form of confidentiality, so that their classmates and instructor would not know if they had volunteered. Within one week of my presentation, six potential student participants contacted me. All six student participants met with me and signed the consent form (see

Appendix C, p. 192). I then scheduled individual one-on-one meetings at a time convenient to the student participants. All six student participants were given a genre awareness and general demographic questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197). The demographic information for all six initial student participants is presented in Table 1 (p. 39).

I also set up semi-structured interviews with the course instructor who was teaching the EAP course that I drew my student participants from. Thelma (a pseudonym), the EAP instructor, participated in a thirty-minute interview in her office. To try and provide further views and perspectives from the department and to situate the data provided by Thelma, I also interviewed the coordinator of the EAP program (Louise, a pseudonym). I used the same set of guiding questions for both interviews with the coordinator and the instructor (see Appendix H, p. 202).

Suter (1998) stated, “The process of qualitative data analysis is concerned with the qualities exhibited by data more than their quantities” (p. 271). Due to the limited time available for this study and after a brief initial qualitative coding of all fourteen transcripts, twelve from the student participants and one each from the instructor and the coordinator, a decision was made that a smaller group of student participants should be sufficient to shed light on my research questions. I decided to select three of the student participants for the more focused and detailed analysis. This final group, which reflected the variety in the classroom’s demographic make-up, contained two female and one male student participants. The final selection was based on maximum variation sampling (Dornyei, 2007), a form of purposive sampling which allows for “searching for cases or

individuals who cover the spectrum of positions and perspectives in relation to the phenomenon one is studying” (Givens, 2008, p. 697).

This type of sampling was chosen in an attempt to uncover any common patterns in student participants’ responses regardless of their nationality, language, or level of education. The student participants were chosen to ensure a maximal variety of the first languages (one spoke Mandarin Chinese, and a Chinese Dialect, another, was a Russian/Kyrgyz bilingual, and the third one spoke Persian) (see Table 1, p.39). Serendipitously, the three student participants represented three distinct levels of prior L1 education. Student participant #1 (Greg, a pseudonym) had finished high school in China before coming to Canada; student participant #2 (Marcia, a pseudonym) had finished a Master’s degree in Kyrgyzstan (a former Soviet Republic where Russian was spoken as a second language); student participant #6 had completed an undergraduate degree in Iran before coming to Canada. As well Greg, Marcia and Alice (a pseudonym) represented three different first language educational and disciplinary backgrounds, with Greg having had only high school education, Marcia having studied a social science, International Relations, and Alice having studied statistics at university, with a minor in industrial engineering (see Table 1). The only similarity between the three student participants was their age group, with all of them selecting the 23+ age on the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197).

Table 1

*Student Participant Demographic Information*

Part.	Age	Gender	Nation	# of Languages Spoken & Written	L1(s)	Language used at home	Language used with family & Friends	Prior L1 & L2 Education	Gap between L1 education and EAP
#1 Greg	23+	Male	Chinese	3	Mandarin (Chinese) & Sichuanese (Chinese)	Sichuanese (Chinese)	Sichuanese (Chinese)	High School & ESL at Algonquin College	4 years
#2 Marcia	23+	Female	Kyrgyz	2	Kyrgyz & Russian	Kyrgyz	Russian	University Kyrgyzstan Major-International Relations	2 years
#3 Jan	23+	Female	Saudi Arabian	2	Arabic	Arabic & Saudi Arabic	English & Saudi Arabic	University Saudi Arabia, Major -Maths. ESL (1-7) at Algonquin College & IELTS Prep. course	No gap (one summer)
#4 Cindy	18	Female	Canadian	2 (less Fluent in Arabic)	English	English	English	Private American High School in Qatar	No gap (one summer)
#5 Peter	22	Male	Chinese	2	Mandarin (Chinese)	Mandarin (Chinese)	Mandarin (Chinese)	University Beijing, Major- Electrical Engineering	2 years
#6 Alice	23+	Female	Iranian	1	Persian (Farsi)	Persian (Farsi)	English & some French	University Tehran, Major-Statistics	8 years

Greg, Marcia and Alice were chosen due to their differing demographic data in anticipation that their backgrounds might ensure a wide range of responses to my interview questions. The following subsection, Student Participant Biographies, presents more detailed information on the selected student participants.

### **Student Participants' Biographies**

All of the student participants in this study were true L1 dominant bi- or multilingual writers, who had completed the majority of their educations in their L1s (see Table 1, p. 39), where L1 dominant bilinguals are defined as “individuals whose proficiency in one language is higher than that in the other language(s)” (Butler & Hakuta, 2006, p. 115).

**Student participant #1.** Greg is a 23+ year-old male student born in Sichuan, China. He indicated that he had two first languages, Mandarin Chinese and Sichuanese. His description makes the two sound like separate languages, but in fact the Sichuanese he speaks, the Chengdu Dialect of Southwestern Mandarin is closely related to the standard Beijing variety with up to 60% of the words being mutually comprehensible (Chaoju & Van Heuven, 2009, p. 720). He used the Sichuanese dialect both at home and with friends but he used standard Mandarin in his middle and high school. He had additional language English classes from elementary school right through high school. After coming to Canada, he took a number of ESL classes at a local community college before entering the university. There was a four-year gap between his finishing high school and entering this university. At the time of the interview, he was not studying in any other classes in the university.

**Student participant #2.** Marcia is a 23+ year-old female student from Kyrgyzstan. Her first languages are Russian and Kyrgyz. Kyrgyz was the language of her home life but Russian was more commonly spoken with friends. The language of instruction changed at each level of her education. She studied her primary schooling in Russian from grade one to grade six. From the seventh to the eleventh grade, secondary school, she studied in Kyrgyz. All of her university level education in her country was conducted in Russian. She had Basic English as a foreign language (EFL) classes throughout her primary and secondary education. There was a gap of two years between finishing her Master's in the field of International Relations in Kyrgyzstan and her coming to Canada to study for her Master's in European, Russian and Eurasian studies. At the time of the interview, she was enrolled in graduate level courses, one in her major and one from the department of political science.

**Student participant #6.** Alice is a 23+ year-old female student from Iran. She studied from primary school through university in Persian. Alice completed her undergraduate degree in Statistics in 2005 and after completing her degree, she worked in an industrial engineering company, before coming to Canada. In her home, school and work life Persian was the language of communication. Although she did have English classes throughout her primary and secondary education, and private classes outside of school, English was not used in any setting outside of the classroom for communication. She described her EFL classes as being focused on grammar, vocabulary and listening. In fact, she estimated that less than 10% of the class time was focused on writing English. She is currently working towards a Master of Women's and Gender Studies degree and at

the time of the interview, she was enrolled in her EAP course and disciplinary courses on Feminism and Activism.

### **EAP Instructor Participants' Biographies**

**EAP instructor.** The EAP instructor interviewed in this study (Thelma) has taught English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for more than fourteen years. Since 2002, Thelma has been teaching in the university's EAP program. At the time of the study, Thelma was the EAP instructor assigned to the class from which all of the student participants were drawn. Thelma earned her Honours Degree in Language from a Canadian university. She has also received her Master of Arts in Applied Language Studies and a Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language (CTESL) from a Canadian university. She has gained experience living and teaching in Japan, Italy and Canada. Thelma is fluent in English, French and has a high level of proficiency in Italian.

**EAP coordinator.** Louise has taught EAP for more than ten years and she has experience creating and teaching courses outside of EAP, and teaching ESL in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program. Currently, she is an instructor teaching EAP and is interested in creating and executing blended course delivery in traditional, online and virtual teaching environments. Louise is also a PhD student in an Applied Linguistics program and has a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics and a Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language (CTESL). Her research interests include diagnostic and portfolio based assessment and needs based targeted instruction, but she is passionate about the role of technology in learning and

teaching. At the time of the study, Louise was the coordinator of the University's EAP program.

### **Expert language Informants**

In order to confirm the translations of the names of the genres provided by the student participants during their interviews, I contacted native speaking Chinese, Russian, and Persian language informants. Marcia spoke Kyrgyz and Russian as first languages, however, as she provided no additional information in Kyrgyz, a Kyrgyz speaking informant was not necessary. All three of the expert language informants also provided explanations about the various genres of academic writing mentioned by the student participants.

### **Role of Researcher**

“What we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to.”

Geertz (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures*

The framing quote reflects an important concept to keep in mind while conducting qualitative research, which is that there is no objective ground from which to observe your data. As a researcher, one must contend with the fact that one's thought patterns, beliefs, interests, prior education and experiences all have an effect on one's interpretation, coding and analysis of the data. Heigham and Croker (2009) described the effect of the researcher on qualitative studies in this way,

...when researchers go into research settings, they also take their own intellectual baggage and life experiences with them. Inevitably, their gender, age, ethnicity,

cultural background, sexual orientation, politics, religious beliefs, and life experiences – their worldview – are the lens through which they see their research. This may color their perceptions of the research setting and also the constructions of reality that they develop with the participants. (p. 11)

It is therefore important to provide the researcher's background. I received my BA Honours in Biology in 1990 and worked in many different sales jobs before discovering teaching. In 2006, while learning Spanish in Mexico, I was asked to take over an ESL class. This experience led me to my current love of teaching. I subsequently taught English (EFL) in Mexico, received a Cambridge English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) certificate, and spent three years teaching EFL in universities in China. While in China, I qualified to be and worked as an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Oral examiner. Upon returning to Canada, I earned my Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language (CTESL) and I am currently completing my Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies. In my graduate studies, I have concentrated on Genre Studies and Multimodality. In the next section, I will discuss the data collected, along with the instruments of data collection and the data analysis.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The dataset for this study is divided into the primary data, interviews, and questionnaires, and the secondary data set including the follow-up questions, and the course syllabus. The primary data set was collected from a genre awareness and production questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197) (based on Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011) and from two semi-structured interviews (Dornyei, 2007) with each of the student

participants (see Appendix F, p. 200, and Appendix G, p. 201) and interviews with the EAP instructor and coordinator (see Appendix H, p. 202). To triangulate the data collected from the interviews and questionnaires, I likewise examined the EAP course syllabus, and asked the student participants follow-up questions and recorded their responses as a form of member checking, defined as the checking of the researcher's interpretation of their responses with the study participants (Heigham & Coker, 2009, p. 106). A more complete explanation and description of each instrument for data collection can be found below.

### **Instruments for Primary Data Collection**

**Interviews.** The student participants were interviewed using semi-structured guiding questions to direct the conversation but at the same time the participants were free to expand or answer the question in any way they preferred (Dornyei, 2007; Yin, 2011). The guiding questions targeted different aspects of their prior and current writing experience in both their L1 and in English with special attention paid to their experiences in academic writing both in their home countries and at a Canadian university in the EAP program. More generally, the interviews targeted the student participants' genre knowledge and awareness (Artemeva & Fox, 2010; Gentil, 2011). Additionally, I attempted to elicit broad experiential accounts of academic writing in additional languages and the student participants' perceptions of English. The first set of interviews reflected the research questions and the readings I completed prior to the interviews. The first interview used a set of 12 guiding questions (see Appendix F, p. 200) designed to elicit information on the student participants' general educational background and specifically on their writing experience in their L1 as well as any writing experience in

English from their home country or gained in Canada, before attending this university. Then the interview focused on the student participants' current English EAP course and the writing it included along with any use of their L1 experience in the English writing process.

The second set of interviews used a new set of guiding questions (see Appendix G, p. 201) that were developed after an initial qualitative coding of the first round of interviews. The data collected in the first round of interviews informed the design of the second set of eight guiding questions. This set of questions sought to gain insight into the connection between the student participants' prior L1 and additional language writing experience and their current EAP writing. At the same time the second set of guiding questions explored the use of the student participants' L1 in their current EAP writing process. As described above, each of the six student participants took part in two thirty-minute semi-structured interviews (see Appendix F, p. 200 and Appendix G, p. 201).

After completing initial thematic coding of all twelve of the transcriptions from the student participants' interviews (discussed above), I interviewed the EAP instructor and the university's EAP coordinator. The semi-structured interviews were guided by a set of five multi-part questions focusing on the instructor's and the coordinator's perceptions of the EAP program and on how they thought the EAP students' perceived the program. The interviews also focused on the instructors awareness of the students' prior writing experience and if and how that experience could be used in the EAP classroom.

The interviews all took place on campus at a location of the participants' choice. Each interview averaged 30 minutes in length, with some as short as 22 minutes and

some as long as 40 minutes. Each interview was digitally recorded, with the permission of the participant, using a Sony® ICD-PX312 and an ICD-8500 for backup. I transcribed the twelve interviews, two with each of the six student participants' and the interviews with the EAP Instructor and the EAP Coordinator using VLC media player© (VideoLAN, n.d.).

**Questionnaires.** The genre awareness and production questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197) was adapted from Reiff & Bawarshi (2011). This questionnaire was originally designed by Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) to administer to first-year American university students entering the First-Year Composition class (FYC) at two American universities, and was subsequently posted on their study's website (UT–UW prior genre study, 2012). The reason for adapting this questionnaire for my study was to facilitate the comparison between the student participants in this study and the first-year American university students used in the Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) study. Due to the use of non-graded (not simplified linguistically) material in the questionnaire, I was available to answer any questions that the student participants might have concerning the questionnaire or the vocabulary used, while they completed the survey.

The questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197) was not simplified for the English learners so that the comparison could be more easily made with the participants in Reiff and Bawarshi's (2011) study. The goal was to examine the student participants' English genre knowledge and awareness (resources) and to see which of the genres they have had experience producing. A chart comparing the American FYC students' responses to my student participants' responses is located in the Findings and Discussion chapter (Table 5, p. 103).

### Instruments for Secondary Data Collection

**Follow-up questions.** In order to clarify some of the participants' responses in the interview transcripts and to seek further information on the L1 names for some of the genres that the student participants wrote in their L1 education, an email was sent to each of the student participants. Only student participants #1, 2, 3, and 6 responded to this email and answered my questions. Cindy (a pseudonym) phoned me but said that she did not have any further information or insights to offer. Peter (a pseudonym) responded that he had left the university and was not willing to continue with the study. I asked for and was granted permission to use the data I had previously collected, as explained in his informed consent form.

Table 2

#### *Forms of Data Collected from Participants for Triangulation*

<b>Participant #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Interview #1</b>	<b>Interview #2</b>	<b>Follow-up Questions</b>
1	Greg	March 4 <sup>th</sup>	April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	√
2	Marcia	March 5 <sup>th</sup>	March 28 <sup>th</sup>	√
3	Jan	March 6 <sup>th</sup>	April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	√
4	Cindy	March 7 <sup>th</sup>	March 28 <sup>th</sup>	
5	Peter	March 7 <sup>th</sup>	April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	
6	Alice	March 14 <sup>th</sup>	March 28 <sup>th</sup>	√
Instructor	Thelma	April 30 <sup>th</sup>		√
Coordinator	Louise	April 30 <sup>th</sup>		√

### **Source of Secondary Data**

**Course syllabus.** A copy of the student participants' EAP course syllabus was provided by the course instructor (see Appendix M, p. 215)

### **Data Triangulation**

To maximize the validity and trustworthiness of the study, I triangulated my data. Data triangulation is the confirming of research findings by using multiple participants and multiple forms of data or instruments of data collection (Heigham & Coker, 2009; Givens, 2008). According to Heigham and Coker (2009), "by using several data-collection techniques and comparing what they tell you, you can determine whether your analysis and findings are well supported across different sources of information" (p.127).

Along with multiple participants and instruments for data triangulation, I also used member checking. After all of the interviews were transcribed and initially coded, the participants were contacted to seek clarification of or specific information missing from the interviews. Member checking is contacting the participants during or after the data analysis, to provide clarification on, or confirmation of the findings (Givens, 2008; Yin, 2011). This procedure allows the researchers to verify their impressions of the data with the participants. Another benefit of member checking is that it provides an opportunity for the participants to confirm if the researcher's interpretation of what they have said matches what they had intended to say (Heigham & Coker, 2009). The multiple forms of data collected from each of the student participants and from the two instructor participants are shown in Table 2 (p. 48) shows. This table shows that all six of the initial student participants took part in the interviews and the questionnaire but Cindy and Peter did not answer the follow-up questions.

## **Data Analysis**

All novice researchers, regardless of how much support they receive from the community that surrounds them, must at one time sink or swim in their pond of data (J. Fox, personal communication, February 7, 2013). The transcription process is not simply a mechanical conversion process from speech to text that a researcher completes before the analysis can begin. It is perhaps the earliest form of data analysis in a qualitative research project (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984), as such constitutes the first step into this “pond”.

**Interview transcription.** I transcribed the interviews following the guidelines set out by Mergenthaler and Stinson (1992, pp. 129–30). The key guidelines are that the transcription should be as similar as possible to what the participants said, and be organized like a script with speech markers. The transcript should include all of the raw data with no reduction. The transcription rules should be universal, complete and easy for all to follow, without the transcriber. This means that someone should be able to follow the transcription rules without the assistance of the researcher who wrote the rules. Finally, the transcription rules should be few in number, simple, and easy to learn. I have attempted to preserve and transcribe as much detail of the interviews as possible. To indicate the turn taking, I used speech and time markers to indicate when the speaker changed. The speech markers, for example, A (03:34), indicated the speaker was Alice and provided a time stamp. Finally, by following these guidelines, I have created transcripts, which are, to the best of my abilities, verbatim copies of the interviews (see Appendix L, p. 214, for a sample page of a transcription).

Although Kvale (1996, p. 163) recommends having a second person independently transcribe one of the interviews and then inspecting the two transcripts for agreement, this was not possible because of the issues of confidentiality and the ethics approval granted to me by the university. All transcripts were backed up and updated during the transcription process. These back-ups were stored on a password protected laptop and on USB© memory sticks in a locked filing cabinet. All of my transcription conventions used in this study are located in Appendix I (p. 203).

**Qualitative coding.** Qualitative coding that relied on the analytical techniques inspired by the Modified Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) was used to analyze the data. This form of analytical coding evolved from traditional Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1968), and is an inductive method. In traditional Grounded Theory the researcher starts by analyzing the data, but without any previous knowledge or literature review into the specific field or topic (a tabula rasa). By identifying specific aspects of the data and grouping them together, the research begins to construct a coding tree, from the bottom-up. As the researcher constantly returns to the data to check their findings, this is also an iterative process. As this process continues, the codes lead to categories and final themes, with each level becoming more abstract. This process leads to the creation of a theory, which is “grounded” in the data. In Modified (constructivist) Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) the meaning is not something to be found by analyzing the data, but to be constructed through the interaction of the researcher and the subjects.

This coding entailed labeling segments of data with a code that summarizes and accounts for the actions occurring or the ideas represented, and then grouping these codes

into more abstract concepts and themes (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2009; Yin, 2011).

Initially, I used a combination of in vivo coding, utilizing the words of the participants as the labels and descriptive coding, which assigns simplified labels to data to provide an “inventory of their topics” (Saldaña, 2009). In vivo coding is a useful technique, because as Glaser (1978) suggested, it remaining faithful to the data and the participants’ words.

This initial coding was used to begin to construct a coding scheme. This scheme was then entered into the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) (Bringer, Johnston & Brackenridge, 2006). The software chosen for this study was Nvivo10 (QSR International, n.d.). This software allowed for the collection of all of the data, data analysis, notes, and literature in one location, which aided in writing memos, and organizing and storing of information. Memoing, the taking of notes during all stages of the study, is an important part of any Grounded Theory analysis. Charmaz (2006) observes, “... it prompts you to analyze your data and codes early in the research process. Writing successive memos or notes throughout the research process keeps you involved in the analysis and helps you to increase the level of abstraction of your ideas” (p. 72). Memos (Figure 2, p. 55) could be written and then attached to specific codes (also called nodes in Nvivo) or lines in a transcript. By adding specific attributes, demographic data like age, gender, education or first language, to the participants (Bringer, Johnston & Brackenridge, 2006), I was able to organize and integrate the student participants’ demographic information. Having these data assembled together allowed me to examine different demographic factors and their relationship to specific findings. This type of comparison can assist the researcher in understanding the relationships between codes, and, as Bringer, Johnston and Brackenridge (2006) explain,

“this... can assist” in higher level coding, that is, “in developing categories and exploring relationships between categories” (p. 269).

The second cycle of data coding utilized focus coding, where the initial codes, or nodes, are organized under higher level and more abstract codes. This process continued until the codes naturally coalesced under specific categories or concepts (see Figure 1. for sample coding). The final stage in the analysis was the forming of themes, the highest-level codes (nodes) in the process. The process of coding is in effect, the search for patterns of recurrent codes. The large amount of data from the interviews was reduced to a group of codes, then these codes were grouped into categories, and finally into three emerged themes, which were then sorted and diagrammed into concept maps (see the Research Findings, p. 56 for a more complete description). Figure 1 presents an example of inductive reasoning where the data informs, and/or constructs the theory. This coding continued until the point when collecting and analyzing further data no longer provided new theoretical insights, which in the grounded theory approach to coding is referred to as *theoretical saturation* (e.g., Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Theme	-	Writing Process
Higher Code	-	Utilization of external help in the writing process
Descriptive Code	-	Lack of experience with TAs
In Vivo Code (participant's own words)	-	“Because just after study here I have chance work with TA, but before I never have experience with this system before um in my previous education.”

*Figure 1.* Sample of coding from student participant #1 interview 1 time stamp 15:00.

**Memoing.** During this research project, I wrote memos with four distinct purposes. Following Hutchison, Johnson, and Breckon (2010, p 287), I have focused on four categories of memos. The most common memo written at during the data collection of this study was the *emergent question memo*. This memo was used to capture any emerging questions. After a quick initial coding of the first interview, many questions came to light, which required further investigation. These were captured in the emergent question memos and used to inform the next round of data collection. *Explanatory memoing* was used to provide more information or explanation to the participant's response. When this further explanation was linked to the literature Hutchison, Johnson, and Breckon (2010, p 287) termed this a *literature related memo*.

The last category of memos is the *reflective memo*. These memos contained any personal reflections on the data collection, the participants, the data analysis, and the study in general. They were used as guides for the data analysis and data collection, and helped to fuel the iterative nature of the study.

Figure 2 represents a sample of an emergent question memo and a literature related memo. The memo is coded "P1 I1 0437 2" which describes the exact location in the transcripts. P1 refers to student participant number 1 (Greg), I1 indicates that the memo is linked to the transcript from interview 1, 0437 2 identifies this memo as linked to the student participants' ideas from the time stamp 4:37 of that interview, and that it is the second note linked to that idea. Therefore, P1 I1 0437 2 is the second memo linked to the time stamp 4:37 of Greg's first interview. The memo discusses the emerging idea of a narrow perception of English and includes some emerging questions. It also links the emerging idea to some similar ideas from the literature, specifically, from Hyland (1997).

P1 I1 0437 2 – Greg 04/03/2013

Here he is discussing how in Chinese there is an art or emotion in writing but that it does not exist in the West. Again, this seems to reinforce the student participant's very narrow view of English. This could lead to the student participant not being able to see the role that his previous L1 writing could have on his current L2 writing. If all English writing is "research papers" and he never read or wrote those in Chinese, then of course the writing in the two languages appears so different. I wonder if any of the other student participants express any similar ideas of the "narrow nature of English". What is the relationship between EAP class and this narrow view of English? How does this view affect the student participants in the EAP class?

This idea of a narrow view of English is also referred to in Hyland (1997). In the study, some of his respondents believed their study of English was utilitarian and therefore no longer useful for creative communication.

*Figure 2.* Sample memo from student participant 1, Greg.

As generalizability is not a feature of qualitative studies, I instead, by using a strategic selection of participants, strive to produce what Mann and Tang (2012) describe as illustrative outcomes that will contribute to the literature on the role of prior or antecedent, genre knowledge in the development of student participants' academic writing.

The next chapter, Research Findings and Discussions, reports the outcomes of the data analysis.

#### 4. Research Findings and Discussion

“There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something. You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after.”  
J.R.R. Tolkien

In this study, the term genre has been used in its broadest sense, including varied genre forms like, for example, Medway’s “baggy” genres, defined as having, “little in the way of formal features to define it as a genre” (as cited in Devitt, 2004, p. 10), and classroom genres (Dudley-Evans, 2002; Johns, 1997).

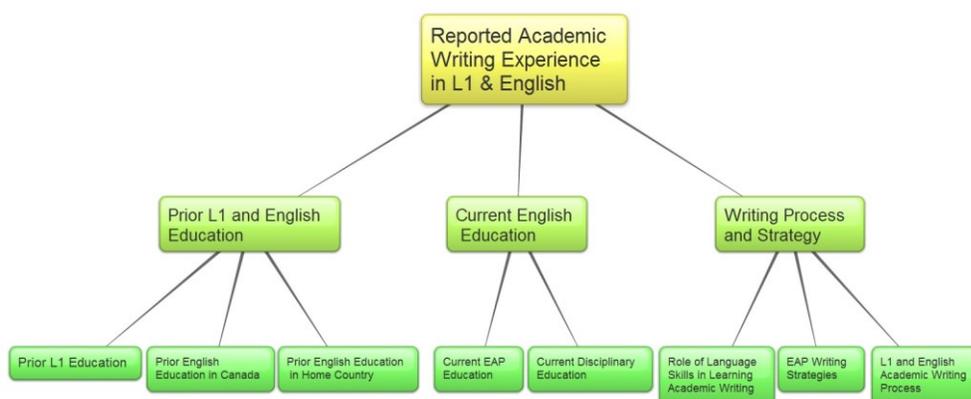
This chapter examines and discusses the findings that emerged from the analysis of the interviews with Greg, Marcia and Alice, along with supporting information from the other student participants and the instructors, including the Genre Awareness and Production questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197). The transcripts of their interviews were qualitatively coded, as described in the Method chapter, and analyzed, following the Modified Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) (see Appendix J, p. 204). Three themes emerged from qualitative coding of the interviews with the student participants. The chapter is divided into four sections with each representing a discussion of one of the emerged themes. Section 4.1 focuses on the student participants’ reported academic writing experience and education in both L1 and English; Section 4.2 discusses their experience with academic writing and genres in L1 and English, and Section 4.3 examines the students’ perceptions of academic writing and language. Section 4.4 discusses the theoretical and empirical contributions to genre-based EAP pedagogy.

#### 4.1 Reported Academic Writing Experience and Education in L1 and English

Memory is deceptive because it is colored by today's events.

~Albert Einstein

The first main theme that emerged through coding is "Reported academic writing experiences in L1 and English." By reported experiences, I understand student participants' articulation and presentation of their recollections of education and academic writing experience in L1 and in English, both in their home countries and in Canada. The student participants' reported prior L1 and English Education, Current English Education, and Writing Strategies and Processes (see Fig. 3) are brought together under this theme (see Appendix J, Theme IA, p. 204).



*Figure 3.* Reported academic writing experience in L1 and English. (Please note: the Theme is highlighted in yellow; the categories, in light green; and the high-level codes are dark green).

Because the focus of this research is on student participants' perceptions of academic writing in L1 and English, their memory and ability to recall their academic writing experiences play an important role in data analysis and interpretation. Therefore, it is important to document the period between the student participants' final year of

education in their home country and the start of the EAP course at the university in Canada. This period varied for the three interviewees: for Greg, the gap between his educations in China and starting the EAP course at the Canadian university was four years, for Marcia two years and for Alice it was eight years (see Table 1, p. 39). Below I provide a description and explanation of the categories comprising the theme.

### **Prior L1 and English Academic Writing Experience and Education**

**Prior L1 experience.** For all of the student participants, the bulk of their education was conducted in their home countries in their L1. Therefore, I begin with an examination of their prior L1 academic writing experience and education (see Appendix J, code IAI, p. 204)

Initially, the student participants stated that they did not remember much concerning their prior academic writing experience. For example, Marcia (05/03/2013) observed, “I don’t know how I wrote in my school or university.” The other student participants in the study echoed Marcia’s lack of explicit memory of or inability to articulate their L1 educational and writing experience. The student participants did not seem to be able to articulate their knowledge of their L1 academic writing. The tacit nature of academic writing knowledge may explain this inability to articulate knowledge acquired in L1 in their countries of origin. This means that a student who knows how to write an academic paper is using what Polanyi (1962) terms their *focal knowledge*, or their knowledge of the entire skill. When the students think about writing a paper, they would be unaware of the *subsidiary knowledge* (Polanyi, 1962), or the knowledge of the steps or skills that make up the whole, using only the focal knowledge. Polanyi (1962) explains, “while attending to the elements of a skill in themselves, we impair their

smooth integration to the joint performance that it is their function to serve. If we succeeded in focusing our attention completely on the elements of a skill, its performance would be paralyzed altogether” (p. 801). In other words, the student participants’ inability to provide information on academic writing in L1 may not be caused by the absence of academic writing in their home countries’ education but rather by the “transparency” of L1 writing in those contexts caused by the absence of explicit writing instruction which might have been integrated within subject matter courses. The student participants were better able to articulate their experiences concerning their prior L1 education in general, perhaps because academic expectations in subject matter courses had been explicitly articulated. All of the student participants have completed primary and secondary education in their home countries with Greg obtaining a high school diploma, and Marcia and Alice obtaining tertiary education: Alice completing a Bachelors of Statistics and Marcia completing her Masters of International Relations program (see Table 1, p. 39).

For Greg and Alice, their prior L1 education was completed in Chinese and Persian respectively. Marcia’s prior educational experience was different from the others because she was raised in a Kyrgyz-Russian bilingual context (Korth, 2005). She identified the language she spoke at home as Kyrgyz and the languages of instruction for her prior education as, “...from first to sixth grade in Russian ... from seventh grade to eleventh in Kyrgyz... and then ... I ... graduated my ... Institute or university, it was in Russian” (05/03/2013). It is important to note that even though both Kyrgyz and Russian are currently written using the Cyrillic script, with Kyrgyz using a modified Cyrillic script, the languages are very different. Kyrgyz is a member of the Turkic family of the

Altaic languages whereas Russian is a member of the Slavic family of the Indo-European group (Brown, 2006). Marcia, however, perceived both languages as her mother tongues and did not comment on the changes in languages of instruction throughout her education. For her, this was just how education was in her country:

It wasn't like different because I didn't notice it at this time. It was similar. I go to the Russian class and write something then I go to the Kyrgyz class and I write something. I don't know exactly why or what, but they are similar (Marcia, 28/03/2013).

Marcia mentioned the switch from Kyrgyz to Russian was no problem because, "Russia came we did not have any universities so it was developed by Russia. Russia came and developed our writing so ... the schools are all based on Russian system. So, the same" (28/03/2013). Marcia noted that the entire educational system in both Russian and Kyrgyz was developed and set up by the Russians since late 19th century (Korth, 2005). Thus, she experienced no real difficulties switching from the Russian to the Kyrgyz classes as the structure and expectations were already similar. Marcia stated that she "didn't notice" any differences, possibly indicating the reason for her difficulty articulating the information, since it was a common experience for all students in her school and it was nothing special or particularly memorable. As Marcia remembered writing in Kyrgyzstan, she was recalling focal knowledge of the entire act of writing in school, during which the subsidiary knowledge, in this case the language she wrote in, were not easily accessible to her (cf. Polanyi, 1962). This inability to focus on the subsidiary knowledge could also explain why Marcia did not notice any difference.

Paré (2009) identifies writing as holding the position of privilege in universities and research. Most of the student participants commented that they had done very little writing in their prior L1 education and they reported their education did not seem to privilege writing in the same way they perceived it to be privileged in their EAP or disciplinary classes at the Canadian university. The student participants, with one exception, suggested that their current writing-based EAP course and other social science courses did privilege writing. Peter, who was enrolled in electrical engineering courses both in China and in Canada, did not mention the difference in the privileging of academic writing between his L1 and English education. This could be related to the writing expectations of electrical engineering as a discipline. In Canadian universities, Engineering faculties may not privilege writing to the same extent as do the social sciences, or as Lester et al. (2003) described in their study of the writing across the curriculum in an American college, the types of writing privileged in math, economics, and physics are not the same as those in the social sciences.

The statements made by the majority of the student participants reflected a lack of focus on writing in their prior L1 education or their inability to articulate it. For example, Alice mentioned, “I told you we don’t really write [sounding confused that I continued to ask about it]” (28/03/2013). It should be noted that Alice completed her undergraduate degree in statistics in Iran before coming to Canada for a Masters in Feminist Studies. Again, there may be a disciplinary difference in types of writing privileged in statistics and feminist studies. Marcia (05/03/2013) also observed that in her home country in the discipline of International Relations, “we don’t have to write... [papers], we have exams, mostly.”

The other student participants all spoke of producing some form of creative writing in high school. For example, Alice stated that she did produce some creative writing in her high school education in Iran, “The only type of writing that we have, that we had in high school was something we called Enshah” (14/03/2013). Enshah is a type of creative writing based on a theme given to the students by their teacher (see Appendix K, p. 210). Overall, none of the student participants described or perceived a reliance on writing in their L1 education.

The student participants repeatedly expressed that in their home countries their learning was tested through exams rather than writing papers, or as Alice put it, “Our knowledge it is..., rely on the marks in exams” (14/03/2013). Some possible explanations for these perceptions are presented below. One possible consideration could be based on Alice’s description of the difference between her education in Iran and Canada, even though she does not seem to distinguish between the disciplines: statistics in Iran and, at the time of the study, social sciences in preparation to enter a Masters of Women's and Gender Studies in Canada. Alice was also enrolled in the EAP class at the time of the interviews. Perhaps due to her past and current educational experiences, she identified a reliance on writing in Canada. Alice’s reported difference between the privileging of writing in her L1 and Canadian university education was perhaps more indicative of the disciplinary differences between the amount and types of writing in statistics versus the arts.

Furthermore, it could also reflect her perception that the writing one did in a statistics class was not considered writing and was not explicitly referred to as such, “in mathematics we don’t like, we don’t have to use like writing like language, all of this like

symbols” (Alice, 06/03/2013). Alice perceives that what is done in mathematics is not writing, but as Van Dyck and Heffer (2014) remind us, “we forget that modern science and mathematics completely depend on writing systems. The least that we can say is that there would be no modern mathematics, chemistry or theoretical physics without a script” (p. 2), in this case symbolic script. This idea that writing plays an important role in mathematics and the teaching of mathematics is supported by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2000) when they describe writing as "an essential part of mathematics and mathematics education" (as cited in Wilcox & Monroe, 2011, p. 521). It is apparent that genres of writing used in the mathematics class were not recognized by Alice as a form of academic writing.

Jan (a pseudonym), one of the student participants whose transcripts were not coded, said it best, “[Sounding upset or frustrated] Writing, you have writing a lot here [in Canada], in our country, we have different subject... we have only just one class for writing, like you have here only English. So we have like mathematics, sport, religion, a lot of things but writing like one little part of that big deal” (06/03/2013). Jan seemed to indicate that while there was writing in her other courses, it was not the focus of the classes or their course assessment. She appeared to perceive writing as something accomplished as part of a specific writing class only, like the Canadian high school English Literature class. It is possible that Jan did not report the writing she did outside of her writing class as writing because of her own definition of the term and not because of a difference between the L1 and English educational systems. When I asked Jan about what she did in those other classes, she once again reported there was no writing.

Greg, Marcia and Alice, when asked about the writing they had done in their other L1 classes, generally stated that writing was not the focus. Discussing her major classes in her undergraduate statistics degree, Alice observed, "...not ... too much writing because our major is statistics... and there was a lot of work with numbers and these kinda things... in my major there is no a lot of essays or writing" (14/03/2013). Again, Alice, much like Jan above, appeared to view writing as essay writing only. This is likely a disciplinary difference or their perception of writing as essays, and not a question of an L1 versus English education system difference.

Another reason for experiencing less academic writing in their L1 was provided by Greg, who identified a lack of experience in writing any type of reports or essays in his L1 Chinese with his reason that he "...just graduated from high school and after that I never studied anymore like in university" (04/03/2013). In his L1 schooling, he studied "Chinese, mathematics, English, geography, politics, history and... biology" (Greg, 03/04/2013). In those classes, he admitted that students normally only read textbooks and wrote exams and tests. Similarly, when Marcia (28/03/2013) described her Master's level courses in Kyrgyzstan, she said, "It's different in our country... we had lectures and write [lecture notes]... we have seminars... but we don't have any readings we just divide the lectures notes... and we talk. We don't have any readings." Here she identified lecture notes as a form of writing. She also observed that she did not have readings, like articles or textbooks. However, in her Master's level courses in Canada, she described courses with a large amount of required readings, "we have a lot of different articles... like political, economical [*sic*], social everything. Different kinds of articles all about the Russia, Central Asia, Europe" (Marcia, 28/03/2013). According to

Marcia, reading academic articles is commonplace in Canada but was extremely uncommon in Kyrgyzstan. This difference cannot be so straightforwardly identified as disciplinary differences because her two Masters' degrees are both in the Faculty of Arts. However, it may represent an issue of accessibility: journals may not have been readily available at her university.

Although Greg, Marcia and Alice described the limited amount of academic writing in their prior L1 classes, they still identified themselves as good academic writers in their L1. This is an interesting result considering all three of them confirmed that writing was not privileged in their L1 education and that they wrote infrequently. Greg was the first to proclaim emphatically that he was a good academic writer in his L1, "Yes Yes Yes!" (04/03/2013). Interestingly, he said many times during the interview that he had done very little academic writing in China, and he never did any formal or research writing in his L1. Marcia also felt that she was an exceedingly good academic writer, "Yes, very good. I didn't have any like difficulties [in L1 academic writing]" (05/03/2013). This self-identification could be important in the development of these, currently L1 dominant, bilingual writers because, as Ball and Ellis (2008) discuss, one of the key factors in the development of a writer is the ability to see oneself as a *successful* writer. The ability of the student participants to perceive themselves as successful writers in their L1 may provide them with confidence and support in their English writing. Kubota (1998) suggests that a language learner's L1 writing ability is one of the factors affecting the quality of the ELL's English writing. Other factors are the learner's English proficiency and level of experience producing essays in English. Carson and Kuehn (2006), in their study of developing second language writers, as well suggest that good

L1 writers tend to become good L2 writers. However, this identification of the student participants as good L1 academic writers is only based only on their perceptions and not on any assessment of their L1 writing.

Peter, another student participant, reported that L1 (Chinese) and English academic writing have a very different organization. He described how the actual structure of an academic essay in Chinese is different from the structure of an English essay. Peter explained how an English essay began with an introduction, then the body and finally a conclusion. Alternatively, “In Chinese we do it like a circle [gesturing a spiral not a circle with his finger] and we give the conclusion at the end of the article. Sometimes even we don’t have a specific conclusion... it is totally different” (Peter, 07/03/2013). This image of Chinese or Asian rhetorical organization being shaped like a spiral closely resembles Kaplan’s (1966) ideas on cultural thought patterns where he describes English thought patterns as a straight line and Oriental thought patterns as a spiral (p. 15). Peter stated that he was explicitly taught these thought patterns in his English class in China, but that he did not remember hearing the name Kaplan. Peter was the only one who spoke of any specific training received in his home country concerning the differences between academic writing in his L1 and in English. To exclude his EAP class as the source of this information, I asked Thelma if she had ever introduced the concepts of cultural thought patterns (Kaplan, 1966) in her EAP class and she confirmed that she had not (personal communication, April, 10, 2014).

**Prior English educational experiences in home country.** This subsection examines the student participants’ prior English education before coming to Canada (see Appendix J, Code IAii, p. 204). The student participants all had English classes in their

education in their home countries, having begun English classes in primary school, or as Greg commented, “I have English class of course since ... elementary school, I have English class... but only some simple things” (04/03/2013). Alice also had English classes in her primary school but she instead started later, “what we studied it is more reading English literature and just talking, not really writing” (14/03/2013). Although they all had English classes in their home countries, the courses did not appear to focus on English writing, but rather on listening and reading: “the level when I study in China is not that hard... it was very simple” (Greg, 04/03/2013). According to Greg (personal communication, March 4, 2013), the class focused mainly on grammar and vocabulary to prepare students for standardized tests. Cindy, similarly, described what students did in English courses in her country as, “rearranging ungrammatical sentences and making it correct” (28/03/2013). She reported that there was listening and reading but little of the productive skills of speaking or writing. According to Alice, the students in her prior English classes spent “maybe 10% [of the time writing]... we had ... some course materials in English, but just we read them and write in Persian” (14/03/2013).

Information collected from the student participants and discussed above appears different from the way Thelma viewed the EAP students’ prior English education in their home countries:

...most of [the students] have done English in high school with Canadian, American or British English teachers, and most of them use those Oxford [or] Longman’s books. So when they come here [to the university]... they pretty much know what we are talking about, because that is exactly what they did with

the foreign teacher in their country. Very few haven't had that exposure.

(interview, 09/07/2013)

None of the student participants mentioned foreign Canadian, British or American teachers in their English classroom nor did they comment on using British or American textbooks. The student participants, contrary to what Thelma indicated, did not see what they had done in their prior English courses as being the same as what they were doing in the EAP course. This represents a difference between the student participants' reported experiences and the Beliefs, Assumptions and Knowledge (BAK) (Woods, 2003) of the EAP instructor. This difference in assumptions may not only exist between the instructor and the student participants but also potentially among the EAP instructors. For example, whereas Thelma stated that in her view, the student participants have had experience with native English speaking teachers and were familiar with English academic writing, Louise disagreed: "I don't know what types of writing they would have done, many of them seem to be coming directly from high school now so they haven't done that much academic writing" (09/07/2013). Even with Thelma's belief in the EAP students' prior experiences with English academic writing in their home countries, she felt it did not imply that they would have any "clue how to write the requested texts" in an EAP class (09/07/2013). The benefits that Thelma assumed the EAP students would have received from their prior academic English writing experience would clearly depend on exactly what the students did in those prior English classes in their home countries.

According to the student participants' reported experiences from their prior English classes in their home countries, the focus of those classes was on what they

termed “simple” tasks with limited writing. All student participants reported that the outcomes of their education in home countries were assessed through exams, which may explain why English teachers restricted their teaching to such “teachable” and “testable” (cf. Adam & Artemeva, 2002) items as vocabulary and grammar. The teachers in the student participants’ home countries might have been targeting the skills that would later be tested. This pedagogical focus on receptive skills, vocabulary and grammar is not restricted to China, Kyrgyzstan and Iran, but is also common in Hong Kong (Evans & Green, 2008; Hyland, 1997). In fact, both Evans and Green (2008) and Hyland (1997) found that the single most important deficit in the EAP students’ English linguistic resources was their lack of lexical range and specific disciplinary vocabulary. Therefore, the focus on vocabulary and grammar in the English classroom in the student participants’ home countries may be addressing a skill required of all students to advance into tertiary education in English.

For example, Greg described the specific skills focused on in English classes in his home country in this way, “in middle school and high school, I learned some... harder English, especially the skill of talking and ... basic vocabulary” (04/03/2013). Notably, Greg considered speaking or conversing in English as a harder skill. Perhaps, Chinese-speaking student participants have issues with the primary genres (Bakhtin, 1986) in English because of the initial focus of English classes in China being on writing, and on speaking only later in high school. This initial focus on written communication gives the Chinese student participants stronger writing skills but weaker oral skills, especially in casual English conversations.

Marcia and Alice described the opposite circumstance. In English classes in their home countries, Kyrgyzstan and Iran respectively, they focused on the primary genres like simple conversation, or as Alice phrased it, “talking and listening” (14/03/2013). The fact that Marcia and Alice stated their English classes in their home countries focused on listening, reading and speaking may indicate a lack of experience writing English texts and could therefore negatively affect the student participants studying in an English university. Not only that, Alice along with Cindy and Jan reported using English as one of the primary languages with their family and friends (Table 1, p. 39). This would mean that although English is not their mother tongue that they do have an adequate knowledge and experience with the primary genres of English.

It has been shown that despite having studied English for years, ELLs still face difficulties in producing English academic texts (Dooey, 2010; Kim & Duff, 2012; Littlewood & Liu, 1996; Raymond & Des Brisay, 2000; Schecter, 2012; Tardy, 2009). For example, in their study of Malaysian learners of English, Wee, Sim and Jusoff (2009) observe that “despite spending between 11 to 13 years of learning English as a second language, the Malaysian learners are still not proficient in the English language” (p. 58). The Malaysian students in that study had approximately the same number of years of English classes as the student participants in this study and experienced similar lack of preparedness for academic writing in English. Sasaki (2001) documents this lack of preparedness in the retelling of her own personal experience, “I had not learned to write more than a paragraph in English before, I had much to learn in the freshman composition class [at the University of Michigan]” (p. 113). Another former ELL herself, Söter (2001) describes her experience as, “It really was not until I began writing

my dissertation that I learned my English was not the kind of English that would ‘do’ for academic work” (p. 68). Perhaps during our interviews the student participants in my study had also come to the realization that they were unprepared for the demands of producing academic English texts. This feeling illustrates that learning to produce academic discourse and gaining a familiarity with academic writing is a lengthy process. Cummins and Man Yee-Fun (2007) comment that ELLs “require at least 5 years of exposure to academic English to catch up to native-speaker norms” (p. 801). In Casanave’s (2002) metaphor of learning a game, new players are not good at the complicated games until they have had months or years of practice. Academic writing at the tertiary level and in an additional language is certainly a complicated game. As reported in that study, many of the student participants experienced far less than the five years of required exposure to English academic, due to the simplistic nature of their early English classes in the student participants’ home countries.

Due to this reported lack of English or L1 academic writing experience, a potentially serious problem facing the student participants is illustrated by Devitt (2007). She maintains when learners are asked to produce a new or unfamiliar genre they will fall back on a familiar “antecedent” genre from their prior writing experience. The issue is the student participants have reported having little English and limited L1 academic writing experience. Therefore, one might wonder what familiar genre the students have to fall back on. Are the student participants without “antecedent genres, [which] help writers move into a new genre; they help writers adjust their old situations to new locations?” (Devitt, 2007, p. 222) Consequently, the students are being asked to build the first floor on a house and we are not yet sure if they have a solid foundation.

Another possible factor affecting the academic preparedness of the student participants could be the value placed on the English course in their home countries. Alice mentioned that parents in Iran thought English was important. Alice stressed the verb *thought*, which perhaps indicated that she disagreed with parents or that many Iranian students did not see the importance of English or the value of developing a high level of literacy in English for their daily lives. Kubota (2001) acknowledges that this lack of preparation can affect the student in their later academic pursuits, “in theory, I would have been able to transfer my L1 literacy skills to L2 while I was growing up. However, I did not develop my advanced literacy skills in English until later in my life, because of a lack of immediate needs for using English...” (p. 107). While some students may not see the need to develop their English, others see English as a roadblock, “[t]he majority of full-time, pre-university ESL students viewed English as a barrier despite their intention to study in an English-medium university. They typically cared less about actually learning English and more about passing a language proficiency test that would allow them access to university courses” (Cheng & Fox, 2008, p. 325). English is stopping them from completing their goal of obtaining an education.

Overall, the student participants reported experiencing great difficulties in their EAP perhaps indicating that their prior English education in their home countries left them unprepared to meet the demands of an English tertiary education. However, most of the student participants also reported having studied English in Canada before entering the university’s EAP program. The next subsection discusses these reported prior experiences learning English in Canada.

**Prior English experience in Canada.** Only Alice did not have any English classes in Canada before testing into and entering the advanced EAP class at the university. Marcia mentioned a prior Canadian EAP learning experience once in the second interview but she gave no details and never referred to it again. Greg reported that he had taken some English courses in Canada but when I asked him about his experiences, he would not answer the questions. In the pre-participation meeting with Greg, I had advised him only to answer the questions that he felt comfortable answering<sup>1</sup>. Later in the interview though, he did acknowledge that he had studied English at a local community college in the town where he lived at the time; however, he supplied few details.

Notably, at the time of the interviews, the student participants' experiences producing English academic writing were not limited to their EAP class. In addition to the EAP class, Marcia was also studying in graduate level courses: one in her major and one from the Department of Political Science. Alice was enrolled in two disciplinary courses: one on feminism and the other on activism. Only Greg was not enrolled in a disciplinary course at the university.

The next subsection discusses the student participants' reported experiences related to their EAP class as well as their disciplinary courses.

**EAP experience.** Greg, Marcia and Alice reported having difficulty in their advanced EAP course (see Appendix J, code IAI, p. 204). With the focus of the EAP class being on developing the students' academic writing, the student participants mostly discussed difficulties relating to producing the required texts. Marcia clearly described

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore, observing his reluctance to answer any questions related to his prior English education in Canada, I stopped that line of questioning.

her difficulties in the EAP class, “Ah! Writing assignments, I’m struggling. It’s very difficult for me to write and I’m struggling with it” (05/03/2013). Not only did Marcia report on her difficulties, but she also displayed a sense of a frustration at having these issues as she repeated and stressed the word *struggling*. She was not alone in this feeling as Greg commented, “now everything for me is very hard” (04/03/2013). The student participants’ reported lack of prior English academic writing and reading experience might explain the student participants encountering new types of English writing and reading activities in the EAP classroom. This newness might translate to a very steep learning curve for the student participants.

The student participants were dealing with a new country, language, culture, including academic culture, different teacher expectations along with new texts in English. The student participants elaborated on some of their specific difficulties in EAP class. Marcia had difficulties with the structure of an English academic paper, “here [in the EAP class], I just realize that I didn’t know about them [introduction, body and conclusion] and so it was really hard for me [to write good EAP papers]” (05/03/2013). The Russian informant noted that these structures were explicitly taught in her Russian education. Perhaps, Marcia’s perception that her Russian academic writing lacked structure displays again the implicit nature of her L1 academic writing knowledge of the subsidiary nature of that knowledge (Polanyi, 1962). Greg noted difficulties understanding the various reading texts, including journal articles and book chapters, assigned in his EAP class. The variety of potentially new reading and writing tasks assigned to the new EAP students could perhaps place a high cognitive load on those students.

According to Van Gerven, Paas, Merriënboer, Hendriks, and Schmidt (2003), Cognitive Load Theory describes the interaction between a person's working memory and long-term memory. The theory describes a person's working memory being limited in what it can hold at any one time and therefore in order to accomplish complicated tasks, the person must rely on some knowledge that has been transferred to their long-term memory, which is significantly larger than the working memory. For a native English-speaking student, the styles, English grammar and vocabulary, and the organization needed to produce an acceptable English academic task, like an essay, might be more commonly located in the person's long-term memory, lessening the load on the person's working memory. However, even native speakers when writing an unfamiliar text will have an increased cognitive load. This unloading of information from one's working memory to his/her long-term memory is what Berger and Luckman (1966) describe as one of the benefits of habituation. In the process of habituation, some of the repetitive elements, in this case writing an English academic paper, may become "cast into a pattern, which can then be reproduced with an economy of effort" (pp. 70-71). This, however, may not be true for ELLs, as they have not had sufficient experience in writing English academic texts for some of the elements to become habituated. Thus, the student participants' reported lack of experience could require more of the operations for English academic writing to reside in their working memory, possibly increasing the cognitive load on the student participants thus making the task potentially more difficult.

In addition to reported difficulties with academic writing and the associated cognitive loads, the student participants also noted that English academic reading

presented numerous problems in the EAP class. For example, Alice indicated that her inexperience in some of the techniques used in reading academic English texts was affecting her ability to produce the required texts in her EAP course, “I think [I am having difficulty writing good papers] because maybe, because I am not familiar with the concept of critical reading” (14/03/2013). However, the difficulties faced in critical reading or thinking may not be related to the student participants’ experience but rather to their cultural background (Atkinson, 1997). When asked if there were any EAP reading or writing assignments which she found especially difficult, Alice paused for a long period (14 seconds), then identified critical reading as the most difficult “...there is many [difficult] assignments like critical reading ... I got bad marks” (14/03/2013). It was unclear why she paused for that long, but perhaps she was processing the question.

Another difficulty faced by the student participants was paraphrasing an academic text. When asked why they found it was so difficult to paraphrase an article, the most common responses related to a lack of the lexical resources. This lack of the required vocabulary may cause the student participants to use inappropriate words or simply to keep the same words as the original text; Marcia explained her difficulties, as “I don’t know their [*sic*] synonyms of these words. I only know these academic words, and ... I just usually use them and it turns... like plagiarism, but I... am struggling with it. Always try to paraphrase” (05/03/2013). She is describing how lack of appropriate vocabulary has led to plagiarism on occasions. This lack of required academic vocabulary has also been identified in EAP students in Hong Kong by Hyland (1997) and Evans and Green (2008). The student participants did comment that there were other

difficulties affecting their success in the EAP course that were not related to their linguistic knowledge.

Marcia identified a difficulty in producing the requested texts in the EAP class due to the limited preparation time for class, “I don’t have time. I have a lot of classes. So I’m like catching up” (05/03/2013). Greg agreed, “the time not [enough for] us to write so much things” (03/04/2013). Time was an especially important issue for the student participants and perhaps all new university students. The student participants had to complete their EAP course requirements and those of their other disciplinary courses. Therefore, time-management was potentially one of the most important factors influencing the success of the student participants. The student participants discussed how it could take them longer to read, understand the article or textbook and then to produce the requested text, causing them to feel as though they were always “catching up.” One possible reason for the student participants feeling that they needed to catch-up was that they were not only enrolled in the EAP class, but also enrolled in disciplinary courses, increasing their workloads but engaging them in authentic academic communication.

**Disciplinary experience.** As discussed in the student participants’ biographies (p. 39) and in the introduction to this chapter, only Marcia and Alice were enrolled in disciplinary courses at the Canadian university at the time of the study. This subsection introduces the reported writing experiences they gained in their disciplinary courses (See Appendix J, Code IBii, p. 204).

Alice and Marcia suggested that in both their EAP class and their disciplinary courses, they were asked to produce similar types of genres. Marcia added that she did

not find the writing tasks in her disciplinary course to be any more difficult than in her EAP course, “No, not actually because they are similar” (05/03/2013) and suggested that she was actually, “getting used to them now. It’s more easier [*sic*], now for me” (05/03/2013). Perhaps, she was finding the writing in her disciplinary courses easier because she had more familiarity with the content knowledge from her related prior degree. This content knowledge may be the only aspect helping Marcia with her disciplinary writing, as Johns (1988) notes that the learning outcomes from the EAP course, in this case general writing and researching skills, may not be applicable in the new disciplinary course. Both Johns (1988) and Spack (1997) do not support this methodology of teaching “common” academic skills and strategies with the hopes that they will transfer to the EAP students’ disciplinary courses.

One problem Marcia did face though in her disciplinary courses concerned the length of the writing assignments, “I have that problem, I can’t write long papers. It is really hard for me, I have just main points and that’s all” (05/03/2013). Alice did not describe any specific difference in the genres she produced in her EAP and disciplinary courses, “I can realize... [There are] differences. They are not very... huge; it is not a big problem” (28/03/2013). Overall, Marcia and Alice reported that the genres they produced in both their EAP class and disciplinary writing were very similar. Another issue commented on by Alice and Marcia was the different focus on the genres they were required to produce in the EAP and disciplinary courses.

One such difference was the focus on writing academic summaries of articles. In her disciplinary classes, Marcia reported that students did not write “summaries but a papers [*sic*]” then after a pause she added, “I have to write summary of my articles”

(05/03/2013). A few moments later, Marcia stated that in graduate school, “they don’t need me summary write [*sic*]” (05/03/2013). It was unclear why Marcia changed her accounts of writing summaries in her disciplinary courses, but perhaps this reflects her implicit knowledge of the writing being done in her disciplinary courses.

The fact that the student participants were focusing on academic summaries in their EAP classes, a less common genre in their disciplinary courses, could perhaps leave the student participants unprepared for the writing they will encounter in their disciplinary courses. Alice and Marcia did perceive the writing in the EAP class and disciplinary courses as not being that different except in terms of the assignments length and in the focus on summaries. Greg, Marcia and Alice identified five genres of writing for their EAP class: lecture notes, formal presentations, summaries, research papers, and reflections. Marcia and Alice reported four genres of writing from their disciplinary course: summaries, research papers, essays and reflections. Three genres of writing overlap between the two courses, research papers, academic summaries and reflections (see, subsection Current English Genres, Text Types and Types of Writing, p. 103). It should be noted that two of the genres in this discussion contain wider variation than does the others. The academic essay, labelled as a “classroom genre” (Dudley-Evans, 2002; Johns, 1997). The other is the reflection, which could be described as a baggy genre, Medway (as cited in Devitt, 2004, p. 10). Due to the variability of the genre of reflection, it is hard to determine if the two genres of reflection in the EAP and disciplinary courses were in fact similar. A comparison of these two samples of this baggy genre, reflective writing, could not be conducted as writing samples were not collected for analysis from their EAP and disciplinary courses.

The different focus placed on specific genres in the student participants' EAP and disciplinary courses was not the only challenge the student participants overcame. To overcome issues related to the production of the English texts the student participants reported using a variety of writing strategies or processes. The next subsection discusses the student participants' reported writing process and strategies.

### **Writing Process and Strategies**

The most difficult and complicated part of the writing process is the beginning.

A. B. Yehoshua

The student participants all indicated some specific strategies or areas they felt they needed to focus on to become more successful writers of academic English or in their L1 (see Appendix J, Category IC, p. 204). Within the context of this study, the student participants defined successful academic writing as writing that earns high marks from their instructors and professors. This section discusses the findings related to the category Writing Processes and Strategies, including the high-level codes: Role of Language Skills in Learning Academic Writing, L1 and English Academic Writing Processes, and EAP Academic Writing Strategies with a special focus on one of its key lower level codes, Use of L1 in English Academic Writing.

**Role of language skills in learning academic writing.** Greg, Marcia and Alice all agreed that the best way to improve their English academic writing was to improve their reading skill (see Appendix J, code ICi, p. 204). For example, Greg commented, “every student who learn [*sic*] English if they have a higher ability of English... they must have been read [*sic*] English materials and books” (04/03/2013). The student participants privileged reading above the other skills as a way to improve their academic

writing in both L1 and English. Reading gave the student participants the content knowledge they needed to complete their writing tasks. Raymond and Parks (2002) also identified the purpose of reading texts in an EAP class as gaining the content necessary, “to answer written questions about them [the readings] or else to summarize them” (p. 160). Reading may also help the student participants in other ways, as Kubota (2001) recognizes that “different skills interacted with each other; for instance, reading helped writing and writing helped speaking, enhancing the overall development of language proficiencies” (p. 107). The researchers and student participants agree that improved reading skill can help the learner to improve their writing; however, this improvement was not solely due to an increase in content knowledge or interaction.

According to the student participants, reading helped them in two additional ways: by developing the ELL’s grammar and vocabulary and by giving them a “feeling” (Greg, 04/03/2013) for English. Greg affirmed the importance of reading in helping him acquire the necessary vocabulary, “I should read more things and improve my vocabularies [*sic*]” (04/03/2013). This belief might originate from his prior English classes in China and their reported focus on reading, vocabulary and grammar. Although, it is important to learn the vocabulary and grammar of a new language to improve one’s writing, it is equally important to acquire other related communication skills. Some of these other skills or forms of knowledge include “skills in the area of content, organisation or style but also the ability to produce a grammatically error-free piece of work as surface errors distract readers” (Wee, Sim & Jusoff, 2009, p. 61). Even though another idea of developing a "feeling" for English was expressed only by Greg, but it is notable in light of the discussions of the student participants’ genre

awareness and knowledge. Greg declared that “If you read a journal article... after that you will have a feeling of English” (Greg, 04/03/2013). Greg was suggesting the reading English gave one a *feeling* for English, which may represent an implicit understanding of the grammar, structure and vocabulary of English academic writing. It may also be defined as an implicit understanding of the genre of the English academic journal article. The student participants mentioned how practicing or improving listening, speaking and reading could improve their academic writing; however, they never discussed how practicing their writing could make them better writers.

The student participants focused almost exclusively on reading as the main language skill that can improve their academic English writing. They did not discuss practicing writing as a valid way to improve their English academic writing. However, that is exactly what Artemeva and Fox (2010) identify as necessary for the successful production of a genre. They find that awareness of the genre is not sufficient to guarantee successful production and that what is required is experience producing the genre. That is, while the student participants’ strategy was to focus on reading, according to Artemeva and Fox (2010) in addition to reading, they needed to participate in genre production in order to improve their production of the common academic genres.

**L1 and EAP academic writing process.** Apart from general strategies used by the student participants to improve their writing, participants also discussed the writing process used in their EAP class and some limited information on writing process from their prior L1 writing (see Appendix J, codes ICii & ICiii, p. 204).

In the discussions of their L1 writing, the student participants commented that they “simply wrote,” or never thought about their L1 writing. However, the student

participants did remember that a limited amount of research or supporting citations was needed for an academic paper in their home countries. The student participants reported that there was far less research needed in their academic writing in their L1 than in the Canadian university. Marcia commented on the difference, “So I could... just gather some information... and put in one paper... I could use only two or three articles and write sixteen pages” (05/03/2013). The increased demand for in-text citations and references in English research papers could perhaps also add to the cognitive load and increase the amount of reading required for the student participant to produce one paper.

Marcia explained similarities between her L1 and English academic writing process, “I gather all of the information collect and organize them. Then I have to paraphrase and write” (28/03/2013). Alice viewed her L1 writing process as, “First, I think... about what I suppose to write and then I read the material... to build your opinion on them... think a lot and then I try to write... down my ideas...I read again and again to do proofreading for myself, and if I can find someone to do the proofreading for me as well” (28/03/2013). Alice further commented that her L1 academic writing process was similar to what she did in her EAP class. Although the two writing processes were described as being similar, the student participants were at times better able to articulate the process in their EAP writing, perhaps because it was explicitly taught to them in the EAP course, whereas they implicitly gained understanding of their L1 writing process through years of L1 writing experiences. The student participants were able to identify some specific key steps in their EAP writing processes.

The first key step in their EAP writing process was to constantly re-examine the question and the teacher’s requirements: “before I write I’m thinking about what the

important point, emphasis of my teacher's question, and the requirement" (Greg, 04/03/2013). Greg explained his iterative writing process: pre-writing phase to determine the important points and requirements of the question, considered along with the teacher's emphasis, and then the writing phase of returning to the question. Greg commented too that when writing, "I'm always focus [*sic*] so if I write a small paragraph I stop and come back to, to look at the question again... I remind myself, oh this is a, my teacher said I need to focus on this topic" (04/03/2013). Marcia had a similar focus on the question: "So mostly I just throw all the ideas and after two days I just revise them [based on the question]" (05/03/2013).

The student participants also described some other general academic writing strategies they used in the production of academic writing in the EAP class.

**EAP academic writing strategies.** The student participants in this study advocated the use of various learning strategies (see Appendix J, code ICii, p. 204) including seeking help from the teacher or, in some cases, the TAs but few specific academic writing strategies. Thelma and Louise emphasized the importance of creating independent learners. Louise described one of her main EAP course outcomes as helping the EAP students to "succeed in a university context ... in their language abilities... in seeking the necessary support and knowing what they need. So, I hope that they are able to, sort of, self-identify in terms of needs, finding support they need" (09/07/2013). Louise is trying to help the EAP students to become independent learners.

Greg, Marcia and Alice acknowledged getting help with their EAP writing assignments and their first choice was to ask the teacher. Greg commented, "After class I always ask teacher...I think mostly it is... teacher and after that it's TA" (04/03/2013).

Greg sought guidance from the teacher first because he admitted to having no experience with TAs before entering this EAP program. Marcia also asked the teacher for help first and was the only student participant to ask the instructor for a model of the required text: “I ask them to give me like some examples to show me. Yes usually I use examples” (05/03/2013). Few of the student participants endorsed visiting the TA unless required to do so by their teacher. Marcia suggested that there was some value in visiting a TA, however, she had no time to “go to the TA or... to the library writing... workshops...” because she had “a lot of classes” (05/03/2013). The student participants have already indicated they felt rushed completing all of the readings and the writing tasks in their EAP and disciplinary courses. EAP students trying to complete all of their required reading and writing requirements are often “[forced] to resort to coping strategies which privileged survival over learning” (Raymond & Parks, 2002, p. 173). Therefore, although the student participants realised the benefits of visiting the TAs, workshops or the writing center, they were more focused on trying to survive the pressure of academic life. Greg was the only student participant who advocated utilizing these resources, possibly, because he was the only student participant without any concurrent disciplinary classes and therefore felt less time pressures. One strategy which helped student participants, and which produced the most heated discussions, during the interviews, was the use of the learner’s L1 in the EAP classroom and during the writing process.

**Use of L1 in English academic writing.** This section discusses the findings related to the use of the student participants’ L1 in their EAP class and in their English academic writing (see Appendix J, Node ICiif, p. 204). Over the past few decades of language teaching, the L1 was considered something not to be endorsed but not to be

prohibited in the second language classroom, or, as Cook (2001) identifies, “[the] avoidance of the L1 lies behind many teaching techniques, even if it is seldom spelled out... Recent methods do not so much forbid the L1 as ignore its existence altogether” (p. 404). Recently, there has been increasing interest in the role of the L1 in the L2 class (Kibler, 2010). Researchers have specifically looked at multilingual and bilingual writers (Canagarajah, 2006; Gentil, 2011; Lee, 2007; Yi, 2010; Zamel, 1998), the role and effects of the L1 in the L2 classroom (Belz, 2003; Chau, 2007; Kobyashi & Rinnert, 1992; Ortega, 2009; Sasaki, 2009), and the role of L1 in second language composition (Wang & Wen, 2002).

I expected that the student participants in this study would utilize their L1s to assist in their English academic writing process, to some degree. In describing her personal English writing process, Sasaki (2001) admits, “I think in Japanese, take notes in Japanese, and write the first rough drafts in Japanese because I can’t think thoroughly about any complicated matters in English” (p. 111). This level of translation from the L1 might not be common in the EAP class, but one possible role for the L1 in the EAP classroom was in trying to better understand or discuss the requirements of the assignments or the content material. This would be most available to the student participants belonging to a language groups represented by multiple members in the EAP classes, for example a group of Mandarin speakers. Kibler (2010) documents this use of the ELLs’ L1 in an American mainstream class as a way for non-native English speakers to quickly ask questions of and gain understanding from their fellow classmates.

Contrary to my assumptions, Greg discounted his classmates as helpful, especially those who shared the same L1: “the ... classmates not help, because we speak Chinese”

(04/03/2013). However, Kibler (2010), notes, “the L1 has the potential to be a productive affordance” (p. 122). In her study of Australian EAP students, Dooey (2010) notes that the Chinese speakers tended to use their L1 in the EAP classroom. The student participants in my study firmly disagreed with using their L1 in the classroom to any degree. Greg suggested that speaking Chinese in the EAP classroom or outside of it had a negative effect on his English: “It’s bad of course! [emphatically]” (03/04/2013). Similarly, Cook (2001) suggests that for many language teachers and researchers, “the L2 is seen as positive, the L1 as negative” (p. 404).

I also thought that the student participants’ L1s would be useful as a support in their individual academic English writing process. When asked about this use of their L1, the student participants were almost hostile in response. Greg noted, “after I come [sic] to Canada study [sic], I always use English... I learn English, so if I don’t use English so it doesn’t make sense” (04/03/2013). Greg stressed the words *always* and *sense*, making clear his message; ELLs should never use their L1 while learning a new language. Greg added that he never took notes in Chinese when he read his English articles, “No! No! No! No!” (Greg, 04/03/2013). Indeed, Greg’s identification of the negative effect of L1 in the English classroom was similar to the Korean Generation 1.5 students in Kim and Duff’s (2012) study, who noted that “one of the participants with a lower level of oral English began to hang out with other Korean speakers, although she admitted to feeling “pathetic for speaking Korean with her peers” (p. 91). Perhaps, this explains the student participants’ avoidance of their L1 in the EAP classroom.

This reported view that L1 has no place in the English class could be based on the student participants’ prior educational experiences. When asked, the six student

participants all stated that it was a feeling or it was logical not to use their L1 in the English classes, "...nobody tell me but I think it" (Greg 03/04/2013). Only Marcia mentioned her English teacher in Kyrgyzstan emphasizing, "Always in English," (05/03/2013). Marcia also indicated that her first EAP teacher at the university told her class, "that... we shouldn't use our first language at all" (05/03/2013). Thelma never mentioned explicitly disallowing the use of the EAP students' L1s in her classroom. She explained that she would use her L1 in an additional language classroom. The student participants were not explicitly told to avoid using their L1s in the classroom, but maybe they were sensitive to more subtle messages. Although Thelma did not forbid the use of L1s in her classroom, she did believe that "...at a certain point they have to give up a little bit of their first language" (29/07/2013). It is possible then the rule excluding the student participants' L1 from English class was presented to them implicitly during the course of their English language education both at home and in Canada. Although the student participants did not acknowledge speaking their L1s in class, they did use their L1s in other ways.

For example, the student participants described thinking, formulating ideas, and composing thoughts in their L1, which they would then translate to English. This was done as a mental process before they committed the idea to writing. Greg suggested, he was "always thinking in Chinese way, when I write English assignment... when I write English sentence... [but] in my brain first is a Chinese sentence after that I translate into English" (04/03/2013). He recognized that translation was not a good method for writing in an additional language, "if I think... in Chinese and translate um... it's very not natural" (Greg, 03/04/2013). This concept of thinking in the L1 and then writing in

English was common to most of the student participants. Likewise, Alice noted, “I translate directly from my language, and I know it doesn’t make sense for an English speaker” (14/03/2013). Marcia also confirmed she used a similar process, “thinking is in Russian. So I think in Russian... but... then I translate my thoughts, when I write [to English]... I have all the information in Russian here in my head, and I just...translate them [*sic*]” (05/03/2013). Greg was the only student participant who did not recognize the serious problem of direct translation, “[Yes there are errors] but not big. It’s like grammar mistake ... but mostly it is fine” (04/03/2013). Although the student participants all spoke of using translation, none of the student participants endorsed writing a text in their L1 and then translating it; instead, they thought of the sentence in their L1 and then translated it to English before writing it down.

## **Conclusion**

As observed above (p. 40), all of the student participants in this study were true L1 dominant bilingual or multilingual writers, who had completed the majority of their educations in their L1s. In their interviews, the student participants demonstrated an implicit knowledge of their L1 academic writing. The student participants appeared to believe that writing was not as privileged in their L1 education as it is in Western English education, for example in the EAP class or other disciplinary courses. They described their prior L1 writing as being infrequent and that marks in their L1 education were not based on writing papers but rather on exams. The student participants’ reported lack of writing in their L1 education may not indicate an actual lack of writing: it may represent the nature of their L1 writing as a tool in their content courses, and not something taught explicitly in a writing course, thus making their L1 writing appear transparent to them.

The need for the learner to see a connection between their current and prior academic writing (James, 2010; Nowacek, 2011; Reiff and Bawarshi, 2011) might present a problem for the student participants as they also reported their L1 writing completed in courses such as math, science, history, and religion was not *writing*. The student participants appeared to feel that writing was something, which takes place in a literature or dedicated writing class and included forms like the essay or research paper.

The student participants also reported limited experience in prior English academic writing, even though they had had a minimum of 10 years of English classes prior to their EAP course. They also reported many difficulties with the writing component of their EAP class, perhaps reflecting the focus on listening, reading, grammar, and vocabulary in their prior English classes. If the student participants did have limited experience producing written academic English genres, then they might not have the required experience in producing the genres in the past, something that Artemeva and Fox (2010) identify as necessary for the learner to successfully produce the genres. Thus, Greg's discussion of reading English academic journal articles to develop his feeling of English would only aid in his awareness and may not be central to his ability to produce the target genre (cf. Artemeva & Fox). Not only do the student participants require experience producing the genres, they would also need, as Levine (2001) identifies, the knowledge of "how to select appropriate language to suit different communicative tasks... [and the] importance of linguistic conventions associated with different text genres" (pp. 76-77).

The student participants might experience increased cognitive loads due to their reported lack of academic writing experience, combined with the requirements of their

EAP and disciplinary courses, along with attending an English university. Therefore, the EAP students, relying mainly on their working memory to contain all of the new information might become overloaded.

Finally, the student participants expressed an aversion to using their L1s in any real productive way in the classroom; even though, it is shown that some controlled use of the student participants' L1s could be a *beneficial and productive tool* in the English classroom (Artemeva, 1995; Kibler, 2010). Greg, Marcia and Alice have in effect *forbidden* themselves to use their L1 in English classes. This self-imposed barrier between their L1 and English might affect their ability to perceive a connection between what they are writing in their EAP class with their prior L1 academic writing. As Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi (2004) suggest, a student needs to see the similarity between texts in order to draw support from their prior writing experience. Similarly, Schechter (2012) mentions that the students' L1 and L2 literacies are linked: "One of the most consistent findings in the literature on bilingualism is that the literacy skills in the first (L1) and the second (L2) [languages] are strongly related. In other words, L1 and L2 literacy are interdependent, or manifestation of a common underlying proficiency" (p. 310). Therefore, the way the student participants appear to view their L1 and L2 as disconnected might negatively affect their English academic writing.

This discussion has provided a partial answer to the first research question: What genre knowledge and awareness do the student participants reportedly bring with them into the EAP class from their first language(s) and prior English education?

The student participants have a mainly implicit awareness of the academic writing they produced in their L1 education. They reported that their L1 academic writing was

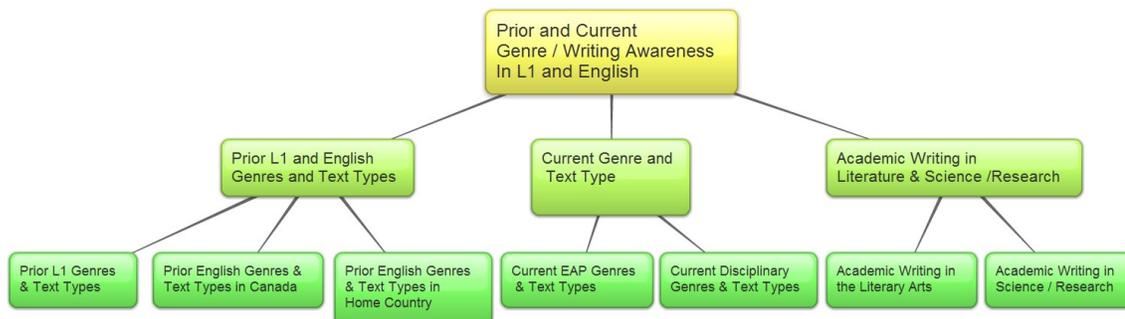
infrequent and not the main form of assessment. Secondly, the student participants generally reported having little or no prior English academic writing experience at the high school or university level.

Next, the paper examines specifics of the student participants' prior L1 and English genre knowledge and awareness.

## 4.2 Genre and Academic Writing Experience in L1 and English

This section examines the specific genres, text types and types of writing produced by the student participants during their prior L1, prior English education in their home countries and in Canada, and finally in their current EAP and English disciplinary courses (see Appendix J, Theme III, p. 2042). In hopes of gaining a better understanding of the student participants' academic writing experiences, the genre knowledge and awareness of the student participants' was documented. This type of research might assist EAP instructors by giving them an insight into the EAP students' prior writing experience and thus helping the instructors to activate the EAP students' schemata (Carrell, & Eisterhold, 1983) or prior knowledge in the EAP class. As Thelma suggests, "these students come to us with a lot of learning knowledge, whether it is language, content or whatever. Yah so we should use that experience in our classrooms" (09/07/2013). The first step in utilizing this prior knowledge would be to identify the genre resources and writing experiences the student participants possess.

The second theme emerged from the data analysis, Prior and Current Genre/Writing Awareness in L1 and English, is composed of three categories (see Figure 4, p. 94): Prior L1 and English Genres and Text types, Current (English) Genre and Text Type, and Academic Writing in Science and Literature. In this subsection, the focus is on the first two categories and the high level codes that form them. The third category, Academic Writing in Science and Literature, was not productive and was comprised of few codes, so it will be discussed in the section relating to the student participants' perceptions of writing in science in Perceptions of English Academic Writing (p. 117).



*Figure 4.* Prior and current genre & writing awareness in L1 and English. This figure is a visual representation of the coding tree for the theme.

### **Prior L1 Genres, Text Types, and Types of Writing**

The first code to be discussed is the student participants' reported Prior L1 Genres and Text Types. The student participants in this study spoke frequently about how little they remembered from their prior L1 education with respect to academic writing. In the interviews, they described an education with little writing; however, this was their perception, as was revealed over the course of two interviews, because they referred to and described many different forms of L1 academic writing (see Appendix J, code IIIAi, p. 204; Appendix K, p. 210; Figure 6, p. 117). The coded interviews, follow-up questions and emails provided a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the student participants' L1 genre resources. As shown in Table 3, the student participants varied greatly in their accounts of the types of writing they produced in their L1s. These differences could be influenced by their countries of origin, L1s, disciplines and by the final levels of education achieved.

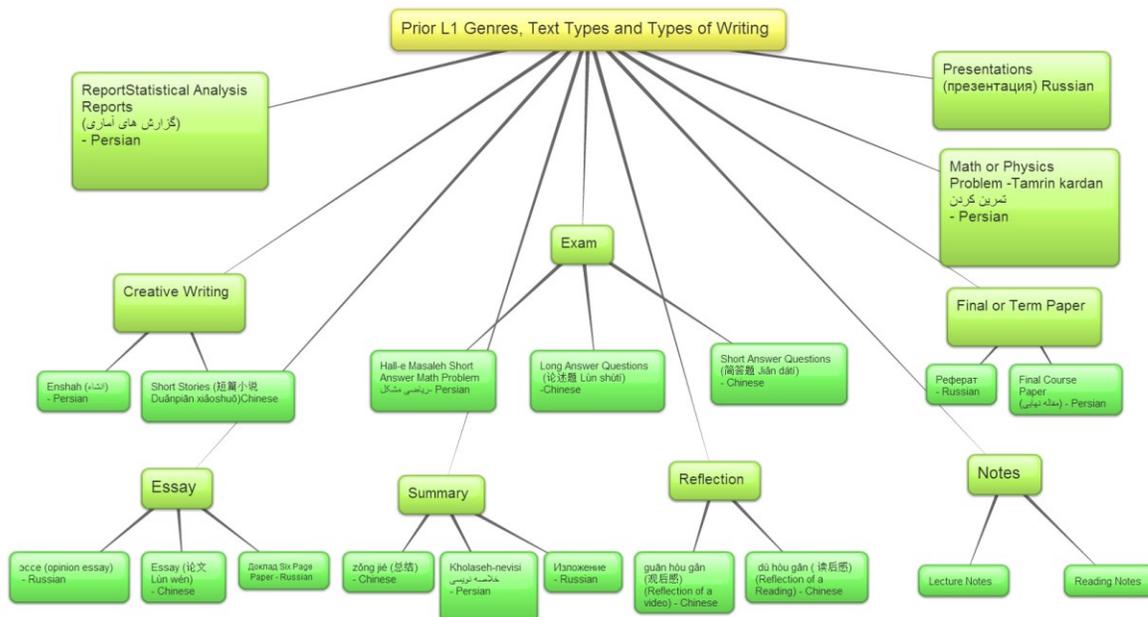


Figure 5. L1 genre, text types, and types of writing. This figure is a visual representation of the coding tree for the higher-level node.

Greg completed his high school diploma, the upper limit of his L1 education, in China before coming to Canada. He described his L1 education as focusing on exams and in terms of writing, more on creative writing. He stated that he never wrote research papers in China. Table 3 (p. 96) displays his reported writing experience as having been composed of short stories (短篇小说), short (简答题) and long (论述题) answer questions on exams and tests, essays (论文), summaries (总结) and reflections of readings (读后感) and reflections based on videos (观后感). Greg summed up his L1 educational experience in this way, "...I write many summarizes and compositions" (03/04/2013).

Marcia, who had completed her Master's in International Relations in Kyrgyzstan, possessed a very different set of L1 genre resources (Table 3).

Table 3

*A Comparison of the L1 Genres and Text Types Produced by the Three Student Participants*

<b>Genre, Text Type, or Type of Writing</b>	<b>Greg-Mandarin</b>	<b>Marcia-Russian</b>	<b>Alice-Persian</b>
<b>Creative Writing</b>	Short Stories (短篇小说 Duǎnpiān xiǎoshuō)		Enshah (انشاء)
<b>Exam Questions</b>	Short Answer Questions (简答题 Jiǎn dǎtí) Long Answer Questions (论述题 Lùn shùtí)		Math Short Answer Problems (Hall-e Masaleh) مشهد کل یاضیر
<b>Math Problems Reports</b>			Tamrin kardan (کردن تمرین) Statistical Analysis Reports (هلی گ زارش) (آمار)
<b>Final Term Papers</b>		Term Paper (Реферат) – Russian Informant says Реферат is a Summary	Final Paper (نهایه ی مقاله)
<b>Essay</b>	Essay (论文 Lùn wén)	Opinion or Position Paper (Эссе) – Russian Informant says it is a composition or opinion essay based on literature. Six Page Essay (Доклад)- Russian Informant says Доклад is a Report	
<b>Summary</b>	Summary (总结 zǒng jié)	Summary (Изложение) – Russian Informant describes Изложение as a retelling of a story.	Summary (Kholaseh-nevisi) (نویسی خلاصه)
<b>Reflection</b>	Reflection of a reading (读后感 dú hòu gǎn) Reflection of a Video (观后感 guān hòu gǎn)		
<b>Presentations</b>		Presentations-презентация	
<b>Lecture Notes</b>	Yes *	Yes*	Yes*
<b>Reading Notes</b>	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*

\* Indicates the student participants did not provide any specific translations in their L1

Marcia's genre and academic writing resources were focused on longer texts including term papers (Реферат)<sup>2</sup>, opinion or position essays (Эссе)<sup>3</sup>, 6 page essay (Доклад)<sup>4</sup>, summaries (Изложение)<sup>5</sup>, and academic presentations (презентация), and she reiterated, "I wrote many presentations in in Russian" (Marcia, 28/03/2013). Her reported writing experiences appear only to include those resources gained or produced during her time in graduate school in Kyrgyzstan. The resources were consistent with her descriptions of her experiences in graduate school and were similar to the types of writing she described producing in her disciplinary graduate course in Canada.

Alice, who completed an undergraduate degree in statistics before coming to Canada, had genre resources that reflected a statistics degree along with some references to her high school writing. She reported producing a form of creative writing based of a prompt from the teacher. Enshah (ءاشنا) is a common type of writing in Iranian secondary schools (Persian language informant). Many of Alice's genre resources were connected to her undergraduate degree in statistics, including math short answer problems (ىاضىر), mathematical word problems (مشكل), stroper sisylana lacitsitats, yltsal dna (گ زارش هلى آماری), and end of term writing assignments in her undergraduate degree as a final paper (دلاقم), but suggested that it was different from a thesis in that it required no original research. The final resource she identified was the academic summary (ىسىذلا صه ذو) based on an article or book.

<sup>2</sup> The Russian language informant suggested the translation for Реферат is a Summary. However, the student participant disagreed and kept her original translation.

<sup>3</sup> The Russian informant suggesting that Эссе referred to a composition or opinion essay based on literature. The student participant disagreed and stayed with the original translation.

<sup>4</sup> Russian Informant says Доклад is a Report and not an essay. The student participant disagreed.

<sup>5</sup> Russian Informant describes Изложение as a retelling of a story. The student participant disagreed.

It appears that the student participants, when asked to reflect on their prior L1 academic writing experiences, generally described what they produced in their most recent educational experience. This created three very different sets of genre resources, based on the student participant's level of education in their L1 (secondary, undergraduate and graduate) and their major. Alice studied statistics and therefore the majority of her academic writing experiences involved mathematical formulas and numbers. However, as discussed earlier, Alice did not view this type of writing as academic; she may therefore view herself as an inexperienced academic writer in her L1, Persian. The student participants not only bring their L1 writing experience to the EAP class, they also have prior English writing experience.

#### **Prior English Genres and Text Types in Home Country and Canada.**

The student participants entered the EAP class with prior English writing experiences in their home country (see Appendix J, code IIIAii, p. 204) and in Canada (see Appendix J, code IIIAiii, p. 204). During the interviews, the student participants provided little information concerning their prior English genres and text types. Greg, Marcia and Alice only identified five types of prior English writing in their home countries: creative writing, essays, diary entries, and summaries and in Canada, Greg admitted having experience writing resumes. Jan (Table 1, p. 39) did have some English academic writing experience in ESL courses at a local community college. She identified the common texts in her advanced ESL course, “we write different types of essay, argumentative essay, opinion essay and descriptive essay. In addition, we learned how to essay like introduction, introduce your topic, thesis statement, topic sentence. And then you have to support your idea for a few paragraphs and conclusion” (Jan, 06/03/2013).

Because the student participants' discussions of their prior English genre resources were limited, this next section will rely on the more extensive results from the questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197). However, because the questionnaire did not indicate whether the prior English genre production was in the student participants' home countries or Canada, the two codes, Prior English Genres and Text Types in Home Country and Prior English Genres and Text Types in Canada are discussed as a single subsection, Prior English Genres and Text Types in the Home Country and Canada.

One of the first trends that became apparent during the analysis was the situating of specific genres in their appropriate specific domains. Thus, as shown in Table 4a (p. 100), the bulk of the genres relating to correspondence were situated outside of work or school, the academic genres were produced at school, and similarly, the majority of the business genres were produced at work.

Another element of note is that the majority of genres or text types relating to the literary arts took place outside of school. This shows that the student participants have had very limited exposure to literary arts in English in an academic setting. More than that, six of the eight genres relating to the literary arts were reported by Cindy (Table 1. p. 39). In fact, Greg, Marcia and Alice have had no experience producing any genres relating to literary arts in English. During her four years at an American international high school in Qatar, Cindy gained extensive experience producing written genres relating to the literary arts as well as a wide range of English academic genres.

Table 4a)

*Combined Prior English Genre Production for Student Participants, Indicating Domain*

<b>Correspondence</b>	<b>For school</b>	<b>For work</b>	<b>Outside school and work</b>
blog (Blogger)	X		XX
email	XXX	XXX	XXXXX
discussion board (online)			X
personal letter	X		XXXX
instant messaging (MSN)	XX		XXXX
text messaging (cellphone)	XX	X	XXXX
<b>Creative writing</b>			
nonfiction	XX		X
fiction (stories)			X
poetry (poems)	X		X
song lyrics			XX
<b>Academic writing</b>			
analytical essay (analyse a topic or theme)	XX		
argumentative essay (defend a position)	XX		
book report	XXX		
compare and contrast paper	XXXX		
descriptive essay (describe something)	XXXX		
evaluation paper (evaluate or assess)	XXX		
five-paragraph essay (Intro, 3 body, conc.)	XXX		
interpretation of literature	XX		
lab write-up/report	XXXX		
opinion/position paper	XXXX	X	
personal narrative	XXXX	X	X
summary	XXXXXX		X
<b>Informal writing</b>			
free writing	XX		XX
journal (diary) writing	XX		X
lecture notes	XXXXX		
reading notes	XXXX		
<b>Presentations/Speeches</b>			
informal presentation	XXXX		
formal presentation	XXX	X	X
speech	XX		
storytelling	XX		XX
<b>Business writing</b>			
business letter		XX	
job applications		XXXX	
resume / CV	XX	XXXX	
<b>Public writing</b>			
letter to the editor			
blog or online journal			XX
web page design			X
web page text			X
social network (Facebook)	X		XXXX

Table 4 b)

*Individual Prior English Genre Production for Student Participants*

<b>Correspondence</b>	<b>Greg</b>	<b>Marcia</b>	<b>Alice</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Cindy</b>	<b>Peter</b>
blog (Blogger)	X				X	X
email	X		X	X	X	X
discussion board (online)						X
personal letter	X	X			X	X
instant messaging (MSN)	X	X		X	X	X
text messaging (cellphone)	X	X			X	X
<b>Creative writing</b>						
nonfiction					X	X
fiction (stories)					X	
poetry (poems)					X	
song lyrics					X	X
<b>Academic writing</b>						
analytical essay (analyse a topic or theme)				X	X	
argumentative essay (defend a position)				X	X	
book report	X				X	X
compare and contrast paper	X	X		X	X	
descriptive essay (describe something)	X	X		X	X	
evaluation paper (evaluate or assess)		X		X		X
five-paragraph essay (Intro, 3 body, conc.)				X	X	X
interpretation of literature	X			X	X	
lab write-up/report	X			X	X	X
opinion/position paper	X			X	X	X
personal narrative	X	X		X	X	X
summary	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Informal writing</b>						
free writing	X				X	X
journal (diary) writing				X	X	X
lecture notes	X	X		X	X	X
reading notes	X			X	X	X
<b>Presentations/Speeches</b>						
informal presentation	X			X	X	X
formal presentation	X			X	X	X
speech	X				X	
storytelling	X				X	X
<b>Business writing</b>						
business letter					X	X
job applications		X	X	X	X	X
resume / CV	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Public writing</b>						
letter to the editor						
blog or online journal				X	X	
web page design	X					
web page text	X					
social network (Facebook)		X		X	X	X

As shown in Table 4b), Cindy's English genre resources were much larger than the other student participants' experience. Out of the 39 genres on the questionnaire, Cindy indicated that she had experience producing 33 of them or 85%. Whereas Greg's experience consisted of 23 different genres or 59%, Marcia indicated experiences in 12 or 31% and Alice only 4 or 10% of the possible English genres. This indicates that the student participants had quite varied experience producing the 39 possible genres. During the interviews, the student participants commented about only completing simple tasks in English (Greg) or even writing in Persian in English class to prove comprehension of an English text (Alice). However, the Genre Production / Awareness Questionnaire demonstrated that these student participants were, to some degree, much more experienced writers of academic English than they reported in their interviews. Are these reported higher levels of prior English academic writing experience similar to that of the American UW students in the FYC course from Reiff and Bawarshi's (2011) study?

In this study, I did not survey any native English speaking Canadian first-year university students to compare with my student participants. However, Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) did analyze the genre resources of FYC students from the University of Washington (UW). In Table 5, I have listed the genres of prior English writing in the order of frequency for the student participants, from most to least frequent. Then, I listed the percentage of student participants (based on all six participants) with experience producing that genre. The next column indicates the percentage of Reiff and Bawarshi's (2011) UW participants with experience producing the same genre.

Table 5

*Student Participants and University of Washington Genre Production Frequency Results*

Genres of Prior English Writing	% of Respondents who wrote genre in any context	
	Student Participants (includes results for all 6)	University of Washington Survey Results: Genre Frequency*
Summary	100%	69%
email	83%	94%
lecture notes	83%	92%
job applications <sup>1</sup>	83%	<i>n/a</i>
personal letter	67%	75%
instant messaging	67%	84%
text messaging	67%	69%
compare/contrast paper	67%	91%
descriptive essay <sup>2</sup>	67%	66%
opinion/position paper	67%	81%
personal narrative	67%	59%
reading notes	67%	77%
informal presentations	67%	89%
resume	67%	72%
social networking profile	67%	77%
book report	50%	81%
evaluation paper	50%	64%
five-paragraph essay	50%	95%
lab write-up/report	50%	92%
formal presentation	50%	89%
blog or online journal	33%	38%
creative nonfiction	33%	72%
song lyrics	33%	34%
analytical essay <sup>3</sup>	33%	<i>n/a</i>
argumentative essay	33%	89%
literary analysis (interpretation)	33%	84%
free writing	33%	72%
journal writing	33%	69%
speech	33%	64%
storytelling	33%	50%
business letter	33%	50%
blog or online journal	33%	52%
online discussion board	17%	42%
fiction	17%	73%
poetry	17%	72%
web page design	17%	25%
web page text	17%	27%
letter to the editor	0%	27%

1) Job application was not included in the University of Washington (UW) results

2) Closest match in the UW results was a more generic “description”

3) UW results did not include genre.

\* Reiff & Bawarshi (2011) & UT–UW prior genre study (2012). Retrieved from <http://utuwpriorgenre.blogspot.com/>

The differences between the two populations of students, the student participants in my study and the UW FYC students, are displayed in Table 5. One difference was my student participants' lack of experience producing genres related to the literary arts, like fiction or poetry. The UW FYC students had far more experience, with 73% of the UW students having produced fiction and 72% of them having produced poetry. For the student participants in my study, the percentage for both genres is 17%, with both numbers representing a single student participant Cindy. She reported that this experience producing these genres came from her time in the American international high school in Qatar.

Another difference was related to the five most often produced genres for both groups. As shown in Table 5, the student participants' top five genres with the percentage and number of student participants who had experience with production were: summary 100% (6), email 83% (5), lecture notes 83% (5), job applications 83% (5) and personal letters 67% (4). This was different from the UW FYC students whose top five genres were five-paragraph essay 95%, email 94%, lecture note 92%, lab reports 92%, and compare and contrast papers 91%. For the student participants, only two of the five most common genres were academic, whereas for the UW FYC students four of the top five genres were academic.

The two groups not only had different top five genres, but their relative percentages, indicating the numbers of participants with experience producing that genre, were quite different. For example, the academic summary was a mainstay of the EAP course in this study. Fully 100% of the student participants had experience producing it; however, only 69% of the UW students reported any experience writing academic

summaries. As well, 95% of the UW students had experience producing five-paragraph essays and 92% in producing lab reports, when only 50% of the student participants had produced those genres. Some of the student participants, especially Cindy, did approach the level of experience of the UW FYC students, with a variety of common English academic genres. The student participants in this study fell far behind the levels of experience held by the native speaking FYC students. It is unclear at this time if the English language support programs like EAP are in fact addressing this gap.

The next section addresses the genre resources used or produced in the student participants' current EAP and disciplinary courses.

### **Current English Genres, Text Types and Types of Writing**

The category, Current English Genres, Text Types and Types of Writing is made up of two high level codes (see Appendix J, category IIIB, p. 204). This section suffers the same issue as the previous prior English genre experience, that is, the student participants reported writing few genres and text types in their interviews. Perhaps, like before, the student participants would similarly identify a wider range of current English genres in a questionnaire rather than in the interview.

**Current EAP genres, text types, and types of writing.** (see Appendix J, code IIIBi, p. 204). The genres reported by the student participants are directly in line with their descriptions of the EAP course and its focus. The student participants reported producing lecture notes, reflections, summaries, research papers and presentations in their EAP course, representing a very limited exposure. Interestingly, two types of EAP writing, reflections and research papers, were not included in the list of 39 common English genres prepared by Reiff and Bawarshi (2011), on which the Genre Production /

Awareness Questionnaire is based. The genres provided by the student participants did not match some of the texts listed by Thelma, “essay or a report versus a research paper or an abstract” (09/07/2013).

In their interviews, the student participants reported being asked to produce a limited variety of writing tasks in their EAP class. However, these reports were based on the perceptions of the student participants. There is evidence to the contrary. From personal communications with Thelma (July 9th, 2013), it followed that the EAP students in her class also had to write long and short answer exam questions and presentations. In addition, the Advanced EAP Course Outline (see Appendix M, p. 215) listed the following types of writing activities: summaries, quizzes, case analyses, essays, note-taking, online web postings, reflections, research projects, and formal and informal presentations. This is similar to the writing tasks reported for the Chinese MBA students in their discipline specific EAP course at the University of Ottawa (Raymond & Des Brisay, 2000). The set of writing tasks presented to these Chinese MBA students included summaries, critical analyses, presentations, lecture notes, memos, reports, case studies, surveys, questionnaires, essays and exams.

Once again, there appears to be a large difference between the students’ reported experiences from the interviews and their actual experience gathered from other sources, including interviews with Thelma, the questionnaire and the EAP Course Outline (see Appendix M, p. 215). Marcia and Alice also provided an equally limited variety of writing types for their current disciplinary courses.

**Current disciplinary genres, text types, and types of writing.** (see Appendix J, code IIIBii, p. 204). The student participants referred to very few English academic

genres in their current disciplinary courses, only mentioning four: essays, summaries, reflections, and research or term papers. This limited variety of academic writing texts, reported by the student participants in the interviews was very similar to what they reported for the EAP class. This limited variety may also represent just a fraction of the tasks written in the disciplinary courses in much the same way as the reported number of genres that the student participants' were exposed to was much smaller than what was indicated in the course outline. There was no secondary source, like an interview with Alice or Marcia's disciplinary professor of the disciplinary course outline, to confirm this list of writing tasks. The two lists of reported writing tasks from the EAP and the disciplinary course were similar in genres. This similarity may account for Marcia and Alice's comments describing the writing in their EAP and disciplinary courses as not that different.

Alice did reveal one notable difference in the writing for her EAP and disciplinary course: the use of creativity and a departure from the standard form. In Alice's feminism course, she described an occasion where she was having the university's writing center look over a reflection she had written for the course. Having limited experience with reflections and a lack of knowledge of what was appropriate or not, Alice used her prior L1 writing experience to write the reflection. She decided to explore the genre and incorporated poetry into her text, something she had commonly done in her L1 *Enshah* writing. Due to the topic of the reflection and the low stakes nature of the writing, Alice decided to take that risk and used poetry in her reflection, "there is a lot of ... reflection paper [*sic*] and so I try in one of them and... it worked and so I said that's good" (28/03/2013). This experience of using features from her prior L1 writing in her current

English academic writing, gave Alice the confidence to feel a little freer to experiment with other aspects of her academic writing but only on more informal and low-stakes assignments. This experience displayed one of the potential ways Alice could utilize her L1 writing experience in her current English disciplinary writing.

### **Issues of Naming Genres, Text Types and Types of Writing**

One issue, which has been a constant challenge in this study, relates to the naming of specific genres, from translating a genre's name from the student participants' L1s to English, to the names given to the academic genres by the student participants compared to the names used by teachers or researcher. The name genre might also be potentially confusing because it is possible for two different genres to represent a single text type or for two different text types to represent a single genre. The reason for this is that the two labels describe different aspects of a text, as Biber (as cited in Paltridge, 2002) characterizes genres based on the external aspects of the text, including the context, audience, purpose and the view of the discourse community, whereas, text type are based on their internal rhetorical modes including "problem-solution," "exposition," or "argument".

Beyond the identification of a genre versus a text type, another issue with the naming of some specific genres of writing is the translation of the L1 genre's name into English. The first translation and description issue arose from Marcia's description of her L1 experience (see Table 3, p. 96). Her translations of various reported genres did not correspond with those of the Russian language informant. During member checking, Marcia disagreed with the Russian informant's translations and stated that her translations and descriptions matched the way those Russian terms were used in

Kyrgyzstan. Greg also had two of his translations challenged by the Chinese informant. The word he originally chose for essay was a less common form and during member checking, he agreed with the informant. The Chinese informant also corrected Greg's translation of *reflection*, as it was suggested that the word Greg chose referred to a reflection based on a video only. Greg quickly acknowledged the mistake and provided the terms for a reflection based on a reading and on a video. There was no disagreement in the Persian terms used between Alice and the Persian informant.

Another naming issue occurred between Alice and the list of 39 genres created by the researchers Reiff and Bawarshi (2011). Their list of 39 genres was designed to reflect the writing genres common to American high school students. Alice described Enshah (see Appendix K, p. 210) as a type of writing where your teacher, "gave us the topic and we have to write about our opinion every week about that topic. But it... wasn't academic... writing" (14/03/2013). Alice's description of Enshah appears similar to what Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) label in their questionnaire as an opinion paper or opinion essay. The key difference between the two names is that Alice perceived Enshah as non-academic writing whereas Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) group the opinion paper or essay with academic genres. Therefore, it is important not to only look at the names of the genres but their descriptions and features as well.

There may also be differences in naming between the writing scholar or researcher and the teacher or students. In this case, the student participant described almost all long answers to a question as an essay. Johns (2008) identifies, "student-produced genres in academic contexts are much more casually named by their instructors than are respected academic genres" (p. 240). This type of overgeneralized naming can

make accurate comparisons extremely difficult. Johns (2011) expresses that the word essay may in fact be used to describe all long writing formats in the ESL/EAP or in the ELL's L1 classroom. The problem with the use of a single term like "essay" to cover such a wide range of writing types is that texts produced in those different contexts may in fact be different (Johns, 2011). This creates difficulties for the EAP student to see a connection between these dissimilar genres. In a study of undergraduate university writing in Canada, Graves, Hyland, and Samuels (2010), note that the terms essay, term paper, or just paper were used in many disciplines to describe various types of writing (as cited in Johns, 2011).

In the interviews, the student participants identified four types of writing: creative writing, essays, diary entries, and summaries; however, when the student participants filled out the questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197), they identified up to 33 distinct genres of writing. In the interviews, the student participants labelled all types of essays or long answers as simply essays, whereas the questionnaire (Table 4a, p. 100) divides essays into 10 or 11 distinct genres. This could reflect an issue of overgeneralizing or the student participants' lack of the specific vocabulary necessary to label the different types of texts. It could also be an issue of the students' abilities to recall a number of different genres from memory versus their abilities to recognize the same genres on a list.

However, one genre of academic writing was identified by all six of the student participants in their L1 and in English, from both their interviews and the questionnaire, that is, the genre of academic summary.

### **Possible “Universal” Academic Genre**

The genre academic summary was reportedly produced by all of the student participants in both their L1s and in English. Alice and Marcia both identified producing summaries in their disciplinary writing as well. The student participants described academic summaries in their L1 education and provided their L1 names: Greg 总结 in Chinese, Marcia Изложение in Russian and Alice یس‌یون هصالخ in Persian. As shown in Tables 4a) (p. 100) and 4b) (p. 101), all six of the student participants in this study have reportedly written academic summaries in their EAP class, normally of journal articles.

As discussed above, and due to potential issues with naming genres and translations of those names, it is important to examine the student participants’ description of the genre along with the contexts in which they were written. The first discussion of summaries came from Alice, “The summaries that [Thelma] asks us to write we done something like that before... both of them... are called summaries but... structure is not really like [English]” (14/03/2013). Alice explained that the main difference was that the Persian form of a summary did not require the use of a reporting phrase”, which is required in EAP class. A reporting phrase is used in academic writing to introduce a quotation. These phrases include reporting verbs, like state, said, and stipulate. Peter, described writing summaries in his L1 but they were not the exact same as what he is doing in his EAP course, “[Summaries] not here. Not the same” (07/03/13). Marcia described her L1, Russian, summaries as being similar to what she did in her EAP class with the same types of material being summarized, including journal articles, and news stories. Greg described some of the similar features in the Chinese and English

summaries, “write a summary to find the, to find the thesis statement, to describe the topic, those things are same. I think it’s really same. Totally same [*sic*]” (04/03/2013).

The idea that a single genre, like the academic summary, could be produced in two or more languages appears to contrast to the work of Kaplan (1966) who identified that each language had its own “cultural thought patterns” (p. 15). If the Chinese writer used a rhetorical organization patterned on a spiral and the English author had a more direct or linear pattern, then it would be difficult to imagine a single or similar genre, like a summary existing in both languages. However, current research has identified that different language groups may achieve the communicative purpose of a genre in different rhetorical features or styles, as Gentil (2011) suggests:

...the fact that researchers and non-specialists alike are still able to identify the same or similar genres... across languages does suggest that discourse communities using different languages may in fact develop similar, though not identical, generic strategies to respond to similar rhetorical situations. (p. 16)

In the interviews, the student participants’ were all clearly able to identify the genre, as an academic summary, in the L1 and in English. However, the structure may not be identical, as noted by Peter and Marcia, but, as was noted by Greg, some of the features of the genre might be identical. The rhetorical situation with which the genres are associated appears to be very similar. Rhetorical situation, as defined by Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi (2004) is the “rhetorical interaction happening within a scene [the place where communication happens in a group of people with a shared purpose or objective], involving the participants, subjects, setting and purposes” (p. 23). It would appear that the roles of participants in the social situations in which the discussed genre were

produced, in this case the student participants, were the same. The subject appeared to be the same in all languages, summarizing the text of an article into a shorter, more concise manner and including only the main ideas. The settings, as defined by Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi (2004), were also comparable at a certain level as all production of this genre was in an educational setting, including high schools and universities. Finally, the purpose of the genres was similar. In all cases, the student participants were writing the summary to complete the task set by the teacher and to gain marks. Johns (2008) describes this type of writing in a classroom situation that students produce as:

not as much purposeful as responsive: their instructors assign the tasks and the students respond to them. The students' purposes, in the main, are to please their instructors and/or pass the examinations. (p. 239)

It is possible that summaries of journal articles, which all of the student participants have mentioned writing in both their L1s and in English, might require what Gentil (2011) identifies as “similar, though not identical, generic strategies to respond to similar rhetorical situations” (p. 16). The student participants were not alone in reporting a genre existing in multiple languages. The instructors also referred to this phenomenon: Louise suggested, “I think a summary is in principal universal as to what it should be accomplishing but in terms of criteria or evaluation it is going to depend on the instructor or professor” (09/07/2013). However, Thelma disagreed that a genre like the summary could be the same in multiple languages, “No, I would think it's different, but I really don't know... the Arabic educational system, or in Iran. No. I have no clue. I really don't” (09/07/2013).

This is only an initial finding and more research is needed, perhaps using the contrastive rhetoric research procedures laid out by Moreno (2008) (as cited in Gentil, 2011, p. 16), before one could identify the academic summary existing in a similar generic form in multiple languages.

## **Conclusion**

This study has explored the genres that the student participants have gained awareness of and experience producing in their L1 and in English education. Greg, Marcia and Alice reported a wide range of L1 academic writing, mostly based on their most recent L1 education. The student participants had very different sets of academic writing experiences (see Table 3, p. 96), apparently related to their prior disciplinary experience and in many cases similar to what they reported for their EAP course. In the interviews, the student participants reported very few genres from their prior English education in their home countries or in Canada, thus the information on the student participants' prior English writing resources were gathered from the Genre Awareness and Production Questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197) instead. The questionnaire provided a much richer variety of reported English genres and types of writing. This study reinforces the idea that the student participants had little prior experience with English writing related to the arts. It also suggests that the student participants possess a wide range of experiences and levels of experiences with English academic genres. Cindy had the most experience producing 33 of the possible 39 genres on the questionnaire, with the next being Greg, 23; Marcia was aware of 12 and Alice, 4. Cindy likely gained experience during her four years at her American international high school in Qatar. Alice, on the other hand, probably lacked experience with the types of writing

on the survey because her undergraduate degree was in statistics. The survey did not include examples of the types of academic writing that, according to Alice, would be common in a statistics class, including mathematical proofs and solving mathematical word problems.

The student participants appeared to not only have less experience with English genres than the UW FYC (First-year composition) participants in Reiff and Bawarshi's (2011) study; they also appear to have a different set of experiences. One such difference was in the production of various genres related to the arts, where almost 75% of the UW FYC participants reported experience producing fiction and poems, whereas Greg, Marcia and Alice had no experiences producing those types of writing in English. The most reported genre for the student participants was the academic summary at 100%, whereas only 69% of the UW FYC students reported experience with that genre. The UW participants' most common genre was the five-paragraph essay with 95% of the participants reporting experience, whereas only 50% of the student participants reported experience with that genre.

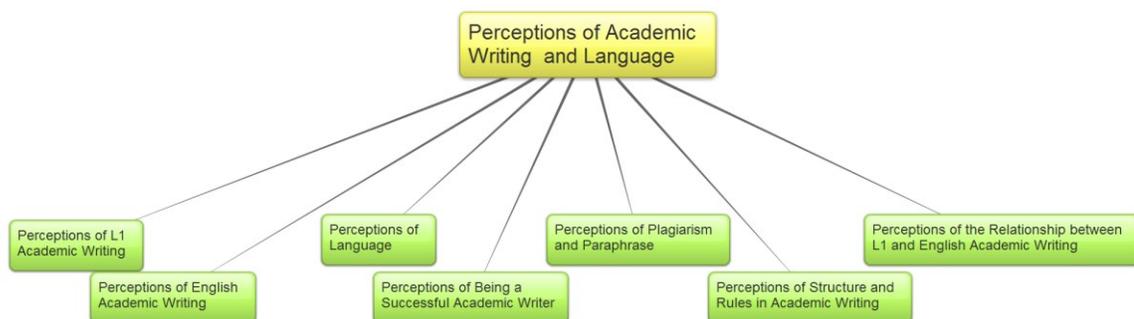
Although generally, there was agreement between the student participants and the expert language informants, there was some disagreement between Marcia and the Russian informant. After I conducted member checking with Marcia, she confirmed that her translations and descriptions were accurate. To try to avoid this in the future, perhaps the language informant should also share the same cultural and educational background as the study participants, if possible.

The last thought provoking finding in the study relates to the possible existence of a similar but not identical genre in all the first languages spoken by of the student

participants, the academic summary. All six of the student participants reported experience producing the genre in their L1 and in English. Gentil (2011) suggests that genres existing in multiple languages must be responding to similar rhetorical situation. For the rhetorical situation to be similar, it would need to share similar roles of participants, subjects, setting and purposes (Devitt, Reiff & Bawarshi, 2004). From the initial work in this study, the genre of the academic summary does appear to meet these criteria of a shared rhetorical situation. More research will be needed to gain further insight into the possible multilingual nature of the genre of the academic summary.

#### **4.3 Perceptions of L1 and English Academic Writing and Language**

This idea of examining EAP students' perceptions of their EAP course is something that, according to Dooley (2010), has not received adequate attention, especially their perceptions of the value and purpose of the EAP course. This section provides some insights into how the student participants perceived their L1 and English academic writing, and the possible effects of the EAP course on their perceptions of language and academic writing in general. This theme, Perceptions of Academic Writing and Language (see Appendix J, Theme II, p. 204) is composed of seven categories as shown in Figure 6.



*Figure 6.* Perceptions of academic writing and language. This figure is a visual representation of the coding tree for the theme.

**Perceptions of L1 academic writing.** (see Appendix J, category IIA, p. 204).

As identified in Section 4.1, the student participants appeared to have an implicit knowledge of what they wrote in the L1, “There is not a lot of writing in universities in undergrads.” (Alice, 14/03/2013). Even when the student participants did try to recall specific information about their L1 writing, they described the writing as having no form or structure, “How I can say, orders like introduction, body, and summary we didn’t have them... No, because in our country we didn’t have... like introduction, body, summary we didn’t have them” (Marcia, 05/03/2013) and then went on to state in the second interview that “[Russian] writing is more... flexible” (Marcia, 28/03/2013), again perhaps a reference to the lack of teaching of structure or lack of explicit focus on a specific structures. Marcia was not the only student participant who saw her prior L1 writing as lacking structure and organization. Jan also stressed that her Arabic academic writing lacked organization when compared to the EAP writing, “[t]here isn’t... as here [in her EAP class], like an introduction, paragraph or something like this” (06/03/2013).

Another perception of the student participants was the apparent reduced focus on writing in their L1 education, as confirmed by Alice, “What we studied it is more reading... and just talking, not really writing... Yes, a very small amount” (14/03/28). The perceived lack of focus on writing in the student participants’ prior L1 educations was clearly stated by Jan, when she described writing as “one little part of that big deal [education]” (06/03/2013). The student participants presented their prior L1 academic writing as low in quantity and frequency, flexible and unstructured. Thus, they tended to represent their prior L1 writing as non-academic, “I wrote poem in my language, so I always write something like a story or a fiction... not academic writing” (Alice, 14/03/2013). Greg stated that in his high school education in China, “we write something not kind of academic” (03/04/2013). When asked about other writing in her L1 experience, Alice identified it as, “it wasn’t academic... writing” (14/03/2013). It appears that the student participants have a somewhat narrow view of what academic writing is, which does not match their prior L1 academic writing experience. Alice’ final comment on her L1 academic writing was, “I didn’t really wrote [*sic*] many things in... my language as academic writing” (14/03/2013). Although, the student participants acknowledged having produced writing in their L1 education, they did not tend to perceive their prior L1 writing as academic. Potentially, this view of their L1 as non-academic might be linked to how they perceived their EAP and other disciplinary writing.

The student participants’ perceptions of having limited experience with L1 academic writing appears at odds with the list of academic genres, text types, and types of writing coded from their interviews, as shown in Table 3, (see p. 96). This difference between the student participants’ perceptions and their actual reported experience

highlights the importance of data triangulation in this type of study. In this case, a comparison the student participants' perceptions of their prior L1 academic writing and a list, based on their interviews, of specific genres, text types and types of writing produced in the student participants' L1 education.

**Perceptions of English academic writing.** As reported in Section 4.1 in the discussion of the codes, Prior English Educational Experiences in Home Country (p. 66) and in Canada (p. 72), the student participants again contended that they had very little experience interacting with or producing academic writing in English in their home countries or in Canada before beginning the EAP course. The student participants' perceptions of having limited prior English academic writing experience was contradicted by the information presented in Section 4.2 (see Table 4a, b and 5). The Genre Awareness and Production Questionnaire (see Appendix E, p. 197) indicates that the student participants had wide-ranging levels of experience writing English academic genres prior to entering the EAP course; however, they did not perceive this to be the case. It is possible that the student participants perceived their EAP class and its associated writing tasks as representing the bulk of their English academic and perhaps non-academic writing experience. We have seen how much prior English academic writing experience the student participants perceived having; the next focus will be specifically on their perceptions of English academic writing (see Appendix J, category IIB, p. 204).

In the interviews, the student participants described many of the features or aspects associated with English academic writing. They described English academic writing as follows: "I think ah the English logical is very, especially... when I come to

[the EAP class to] learn” (Greg, 04/03/2013). Greg repeatedly referred to academic English’s logical nature, “It is very logical; clear clearly, one by one and uh the structure very clear. This is a point that I can separate what is academic writing and what is not” (03/04/2013). Greg perceived all English academic writing as having clearly defined structure. In fact, Greg said he could identify English academic writing because of its logic and structure. Another element of academic writing cited by the student participants was the required use of formal language, “...academic writing is when we take an example from an academic article and we don’t use informal forms or dialect” (Marcia, 28/03/2013). Marcia also added to the description of academic writing the idea of requiring in-text citations, something commented on previously by other student participants.

If one were to amalgamate the student participants’ comments concerning what constitutes English academic writing, one could end up with the following or similar definition:

English academic writing is a form of writing that is extremely logical and structured. It contains an introduction, body and conclusion with a clear thesis statement, and topic sentences in each of the body paragraphs. As well, all of the ideas expressed by the author must be presented in formal language and supported with in-text citations and references. A piece of academic text must have specific margins, and be written in a certain font and size; normally Times New Roman 12 (see Appendix M, Writing Guidelines, p. 215).

This definition would be based on the student participants' perceptions of English academic writing. The student participants appear to have described the features of an essay or research paper from their EAP course. The description of their EAP writing focuses on the organizational and mechanical features of writing (on its form), without any mention of content or disciplines, leading to a very narrow view of English academic writing.

This focus on form also affects the student participants' perceptions of how the marks for their writing are assigned. The student participants perceived a clear difference between how teachers assign marks for writing tasks in their L1 classes and in their EAP or English disciplinary classes. They perceived that marks for their EAP papers were mainly based on the paper's organization and grammatical features, neglecting their thoughts or ideas. Thus, they saw English academic writing as being more concerned with the structure, format and organization rather with the content. Raymond and Parks (2002), in their study of EAP students transitioning to their MBA courses, note that "when doing the EAP assignment, students stressed they had to pay attention to language and format. By contrast, in the MBA program, what was emphasized was accuracy of content" (p. 162). This supports the student participants' perceptions that the focus of the EAP paper is on the mechanics rather than the content. The student participants provided examples of this perceived breakdown between structure and content reflected in their marks, "I think... 70% how to organize it and 30% to come up with the idea" (Cindy, 07/03/2013) and "In Persian, I think 90% is the content but in English, 45% is the structure and this is the problem" (Alice, 28/03/2013). However, Thelma described a variable marking scheme she used in her EAP courses, which averaged 50% for the

content and ideas and 50% for the mechanics including grammar, format, structure and vocabulary (personal communication, July 9, 2013). This correlates perfectly with the results reported in Raymond and Parks (2002), where they found the EAP instructors broke down the marks for long writing assignments as follows, “content – 50%, format – 25%, and grammar and vocabulary – 25%” (p. 167).

Regardless of what the teachers explicitly said about the marking scheme, some student participants still perceived a high portion of the grade to be attributed to format and mechanics of their papers and not the ideas, even though their marked papers returned to them contained teacher's feedback along with a marking rubric. Importantly, Alice also expressed that this lack of focus on content occurred in her disciplinary course at the Canadian university, with 70% of the content and 30% of the mark coming from the grammar and organization of the paper compared with her reported 10 % focus on grammar and organization in her L1 education.

It appears that the student participants viewed their English academic writing marks in general as focusing on the grammar and organization of the text. This could reinforce the student participants' impressions that, in general, English academic writing was focused on form, since they were learning how to write English academic papers with little attention paid to the ideas they were communicating. This focus on form in the EAP class was a new experience for the student participants, when compared with what they had experienced in the L1 education. The EAP course was their first experience with a course of this nature, where the content was not as important as how you communicated it. Louise agreed, “I expect that initially they are a little confused because

it is quite different from what they are used to in terms of language learning... maybe the content does not matter too much. It is what you do with the content” (09/07/2013).

The goal of an EAP course is not the passing on of specific content knowledge, but as Hyland (2010) defined, “EAP is usually defined as teaching English with the aim of assisting learners’ study or research in that language” (p. 223). EAP is not a content-based course but as Cheng, Myles and Curtis (2004) describe, it is “characterized by activities that simulate academic work; for example, reading academic texts and taking notes; writing research reports or essays; making formal seminar presentation” (as cited in Fox, Cheng, & Zumbo, 2013, p. 2). The purpose of the EAP course is then to prepare the students by simulating classroom activities to develop the learners’ familiarity with common classroom genres and activities. Thelma and Louise agreed that the focus of their EAP course was on helping the EAP student to acculturate into Canadian university academic life. With the courses being only a simulation of a subject matter course, without any focus on relevant content, the student participants could perceive their papers to be marked on the structure and mechanics of their English academic writing and not on their ideas.

The student participants appeared to perceive their prior L1 writing as not academic and their current English academic writing as focused on the structure and form. How would the student participants perceive a connection between the two?

#### **Perceptions of the relationship between L1 and English academic writing.**

The commonly accepted purpose of the EAP course is to aid in students’ “successful navigation through an academic program in their given discipline. To achieve this purpose, students must apply what they learn in the EAP writing course to their discipline

courses; in other words, these students must transfer learning” (James, 2010, p. 183).

The key to this ability to help the students is the concept of transfer of prior learning. In this definition, James is looking at transfer from the students’ EAP class to their disciplinary classes. However, I would argue that for the success of the student in the EAP class, transfer is required from the learners’ L1s and prior English classes. Devitt (2009) stresses that we cannot escape the issue of genres because regardless of what we teach, “students will use the genres they know as they try to interpret what we ask of them. So genre will affect our students’ learning whether we teach genres explicitly or not” (p. 341). This explains how the students may use their prior genre knowledge in the EAP class; however, do the student participants attempt to utilize their prior L1 genre knowledge?

Initially, I expected the student participants would try to utilize their prior writing experiences when completing English academic writing tasks in their EAP and other disciplinary courses (see Appendix J, category IIIH, p. 204). Thelma supported my expectation, “they’ve all been taught how to read and how to write [in their L1s]. You hope they were taught certain strategies, styles of writing that they will use those and apply them to a second or a third language” (09/07/2013). Thelma suggested that some of the writing types, defined as including essays, reports, research papers and abstracts, learned in the student participants’ L1s could be applied to the production of English texts. Louise shared this belief, “I think that someone who can organize their thoughts, present information and support that information in their first language can transfer that to their second language” (09/07/2013). However, for transfer to occur, it is important for the learners to see a connection between what they have written in the past and what

they are currently writing. Nowacek (2011) stresses that “transfer will only happen when an individual recognizes similar elements” (p. 15). James (2010) and Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) also identify the student’s recognition or perception of the similarity of the new genre with the prior genre as the most important factor controlling the transfer of genre awareness, knowledge or strategies. Further, I explore the student participants’ perceptions of the relationships or connections between their current EAP and prior L1 academic writing.

The majority of the student participants did not appear to identify or perceive a connection between their prior L1 and current English academic writing tasks, “No. It’s totally different... it’s a different approach it’s a different everything” (Marcia, 05/03/2013). This perceived lack of connection between their EAP and L1 academic writing could influence their belief of whether their prior writing experience can assist them in their current EAP course, “[m]y past experience doesn’t help me at all... nothing I write here in Graduate School is similar to what I wrote back home” (Marcia, 05/03/2013). Marcia perceived that nothing was similar but to the contrary, she reported similar genres and writing tasks in her L1 and Canadian disciplinary classes. This is another example of the student participants’ perceptions not matching their reported writing experiences. Greg expressed his view of the possible connection between L1 and EAP writing as, “NO! NO! Totally separate... [None of my EAP assignments are similar to what I wrote in my L1]” (04/03/2013). Possibly, one of the reasons why the student participants perceived that their prior writing did not help them in their current EAP class was due to their perception that they had no similar experiences to draw on, or as Greg said, “when I came [to the EAP class] usually academic writing... and I never never [*sic*]

write these kinds of things in China” (03/04/2013). By not perceiving their own prior L1 academic writing experience as academic, the student participants face difficulty utilizing that experience in the EAP class.

In her research with a Mexican-American graduate student, Mein (2012) found evidence of positive utilization of prior writing experience when the student wrote various academic genres in English. None of the student participants gave any indication of a positive role for their prior writing experience.

However, not all of the EAP assignments were completely new. Greg identified two academic texts, the reflection and the academic summary, which were comparable to what he had written in China. A second Chinese student participant Peter had similar feelings, “I think my Chinese helps me a lot because when you write like academic writing, I found they are same like between the Chinese and the English” (07/03/2013). Greg commented that even some of the structures in text are similar, “Same the English assignment because there are introduction so we call the opening the door, say your topic. We call that. And ah about the last part usually, in the formal case, we repeat our thesis statement” (04/03/2013). The other student participants did not mirror this feeling. Presently, it is unclear if this difference is related to similarity between Chinese and English academic writing or related, in some way, to Chinese education. Although, Peter and Greg did note the existence of some connections between their current EAP and prior L1 academic writing, the majority of the student participants did not.

This limited connection expressed by the students may not be sufficient to ensure some form of knowledge transfer. It has been shown that for transfer to occur, some recognition of a connection or experience between the current and prior writing is needed

(Artemeva & Fox, 2010; James, 2010; Nowacek, 2011; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011).

Without such a connection, the students may struggle in attempting to transfer aspects of their L1 genre awareness and knowledge or their general academic writing skills and strategies into their EAP writing. The one exception was Peter, an electrical engineering graduate student. He saw a connection between the writing in his L1 and English engineering classes. This connection may not be related to an association between his L1 and L2 academic writing experience, but could represent an overall similarity of the genres used in engineering courses. For example, Artemeva and Fox (2011) describe the board work and *chalk talk* performance of math professors as a genre that exists in the same form in many languages. The ‘universality’ of the mathematics or the engineering classroom genres could potentially provide some explanation as to why Peter saw his prior Chinese disciplinary writing helping him in his English academic writing when the other student participants did not.

Peter and the other student participants might have benefited from enrolling in a more targeted EAP course linked to their major, where the content is more closely related to the student’s major. Examples of these types of courses include EAP courses designed, specifically for engineering students or for economics students, which are offered at the Canadian university where I conducted my study. These courses are meant to allow students to develop reading and writing skills that might be transferred more efficiently into their disciplinary courses. Although the idea of disciplinary EAP courses appears sound, there has been a movement in the other direction creating more generalized EAP courses and grouping students together regardless of their discipline (Hyland, 2002; Wardle, 2009). This could be due to budgetary concerns in the

universities or to a lack of qualified teachers with the required familiarity with the different faculties.

Another idea that could assist the learners would be to reconsider an old concept, the sheltered classroom (Krashen, 1985). In this workshop-like class attached to a specific disciplinary course, the students at risk, like the ESL students, could gain specialized language assistance from English language teachers and discipline specific help by experts in their field. In that way, they are not isolated from the discourse community for which they are learning to write. The EAP teacher could provide the language-related support for the student while the teacher or TA from the disciplinary course could help the learner to write within the discipline. There was little to no mention found in the recent literature of sheltered courses to aid EAP students.

If the student participants like Greg and Peter are able to utilize some aspects of their prior L1 writing in their current English writing, then what genre awareness or knowledge, or general academic writing skills would they be able to transfer? It is known that genre awareness may transfer (Johns, 2008); however, this is not sufficient to aid the learner in producing the target genre (Artemeva & Fox, 2010). The learner's ability to produce the genre in a new situation is determined by the learner's experience producing the genre and therefore awareness of a genre does not equal the ability to produce the genre (Artemeva & Fox, 2010). If the student participants did see a clear connection between their prior and current academic writing, it is unclear what, if anything, could transfer, or if this transfer would assist them in producing the required texts in English. One benefit that Devitt (2007) suggests for recognizing and utilizing the prior genre knowledge is it gives the writer, "a place to start, a location, however

different, from which to begin writing” (p. 220). There is a potential negative to this type of transfer or application of knowledge in a new situation though, even if the student perceives the two genres as similar, because this perception may be leading to inappropriate transfer, where the student attempts to use this knowledge in an incorrect situation or context. Nevertheless, whether a positive or a negative the student participants generally did not perceive a connection between their prior L1 and current EAP writing texts. This lack of connection could make any transfer difficult.

The next subsection will look at the student participants’ perceptions of languages in general and English specifically.

**General perceptions of language.** Only one of the student participants discussed their perceptions of language in general (see Appendix J, category IIC, p. 204). Greg described the differences between Chinese and English; “I feel language is really not that big difference in the central part” (04/04/2013). Greg identified the only difference between languages by saying that “[the biggest difference] between languages... grammar and vocabulary is different... but vocabulary is most different” (04/03/2013). He connected this to learning to write academic English and concluded that “if you can write in your language very good papers, you can write it them in English too. It’s not a barrier, you can learn the words” (Greg, 04/03/2013). Greg appeared to privilege vocabulary above everything else when learning a new language. This could have been related to the focus on vocabulary in Greg’s prior English education, in China. However, the view that one simply needs to learn the vocabulary to perfect their writing ignores the role of grammar.

Greg suggested language learners only needed to learn a language's vocabulary and grammar rules and then they would be able to write a *perfect* paper. Even so, he still felt that there was some form of ceiling for or upward limit on an ELL's writing, "I think I have a limit because I am not native speaker" (Greg, 04/03/2013). No support could be found in the literature for the idea of a linguistic ceiling that somehow limits second/additional language learners' development as academic writers. Notably, many of the researchers studying multilingual and bilingual writing (Cansagarajah, 2001; Kubota, 2001; Levine, 2001; Söter, 2001) are second/additional language writers and they have produced such high level academic prose in English that they been accepted as full members of the international English academic community. Although only Greg spoke of his general perceptions of language, the other student participants did speak of their perceptions of the English language.

**Perceptions of the English language.** One potential effect of the student participants' narrow views of English academic writing discussed above could be their extension of this narrow view to encompass the English language in general (see Appendix J, category IIE, p. 204). The student participants reported that English academic writing was structured, organised and logical, all features which would make the language superior for writing a research paper. However, it is exactly those features and specifically the logical nature of English that may have predisposed the student participants to see English, as Hyland's (1997) EAP student participant did, as rigid without creativity.

The student participants identified English as a superior language for producing certain forms of writing, including research papers, essays, and reports. In all cases, the

student participants identified the literary arts as something that can be better produced in their L1s, “I think... Chinese language has an advance to perform [*sic*]... the art field things better than English... like the... writing art which is not have in Western” (Greg, 04/03/2013). Here Greg stated that the “Literary arts” was “something you don’t have in English” (04/03/2013). Perhaps this view reflects the student participants’ limited exposure to the literary arts in English. Louise noted this lack of exposure to English literature and commented, “Maybe that perception [that English is not suitable for the literary arts] is because we would never look at those things in EAP. When we had an intensive ESL program [no longer offered at the university] here we did look at poetry, music lyrics and stuff like that” (09/07/2013). This lack of exposure to the literary arts in English has perhaps influenced the student participants’ perceptions of English and their belief that literary arts or creative writing is superior in their L1, while missing in English.

At the same time, the student participants appeared to privilege English as the superior language for any academic or scientific writing, “...if you want to describe some science things its more, English have an advance [*sic*] might be I don’t know... If I have a research, I prefer write in English” (Greg, 04/03/2013). However, this preference to write research papers in English may have less to do with the student participants’ perceptions of the English language as being uniquely suited to research and more to do with connecting the genre to the language in which it was first learned. By their own admission, the student participants have had limited interaction reading or producing English genres relating to the literary arts. We have seen how the student participants are primarily reading book chapters and academic journal articles. Without any connection

to English literature and arts, they will only be able to perceive these genres in their L1 where they have experienced and produced them. This perhaps explains why the student participants admit to preferring to write research papers in English because, in almost all cases, they have only used English to read or produce research papers and essays.

For some multiliterate writers, it is difficult to take a genre learned solely in one language and then to write or discuss that genre in a second language (Söter, 2001). Possibly some genres may be situated in the language in which they are learned. Another possibility could be that if students read all of the content material in English and learn all of the related specialized vocabulary in English, they may experience difficulties discussing that topic in their L1. Söter (2001) captures this concept in her description of a friend, who had written his dissertation in English but found it difficult to describe his work in his L1, Korean, “he declared he could not think about the subject in Korean. It represented an experience that began with English and for which he had only English words and syntactic structures. His dissertation was conceived of and written about totally in English” (p. 72). Therefore, the student participants might simply be reflecting a similar effect of being able to talk about or write about a formal research paper only in English as that is the language the genre was learned and produced in, and they had limited experience writing similar papers in their L1s. Greg, upon reflection, appeared to agree, “I think ah the difference is because here [in Canada] I study research skill... but in China I write like a literature things” (03/04/2013).

### **Perceptions of Learning to Write to a Specification in the EAP Class.**

“Recipes are a genre; but genres are not recipes.”  
Freadman (1994, p. 49)

Most of the student participants reported the rigid and logical order/structure of English academic writing. As discussed in Section 4.1 on Prior English Academic Writing (p. 65), the student participants reported having little prior English academic writing practice, (although this reported lack of experience is challenged by the findings from the questionnaire, see p. 185). Most of the student participants’ reported experiences in producing English academic papers came from their EAP class in Canada. In these EAP courses, the students were not learning a content related to their majors, but were instead focusing on writing strategies, formats, and researching skills. This focus away from the content and towards these skills, strategies and organization in the EAP course may have led the student participants to a view of English academic writing similar to that held by Cansagarajah (2001):

What struck me as peculiar... was the heightened sensitivity to the materiality of the text-the physical representation of what I was trying to communicate. It was a shock to learn that there were such numerous detailed rules and conventions relating to the encoding of ideas on the page. (p. 29)

These differences in text construction, including the focus placed on the style and formatting may be in stark contrast to the ELL’s L1 writing experience and could lead to what Cansagarajah (2001) suggests is a form of *culture shock*. Both the student participants and Cansagarajah described a “heightened sensitivity to the materiality of the text”; however, where Cansagarajah saw *culture shock*, the student participants found reassurance in the repetitive and structured nature of the academic writing.

Writing to a fixed form or specification could be comforting to the student participants, as Berger and Luckman (1966) observe that once an action has become habitualized, it can then be repeated with an economy of effort. Perhaps more important for the student participants is that once the action is habitualized, it can be reproduced in the future with the same lowered cognitive load. All of the student participants expressed comfort when writing to this narrow or restricted form, “I like this structure because we can just structure all your thoughts and it is easier when you have structure” (Marcia, 28/03/2013). Marcia sees this structure as a scaffold or framework that aids her in constructing a text. Hyland (2004b) agrees that the learners’ awareness of the repetitive nature of the structure helps and comforts them and Johns (2011) suggests teaching students these forms gives the students confidence. Raymond and Parks (2002) observe that “When doing the EAP assignment, students stressed they had to pay attention to language and format” (p. 162). However, not all researchers agree with the concept of teaching students to write to a form in EAP or other writing classes. Freedman (1993), for example, disputes the benefits of writing to a form, because they may reproduce the model and be *constrained* by it.

The student participants have expressed this perception of writing to a form. For example, Marcia discussed it directly by talking about the structure of the paper, while other students discussed it indirectly by describing the EAP instructor’s lengthy requirements for their assignments (see Appendix J, category IIG, p. 204). In describing the differences between her EAP and disciplinary writing, Marcia reveals, “my [EAP instructor] gives me step by step instructions to follow... and for my master’s program

we do not have the same thing” (28/03/2013). Greg described the amount and detailed nature of the EAP assignment’s instructions:

[The instructor] told us how to find source... create topic, and we should following... her... very detailed... list of ... requirements... first, second steps... and we should write a thesis statement, how to write topic sentences and how to make the research or article logically one part by one part. (03/04/2013)

The EAP Instructors perceive what they are doing as teaching the students to produce what Thelma called a *style* of writing, like an abstract. Thelma provided the list of requirements to ensure the students understand the expectations of the assignment. This focus on form was not explicitly articulated but implicitly supported by providing the student participants with a very detailed list of instructions and the required structural elements.

The student participants’ perceptions that they were being taught to write to a form was perhaps also based on the nature of the tasks required of them in the EAP class. According to Muchiri, Mulamba, Myers, and Ndoloi, (as cited in Adam & Artemeva, 2002), EAP instructors reduce the selection of English presented to the students until it becomes teachable, which is opposite to the much wider choice of assignments and materials presented to the mainly native English speaking First Year Composition students at the University of Washington. The student participants did refer to a limited number of genres and texts they were asked to write in the EAP course, including summaries, reflections and research papers and to the limited readings, including journal articles and book chapters. Louise also admitted that there was a potential the assignments given to the advanced EAP students could be a little limited, “So depending

on what we are asking them to do... I think it would be more formulaic" (09/07/2013).

Louise also recognized the limited variety of academic English tasks presented to the EAP students and is actively "focusing more on... developing their reading skills and giving them a lot of input in terms of reading" (09/07/2013). Levine (2001) advocates for a better way to provide the EAP students with the mechanical knowledge, including the form, grammar and vocabulary of English writing that is required, while still helping the learners to communicate their ideas in a more acceptable and perhaps less restrictive manner.

Another possible factor influencing the student participants' perceptions that they were learning to write to a specification was the very implicit knowledge of their own L1 writing. Alice described her L1 academic writing as, "in Persian you... don't go through these introduction, thesis, paragraph one, paragraph two, conclusion. You talk about something or you write about something, but not in this way. Your opinion is not very organized like this" (14/03/2013). The student participants' lack of awareness of the form or organization of their prior L1 academic writing could make the current explicit knowledge of the English writing seem magnified in their eyes, thus making it appear that they are learning to write to a specification.

Tardy (2013) introduced the idea of creativity in writing and the acceptance of departures from writing conventions or specifications. From the interviews, it appeared, that the student participants did not feel that they had much leeway to depart from the form, as they were told exactly what they would need to produce and how it should be written. This perception may be a serious concern for some in the EAP community, because if the EAP students continue to write to a specification or form, they could begin

to lose their creativity and become stifled, as a student in Hyland's (1997) study described English EAP writing, "Now English is rigid since everything has its standard and format. No imagination is needed. I can't run freely in the field of English" (p. 16). Hyland (1997) cautions EAP teachers of being too rigid, causing EAP students to lose the ability to express themselves creatively in English. Accordingly, Schneider (2003) recommends creating a "freer, less constrained" classroom that will allow the students to "think, write, and know in a way that makes sense for [the students]" (as cited in Ball & Ellis, 2008, p. 371).

The student participants' perceptions of writing to a form may not only have come from their experience of being explicitly taught a specific model by the EAP instructor. Thelma and Louise did not mention or refer to teaching the EAP students to write to a specification or of giving them a single accepted model to follow to aid them in producing a target genre. Ball and Ellis (2008) describe how ELL writers can be influenced by the way they are perceived by the people or institutions around them. Perhaps they are responding to a subtler message. It is possible that the students are influenced by the subtle messages they receive in the classroom or at the university. Thelma viewed her EAP class as one that does not focus on teaching specific forms or styles of writing (genres). She described her class in this manner, "the focus really is academic and it is getting students ready for their academic studies... by practicing the skills and strategies, whether it's summarizing or proofreading with integrating all of the skills and relating it to their major" (27/07/2013). However, Thelma described the EAP class as a place to teach styles of writing including summaries, reports, abstracts and research papers and as such, there did seem to be some implicit focus on form.

Another possible factor influencing the student participants' perceptions that they are learning to write to a form could be the writing assignment prompts they receive, being influenced by the highly detailed nature of them. Louise suggested that her writing prompts contained "tons of instructions" (09/07/2013). Greg described his English academic writing as, "I have a systematic method in my brain, how to do academic research in Canadian style. And it involves so much details, so much requirements" (03/04/2013). Greg's descriptions of writing prompts the students received from their instructor resembled what Freedman (1994) would call a recipe. This idea of having a large number of requirements or instructions to follow to accomplish their EAP writing was frequently identified by the student participants. This was reported as different from their experiences in their L1 writing.

The student participants described the prompts as including every aspect of the text, which they had been explicitly taught to produce. This focus on the subsidiary skills, like writing a thesis statement or topic sentence, may limit the student participants from successfully realizing the focal skill of writing a paper (Polanyi, 1962). Beyond the form, these prompts also include style information, generally following the APA citation style. The advanced EAP course outline (see Appendix M, p. 215) contained a section, "Guidelines for Assignments," with the formatting instructions for all course assignments. This was the only section completely written in a bold font and highlighted with a border, possibly indicating to the student participants how important this information was; perhaps leading the student participants to believe they were being taught to write to a form or, as Louise suggests, "We might be [boxing them in]" (09/07/2013), and consequently restricting their creativity. Peter, perhaps correctly,

identified that “[academic English writing] is a fixed, a fixed format” (03/04/2013). The structure of the course and the EAP instructors may be unconsciously leading their students towards writing to a form or following a *recipe*. However, is this an effective method of teaching EAP students about the various classroom or academic genres necessary for success at university?

RGS scholars working with first-language English writers (Freadman, 1994; Freedman, 1993), among others, would disagree with the teaching of an academic genre as a simple form or set of rules to follow. As Freadman (1994) identifies, “Recipes are a genre; but genres are not recipes”, that is a genre is not a recipe where the writer simply inserts the relevant ingredients to produce an appropriate text. Writing is a much more complicated process and genres are more than the sum of their parts or a set of instructions. Freedman and Medway (1994) state this idea clearly, “Unless genres are static, and why should they be, how can they be taught” (p 9) because a genre is not a fixed form, they evolve and change.

If genres are produced in combination with or responding to the context, then they cannot be understood or learned by the student without that context (Freedman, 1993). Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) indicate, “Genres are part of a complex socialization process including methods of training and labelling students” (p. 82). Therefore, if the genre is removed from that process, how can it be taught effectively to the students? Similarly, Freadman (2002) suggests that the learning of genre knowledge or how to respond to a genre (“genre uptake”) is not to be learned on its own as it is woven into a fabric that contains threads or associations with the other users of the genre and one's place in what she calls the "ceremony" surrounding the genre.

Since Freedman (1999) sees genres as ever moving, evolving and changing in response to “social, cultural, and rhetorical features” (p. 766), then how can a genre be taught as a fixed form? Freedman (1994) also questions if genres can ever be taught as a form or set of rules. The idea that genres are not fixed forms and that to learn a genre one must consider the context is supported by Prior (2007) and Russell (1997). A genre cannot be separated from its context, purpose or audience as these components of a social situation are all interrelated and interconnected in a *system*. A genre is not merely a collection of rules or forms. Thus, Freedman (1994) points out that simply learning the forms would not allow one to create an appropriate text. Seemingly, this argument challenges the efficacy of explicitly teaching genres as a fixed set of rules as those rules would not take into account, as Hyland (2004) describes the variations in such texts. As well, Miller (1984) identifies that the genre should be examined with respect to the activity it is performing and the purpose, but not as a permanent form. Another reason for the EAP instructor not to focus too heavily on the form comes from the work of James (2009) and his examination of the writing of EAP student and their transfer of a single form of writing from the EAP class to outside the class. This study indicates that the organization and content of the paper do not transfer as easily as general language use. Perhaps, for improved effectiveness, the EAP teachers could focus more on language use and less on the specific structures of the genres.

However, not all researchers are against explicit genre instruction. In her book, *College Writing and Beyond*, Beaufort (2007) discusses a student who received no explicit genre instruction in the class and yet gained in genre knowledge. Nevertheless, she still wonders, “what opportunities might there have been for deepening Tim’s genre

knowledge if this knowledge domain had been discussed more explicitly in the curriculum?" (p. 53) She concludes that the transfer of genre knowledge might have been easier for students if they had received explicit genre instruction in the appropriate social context. Devitt (2004, 2007) also supports a model of teaching that includes both implicit and explicit teaching of genre awareness. However, this is not the same as supporting explicit instruction of a genre's form.

Another possible factor not directly addressed in this study, but mentioned by Louise, was the effect of the various standardized English test preparation courses on the student participants' perceptions of academic English and the formulaic nature of academic English writing seen there. These preparation courses focus on teaching the learners how to write to meet the specification of the test. In that case, the student participants would clearly be learning to write to a specification. Louise identified this potential concern in her interview, "I think that a lot of their prior English writing is preparing for a test. So they are doing very formulaic *crap*" (09/07/2013).

**How are the genres of writing and reading selected in the EAP class?** EAP Instructor and coordinators select the genres, writing skills and general strategies that are taught in the EAP class. As mentioned by Peter, one area of possible concern was the transferability of those genres and skills into the students' disciplinary writing. The EAP classes might be focusing on genres that are not well represented in the student participants' disciplinary writing. For example, Peter did wonder how often he would use the skills from his EAP course in his electrical engineering graduate level courses (personal communication, April 3, 2013). The real question becomes: How do EAP instructors know which skills, strategies or academic genres to focus on? The genres or

types of writing reported by the student participants might be common in the social sciences but could be less represented in other disciplines, thus leaving the students unprepared for the writing and linguistic demands they will face in their majors.

According to Zamel (1998), it is the teachers' beliefs of what the students will need to be successful that guides the teacher in selecting the assignments for the class and making other classroom decisions. However, as Zamel (1998) points out, "preparing students for what is deemed as more authentic or more important work may not only limit what we ask them to do, but blind us to the expertise they bring with them" (p. 193). Therefore, it is important for EAP teachers to be reflective and examine their own BAK (Woods, 2003) about the needs of the EAP students before they decide on the important genres or skills for the class.

One possible reason for the choice of materials or genres the EAP instructors make for the EAP class is based on their students having vastly different majors, from the social sciences to engineering, and therefore perceptions of what is considered good academic writing may also be quite different. Instructors will likely not have experience in all of the different majors and as such, will tend to teach either to a single form or to the major with which they have the most experience. The teachers may then fall back on teaching the familiar five-paragraph. To solve this issue would require a closer connection between the EAP and disciplines.

**Self-identification as writers.** Researchers and teachers of composition and writing classes have labelled some groups of native English speaking and ELL students as novice writers (Bridwell, 1980; Flower, 1979), a somewhat neutral term; struggling writers (Allington, 2005), or remedial writers (Butler, 1980), both of which have a more

negative connotation. These labels traditionally focus on what the students are missing and not on the wide range of writing experiences that they do bring to the class. The students might be novice writers, with respect to certain English academic genres, but may well be extremely experienced L1 writers. This type of deficit identification of the students could have serious effects on their self-identification as a successful writer. Pajares and Valiante (2006), in their discussion of Self-efficacy theory, identify the self-perceptions of the writers' abilities as a key to their academic success.

However, the student participants did not indicate that their EAP instructors used any such terminology inside or outside the classroom to refer to her EAP students. Even so, it is possible that an identification of the student participants as being somehow deficient could still come from the institution itself. Thelma confirmed that the majority of the EAP students were in her EAP class, "because they got a bad score on a TOFEL, IELTS or CAEL [English language proficiency tests]" (09/07/2013). Louise agreed with Thelma in that the students' "perception is that they had to take a language test and this is kinda like a penalty for them...or that they are not good enough" (09/07/2013). The possible perception by the student participants that they were unsuccessful or in some way not good enough might reinforce this negative institutional message.

Therefore, although no one has specifically labelled the student participants negatively, the institution and its rules could be communicated implicitly the idea that they are somehow deficient, for example, failing to meet a language proficiency standard certainly does indicate that the students have some form of language deficiency. Ball and Ellis (2008), in their discussion of ELLs in mainstream English primary schools, observe, "... students internalize the messages they receive from the society they live in and

develop identities based on assumptions they glean from their interactions with individuals and from institutions in which they participate” (p. 509). Thus, the students could certainly internalize the label of being somehow deficient, after being told indirectly by the institution, in this case the university. Taking a highly qualified and extremely experienced L1 academic writer and placing them in even an advanced level EAP course, as Louise stated, might appear as a form of punishment or a setback. Learners respond to the signals around them so if the university does not treat them as good academic writers, then they may begin to internalize this view (Ball & Ellis, 2008).

It is therefore important for the academic success of the student participants to have strong self-confidence as writers, which, due to their reported inexperience writing English academic papers, might only be derived from their L1 writing. Louise recognized the importance of this confidence, “Well I hope they are taking away confidence, first and foremost... they should be becoming confident as language learners and students” (09/07/2013). Unfortunately, none of the student participants openly expressed confidence in their English academic writing abilities. However, they did self-identify as very good to great academic writers in their L1s. It is hoped that this positive self-identification as great L1 academic writers could be extended to support the student participants’ development in English.

## **Conclusion**

This section has focused on the student participants’ perceptions of their prior English and L1 academic writing along with their current English academic writing. The findings provided responses to research question 2 and 3:

2) What, if any, connections do the student participants perceive between their prior L1 and English genre knowledge and awareness, and the current EAP writing requirements?

The student participants generally did not identify a connection between their prior L1 academic writing and what they are producing in their EAP classes. Peter, the engineering major, and to a lesser degree Greg, saw only limited connection between their L1 academic writing and their current EAP and other English disciplinary writing.

3) How does EAP class affect the student participants' perceptions of English?

The student participants have all commented that the English language is more organized, structured and logical than their L1s. Some go further suggesting that the English language is inferior to their L1s, or unable to produce creative writing, poetry or other forms of the literary arts. This point of view may show that the student participants have an extremely narrow view of English writing, which was perhaps influenced by the narrow range of reading and writing texts assigned in the EAP class. It might also indicate their very limited experience with the English genres related to the literary arts. Without further study, it cannot be determined if there is any causal link between this narrow perception of academic English writing and the student participants' EAP class.

#### **4.4 Theoretical and empirical contributions to genre-based EAP pedagogy**

The findings of this study have painted a picture of the student participants as reportedly novice or inexperienced writers in both their L1 and in English. Their EAP class was described as having a somewhat limited variety reading and writing tasks, as well as, having a focus on the form of the text. One potential tool to assist the instructor in dealing with the student participants' perceptions of the EAP class would be to use a

genre-based pedagogy. For the instructor wanting to use a genre-based pedagogy, Devitt (2009) reminds us that the teaching of genre can be “formulaic and constraining, if genres are taught as forms without social or cultural meaning,” however, she also believes that genre teaching can be “enlightening and freeing, if genres are taught as part of a larger critical awareness” (p. 337).

This study set out with the aim of assessing the role of prior genre awareness and knowledge in the EAP classroom, with a special focus on the students’ perceptions of their prior writing and experiences and genre resources. The study also examines the student participants’ perceptions of the use of their L1s and prior genres and writing experience in their current EAP and disciplinary classroom. This subsection reports on the theoretical and empirical contributions of the study to the discussion of genre-based EAP pedagogies. As discussed earlier in the study (see p. 28), Johns (2008, 2011) identifies two main types of genre-based writing classes, genre acquisition versus genre awareness. The first pedagogical model focuses on helping the students gain the ability to replicate a target genre by explicitly teaching the genre as a form. The second focuses on raising the learner’s awareness leading to the student perhaps being able to utilize flexibly their genre knowledge in a new or changing context. This is achieved by raising the student’s awareness of the genres relationships with other texts, and the genres purpose and context.

**Genre acquisition classrooms.** Based on the descriptions and goals of the genre acquisition classroom (Johns, 2008, 2011) and the reported and/or perceived experiences of the student participants, I present my position that the EAP classroom is a form of genre acquisition classroom. Neither the instructors nor the student participants

mentioned the word genre at any time in the interviews process, but the perceptions of the student participants painted a clear picture of the genre acquisition classroom.

The first reason to describe the student participants' EAP class as a genre acquisition classroom is the student participants' perception that they are being taught to write to a specification. All of the student participants describe their writing as extremely organized, logical and fitting a required form. They described how the marks received in their EAP course were weighted towards the mechanics of the paper and not on their ideas. Cindy suggested that the mark for the writing in her EAP course was mainly based of the form of the writing. The focus on form was also expressed through the detailed nature of the writing assignment instructions given to the student participants. Greg described how the EAP assignment's instructions indicated exactly how to complete the task with all of the specific instructions and requirements elements.

If the goal of the genre acquisition class is to teach the learners to replicate the target genre (Johns, 2008, 2011), then the teacher would need to explicitly teach and focus on the form of the writing. This focus on the form was something acknowledged by all of the student participants. Greg and Marcia reported receiving highly detailed writing assignment prompts that listed all of the expectations for the paper including the required elements, their organization and the format of the paper. Louise suggested that her writing prompts contained "tons of instructions" (09/07/2013). This focus on form or on replicating a specification perhaps led Peter to identify English academic writing as a "fixed form" (03/04/2013). Thus, the genres of writing in the student participants' EAP class are viewed as fixed forms to be learned. Macbeth (2009) notes that although fixed models aid and comfort her novice learners, they are an impediment to transfer as they

present a fixed view of a genre, which is likely far more variable, and thus this may not prepare the learner for the variation they will face (as cited in Johns, 2011, p. 61).

The student participants, as well, noted a lack of connection between what they wrote in their L1 or prior English education. This lack of connection between genres would be one of the effects of the genre acquisition classroom. According to Johns (2008, 2011) there is no focus on the relationships between the learners' genres in this type of pedagogy. This connection would be one of the key factors controlling the learner's transfer of genre knowledge from their L1 or English into the EAP course and out to the student participants' disciplinary courses (James, 2010; Nowacek, 2011; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). Therefore, the student participants perceive themselves to be learning to write to a fixed form with no prior resources to aid them in the production of the genre. The student participants' perception of the focus of learning to write to a specification, along with their lack of genre awareness, leads to the identification of their EAP course as, intentionally or unintentionally, a genre acquisition classroom. Next, I present a discussion of the genre awareness classroom.

**Genre awareness classroom.** Johns (2008, 2011) introduces the concept of a genre awareness classroom and discusses some key elements required in a successful implementation of a genre-based pedagogy. If the instructor utilizes this pedagogy in an EAP classroom, it is imperative the learners are aware that the production of a genre, its requirements and its expectations change from professor to professor, and from discipline to discipline. With an awareness of these facts, the learner might be better able to deal with the variations from the fixed form. Secondly, the writer needs to be made more aware of what it means to write in the different disciplines, like a historian or an

economist. As well, an awareness of these disciplinary differences might help the student in the “near transfer” (Brent, 2011), or transfer of “rhetorical knowledge and skill” (p. 397) to a related discipline class or from the EAP to the disciplinary class.

The other benefit of a genre awareness classroom is that the learners not only gain awareness of the English genres learned in the EAP class, but also develop the awareness of how the genres they learn in the EAP class related to those in their disciplinary courses. I would suggest that the same connection could be made from the EAP students’ L1 academic genres into their EAP classroom writing. In the student participants’ current EAP class, they do not appear to perceive any connection between what they are writing and reading with what they did in their L1 education. This is in spite of the fact that they admit to having written similar academic genres, including formal presentations, summaries, reflections, essays and opinion papers, in their L1(s) (Table 3, p. 96). There seems to be a wealth of experience that the learners are not utilizing or are not able to utilize.

It is the role of the teacher or instructor to help the students to see the connection between the source and target genre to aid in the transfer (Brent, 2011, p. 413). The student participants’ L1 could be a valuable source of genre knowledge and writing experience in their EAP class. The student participants’ L1 genre experiences are displayed in Table 3 (p. 96) and their prior English writing experiences and genre resources are shown in Table 4a (p. 100) and Table 4b (p. 101). By not attempting to use these prior writing resources, we are focusing on putting a roof on a house before we have solidified its foundation. The goal in the EAP class is to help the students use their

prior knowledge as a base upon which to construct their new knowledge (Smart & Brown, 2002).

A similar concept for incorporating genre awareness into the classroom is discussed by Devitt (2009) in her concept of teaching “Critical Genre Awareness”. This critical awareness pedagogy focuses on the awareness of both the students and the teachers. It is important to raise the teachers’ critical genre awareness because as teachers select a genre, they also select all of the associated aspects, connotations and ideologies of the genre at the same time. Devitt (2009) reveals that by using the “five-paragraph” essay in the writing class, the teacher is reinforcing the “apparent objectivity and distance from the subject and Western logic” (p. 340). This can reduce the student participants’ engagement with the material and limits their “understanding of subjects having complexity that’s irreducible to parts” (p. 340). The EAP student participants have discussed how logical, organized and formulaic English is. Devitt would suggest that part of that reason for this perception of English comes from the activities presented to the student participants. The genres that the EAP teachers have chosen to teach in the class contain this notion of English academic writing as objective and logical. This perhaps has led the student participants to view English as logical, structured, and therefore not suitable for the literary arts.

In her genre-based pedagogy, Devitt’s (2009) approach includes teaching “particular genres, how to use those genres as antecedents, and how to critique and potentially change genres” (p. 346). Her goal is not to teach a genre including all of its social and textual aspects. Devitt (2009) admits that it would be impossible to teach a genre completely in all of its variations and contexts, so she is focusing on teaching

enough of a genre so that it can be used as an “antecedent” (p. 346). These antecedents can be used as building blocks or scaffolds to help the student acquire new genres in the future. In teaching native English speaking students, Devitt (2009) is able to build upon the antecedent genres because she has an awareness of the genres the students possess. Devitt notices certain elements of writing in her students’ work from, “the expository and persuasive papers for high school students” (p. 347) which displays the student’s prior experience producing these genre elements. Devitt can then use these elements as a foundation to build or as “antecedents” (p. 347).

Therefore, it is important for the composition instructor to have a familiarity with the prior genres of their students. If the instructors are aware of the antecedent genres of their students, they could scaffold future activities or genres. Without that knowledge, the teacher is missing an opportunity to activate the prior knowledge (schemata) of the students. The issue addressed by this study is the lack of awareness of the EAP students’ prior L1 and English genre resources. The goal in a genre-based writing class is to help students develop an awareness, but for the course to be successful, this awareness must begin with the teacher (Bruce, 2013). The success of this type of pedagogy hinges on the teacher’s awareness. In a first-year composition class, the teacher is likely has a greater understanding of the genre awareness of her students than would the average EAP teacher, whose students come from around the globe.

Therefore developing EAP students as writers require more than a focus on form in the classroom. Previously, in the literature review, I introduced the potential of combining the ESP and RGS genre schools to examine the student participants’ genre prior resources and perceptions of the EAP classroom. Now, I suggest that a combination

of ESP and RGS needs to be used in EAP classroom pedagogies. Combining these pedagogies in an EAP classroom takes advantage of the benefits produced by each of the genre schools. The focus of ESP is on teaching learners to replicate a “model” or “exemplar” of a genre that was created to be used as a tool for teaching (Flowerdew, 2002; Johns, 1997; 2002; Swales & Feak, 2004). Thus, this goal of ESP, teaching the learner to produce a specific genre in a specific form, can comfort the novice writer (Hyland, 2004b; Johns, 2011). RGS is important as it counter-balances the focus on form in traditional ESP-based pedagogies. It provides this balance by acknowledging the changeable nature of the genres and the importance of purpose, audience, context, and the relationships with other genres. This would allow for a course design or pedagogy that starts with the comforting heuristics of the ESP exemplar and then develops the learner’s awareness of the social and variable nature of the genre. This model would help to develop the learners’ awareness of both the “socially-constructed influences that constrain novice writers” while at the same time giving them the “procedural knowledge that... governs the choice of the textual elements” (Bruce, 2013, p. 12). Thus, it is hoped that a pedagogy based on the continuum from ESP to RGS would allow the students to be better able to apply this knowledge gained in the EAP class to the learners’ disciplinary courses.

**Creating a genre awareness based classroom: Recommendations.** Next, I discuss some ways of implementing this pedagogy in the EAP classroom. The implementation of my proposed form of the genre awareness pedagogy differs from that of Johns (2011) in that I suggest focusing on the learners’ awareness of the target genres in English before looking at their L1s. The reason for this decision is to avoid any

potential issues related to naming. If the class begins by examining the target genre in English, then the learners can use the features and descriptions of the target genre to identify a similar genre in the learners' L1s.

The first step in genre awareness class would be to try to elicit from the students the features of the target genre that the teacher wants to teach, for example an academic summary. I propose the following procedure: Start by surveying the class to see how many of the learners have had experience with this genre. Then have the learners create a list of the features of that genre on the blackboard. If the EAP students did not report having experience producing the target genre before, then I would introduce some ESP based prototypical models of the academic summary. When the students attempt to replicate these models, they would gain some experience producing the genre. When the students have experience producing the genre, I would ask the learners to examine the social nature of the genre by examining its features in order to determine why the genre is written, where it is written, who reads it and why, and what other related texts may influence the production of this genres, or the rhetorical situation (Devitt, Reiff, M. & Bawarshi, 2004). This would help to increase the learners' awareness of the target English genre. Then, the EAP students, guided by the description they developed, could identify a similar genre in their L1. Next, the learners would conduct a similar analysis of the genre in their L1. With this combined L1 and English genre knowledge, the learners could use the knowledge of the purpose, audience, functions, and features of the genre to aid them in the production of the genre in new contexts.

Another awareness raising exercise would be to have the students interview someone in their discipline (Johns, 1997). For practical reasons, I would propose to

develop the student's ability to reflect on their writing in their discipline (John, 2011), or as Beaufort (2007) suggests increasing their mindfulness. The EAP students could reflect on how the specific aspects of a genre produced in their EAP class could be different from an example of the same genre written in their disciplinary course, or even between two disciplinary courses (Bruce, 2013). This method might help to produce writers who actively think about the context of the writing and how they need to adapt any fixed form to a new situation. This focus on the target genre, its social context, and its associated textual features might help students to connect their prior L1 writing to their current EAP and disciplinary writing. Making a connection is the goal as transfer only occurs with recognition or connection.

Although I have introduced my views on the role of a combined ESP and RGS genre awareness based pedagogy in the EAP classroom, I am by no means suggesting that what we currently do as EAP instructors is not helpful to the learners. In their study of over 600 L2 English speakers in ESL and EAP programs at 26 Canadian universities, Fox, Cheng, and Zumbo (2013) found “empirical evidence that English language programs had a direct, positive, and significant effect on the academic and social engagement of the L2 students” (p. 21). Thus, what we do in the EAP classroom does help the students.

The goal of this study and of the proposed pedagogy was to see if gaining an understanding of the EAP students' prior L1 and English genre awareness and knowledge and the EAP students' perceptions of their class could suggest possible ways to make what is already successful even better. Ball and Ellis (2008) said it succinctly, “all students can be successful academic writers, particularly if they are supported in the

development of identities as successful writers and receive enjoyable instruction that builds on their background knowledge, builds a sense of community, is interactive and meaningful, and requires extended writing, reflection, and critical thinking” (p. 511).

## 5. Conclusion

“...your analyses will likely be more cyclical than linear – often raising more questions than they answer” (Freeman, 2009, p. 38).

The present study used a combination of English for Specific Purposes and Rhetorical Genre Studies in the investigation of EAP students' perceptions of

(a) their awareness and knowledge of written academic genres in the first languages (L1s) and in English, which they acquired in previous writing experiences, and

(b) the relationship between their prior L1, English, and current EAP writing.

The study addressed three research questions:

1. What genre knowledge and awareness do the students reportedly bring with them into the EAP class from their L1 and prior English education?
2. What, if any, connections do the students perceive between their prior L1 and English genre knowledge and awareness, and the current EAP writing requirements?
3. How does EAP class affect the students' perceptions of English?

In order to seek responses to these questions, qualitative semi-structures interviews and questionnaires were employed to gather information from student participants along with interviews with the EAP instructor and coordinator. The study also examined the student participants' perceptions of their EAP class along with gathering L1 and English genre resource information.

### Summary of Research

The findings suggest that the student participants have a mainly implicit awareness and knowledge of the academic genres they produced in their L1 and prior

English classes. They reported that their L1 academic writing was infrequent and not the main form of assessment, and as such, was not privileged in the educational system in their home countries. Secondly, the student participants reported having little or no prior English academic writing experience in their home countries, even though, all of the student participants had completed more than 10 years of English classes before coming to Canada and their EAP course. The student participants also reported facing many difficulties with the EAP writing assignments, which may have been related to the focus on listening, reading, grammar, and vocabulary in their prior English classes. This led to the student participants having limited experience writing English academic genres.

The student participants also perceived a limited connection between their prior L1 and English genre knowledge and awareness, and the current EAP writing requirements. The student participants' belief that they have had limited experience in academic writing in both their L1 and in English might make it difficult for them to identify any connection between their prior academic writing experience and their current English academic writing. This may further complicate any potential transfer of genre awareness and knowledge, or even general writing strategies from the student participants' prior L1s and English academic writing into their current EAP and disciplinary academic writing (Brent, 2010; James, 2010; Nowacek, 2011; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). This lack of connection could, as well, lead the students to perceiving themselves as novice or inexperienced English academic writers rather than experienced L1 dominant bilingual or multilingual writers with years of L1 academic writing experiences.

The EAP class appears to have affected the students' perceptions of English, with the student participants reporting that in their class they are learning to write to a form or, at the least, that English academic writing is largely formulaic and that the content or their ideas was not valued. This view of English academic writing as being formulaic may be one of the factors leading the student participants to develop a narrow view of English academic writing as needing to be highly structured, logical, filled with in-text citations, formal and not expressing the author's own ideas without the support of other scholars. With this view of English academic writing, the student participants might see what they have written in their L1 as not fitting this restrictive mold and therefore consider it as not academic. The student participants reported experience in their prior or current English classes have lacked any connection with the literary arts in English. They have never read or produce any genres relating to literature or the arts. This has given the student participants the impression that due to English's logical and structured form, it was not suitable for literature. In a related view the student participants all view their L1 and superior for these artistic genres. However the student participants also expressed that English was superior for research papers.

The research has demonstrated that a combined ESP/RGS perspective can be productively used in the investigation of EAP students' writing performance and address issues of transfer of prior genre knowledge to new linguistic, cultural, and educational contexts.

This same combination of ESP and RGS may provide some possible solutions to the issues reported by the students. Using the research findings as a base, the study has discussed the role of genre-based pedagogies in the EAP class. Based on the reports from

the student participants, it would appear that their current EAP class approximates a genre acquisition class (Johns, 2008, 2011), with the requisite focus on form. Indeed, the students all spoke of the restrictive or fixed nature of English academic writing.

Conversely, many researchers have questioned the effectiveness of explicit teaching of a genre (Freedman, 1994; Freedman, 1993, 1999; Freedman & Medway, 1994). Perhaps due to the nature of the EAP class, the students saw no connection between what they wrote in their EAP class and what they wrote in their L1 or in their prior English classes.

This study suggests the use of a combination of ESP and RGS genre awareness pedagogy in the EAP classroom (Bruce, 2013; Devitt, 2009; Johns, 2008, 2011). In this class, as suggested by Johns (2011) the students would start initially with a ESP based focus on the form using models. This could comfort the novice writers. As they gain experience the class would shift to raising the students' genre awareness. The genre awareness class educates the students and builds their awareness of the genre, its purpose, audience, related genres, and context. This study proposes that after the students have gained experience producing the genre with ESP based models, that the EAP course should then attempt to follow the pedagogical suggestions of Devitt (2009) on raising the EAP students' critical genre awareness, and Johns' (2008, 2011) model of the genre awareness classroom. This might aid the student participants to not only use what they have learned in the EAP class as an antecedent genre to aid them in the future, it might also aid them in transferring genre awareness and knowledge from their L1s to their current EAP and disciplinary writing.

## **Implications**

Based on the analysis of students' perceptions, the study indicates some areas where the students' experience and learning may possibly be improved in the EAP classroom. The first implication to come out of the study is that the EAP instructors should treat the EAP students as a heterogeneous group. In this study, the six student participants appeared to be members of distinct groups based on their prior knowledge, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and their current discipline of study. Consequently, they have different expectations of and goals for the EAP class. This may suggest that the program needs to address these groups differently. Possible solutions to this potential issue include providing discipline specific EAP classes where all of the students belong to a single faculty or major. Another approach, which has been around since the mid 1980's, is the sheltered classroom (Krashen, 1985). In this workshop-like class, the students like the ESL students, could gain specialized language assistance from English language teachers and discipline specific help by experts in their field.

Another implication of this study of the EAP class could be the increased use of collaborative learning in the EAP classroom. While acknowledging the limitations of the classroom, Hunt (1993) mentions that collaborative learning is one possible way to create more meaningful writing in the classroom where the texts produced by the students serve to convey the knowledge and opinions of the students to the other members of the discourse community, their classmates. Therefore, the content of the student paper would be meaningful to the author. In this collaborative class students would be writing for each other and for the teacher. This reduces the "arhetorical" (Pare, 2009) or "textoid" (Hunt, 1993) nature of the student produced papers. Although, in the context of the

classroom the writing may be seen as rhetorical. The EAP classroom writing has been described as a simulation of a real, discipline-specific, class (Fox, Cheng, & Zumbo, 2013), however, the content of student papers in the EAP class has little importance. The texts EAP students produce in their academic classrooms, as Johns (2008) reminds us, are not as much purposeful as responsive, and as such, simply respond to the teachers prompt.

The study also hints at the need for more specialized training for the EAP teaching professionals (Fox, 2009). This training could include the development of a culture of collaboration among the teachers using meetings and co-planning of courses. It could also include training in genre-based pedagogies like the genre-awareness classroom (Johns, 2011) or critical genre awareness (Devitt, 2009). The raising of the teachers' genre awareness is critical to the success of genre-based programs (Bruce, 2013). An increase in the EAP teacher's understanding of EAP students' prior L1 and English genre knowledge and its role in the students' English academic writing could aid in the design of course materials, activities and curricula. These resources could help the teacher to scaffold from the learner's known to unknown genres and to create new methods that would help learners make more explicit connections between the learner's prior L1 or English genres and their current English academic writing (Johns, 2011). This is key because transfer of genre awareness and knowledge is more likely if the learners are able to identify the connection between what they are doing now and what they did in the past writing (James, 2010; Nowacek, 2011; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). As Brent (2011) suggests, "it is important to provide explicit cues that encourage learners to consider the relation between the source and target of transfer" (p. 413).

## **Limitation**

In the design of any empirical study, there are always limitations, and this study was no different. The first limitation for this study was that all of the data were based on the student participants' retrospective reflections, and as such, there was a reliance on the student participants' memory of their writing and the related cognitive processes (Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011). In my study, this was an issue of particular concern, because the student participants had completed their prior L1 education two to eight years before entering the EAP program. Therefore, many of their reflections of their experiences could and sometimes did lack detail and perhaps accuracy. It was for that reason that a questionnaire was used in order to triangulate the data provided by the student interviews.

A second limitation of this study was the limited access to the student participants granted to the researcher. Only after finalizing the coding scheme, did I determine that some questions had gone unasked. The most important of these unasked questions was, what do you mean by "writing"? This question would have been helpful in determining what the student participants meant when they suggested they did not write much in their L1. The limited access also did not allow the opportunity to fine-tune the questions. Dornyei (2007) suggests the only true way to pilot the research questions is to identify a group which is similar in all ways to your target group. However, this was not possible with the ethics clearance limited access to the recruited learners. As well, according to Kvale (1996, p. 163), it is important to have a second person independently transcribe one of the interviews and then inspect the two transcripts for agreement. Due to the limitations of the ethics clearance and for concerns of maintaining the student participants' confidentiality, I conducted all of the transcriptions. In the same way,

having a second researcher code the interviews would have increased the trustworthiness of the coding.

The final limitation in this study was my own limited knowledge of the educational systems and the associated genres of writing used in the student participants' home countries; however, the introduction of linguistic and cultural informants and member checks with the student participants somewhat compensated for this limitation.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Further research in this field is needed to investigate and explain the effects of a genre awareness based classroom (Johns, 2011) on the transfer from and application of EAP students' prior L1 and English genre awareness and knowledge. This study gathered the students' reports of their prior writing experience in their L1 and English and asked about the connection with their current English academic writing. As James (2010) noted, a lack of perceived connection might lead the students to conclude that no transfer has occurred. A longitudinal, large-scale study covering the students' writing in both their L1 and in English and using genre analysis of writing samples in both L1s and English may be needed to identify any occurring transfer of genre awareness and knowledge.

The study has identified the academic summary as the genre that EAP students perceive as the same across different linguistic and disciplinary contexts. Further research is needed to investigate the nature of academic summaries written by EAP students in their EAP and other disciplinary courses, along with those written in their L1s and prior English classes. As discussed above, Gentil (2011) identifies the possibility of a genre existing in a very similar state in two languages. It is imperative for further

research in this area of studies to determine if a genre could exist across multiple languages in specific institutions like the university (cf. Artemeva & Fox, 2011; Gentil, 2011). To explore this possibility, it might be useful to not only gather writing assignments in the students' L1s and English but also the writing instruction sheets, along with interviews conducted with the EAP students' prior L1 (if at all possible) and English instructors to gain insight into their expectations of and requirements for the summary writing assignments. Combined ESP/RGS genre analysis will inform the investigation of a possible role of transfer between these genres. Finally, contrastive rhetoric research procedures suggested by Moreno (as cited in Gentil, 2011, p. 16) could examine the actual similarity of the summaries written in the different languages.

This study did not address what the EAP student participants thought of or meant when they said "writing". Future research, however could clarify what students mean by writing or by academic writing. A related study could investigate the differences, if there are any, between EAP and Native English speaking Canadian university students' identification of writing.

The student participants in this study discussed the important role of vocabulary as a resource needed to complete many of the required writing tasks in their EAP class. The important role of lexical resources in the EAP class has also been identified by Evans and Green (2008) and Hyland (1997). Another area for future study, therefore, should be an investigation of the role of explicit teaching of the lexis and the development of methodologies that could foster greater learner independence. This focus on lexical resources could aid the learner in the productive (writing and speaking) and receptive (reading and listening) activities in the EAP class and further, in disciplinary classes.

**Reflection**

In writing this thesis, I have experienced something that I had not experienced in a while, a new type of complicated writing filled with requirements, rules and specifications. My experience might not have been that different from what the student participants expressed in this study. When I add these “shared” experiences to the readings I have completed for my thesis, I have a lot on which to reflect. I now have cracked the door open and have gained an initial glance into the EAP students’ world with respect to their prior genre awareness and knowledge. As a current EAP instructor, there has been a difference between what I think I should be doing in a perfect world and what I actually do in my classes. Although I strive to give my students every opportunity to learn and gain from my classes, I know I can do more. I am beginning a new EAP course soon, and my planning will be inspired by the words of Mahatma Gandhi (B’han, 2001) “be the change that you wish to see in the world.” Therefore, I will attempt to use the knowledge gained in this process and help my students to see the connections between their prior and current writing and help them to view themselves as experienced writers.

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## **Appendix A: Oral Invitation to Participate in the Study**

Hello, my name is Don Myles and I am a graduate student at Carleton University and I am studying Applied Linguistics. My area of interest is second or additional language writing. I am beginning to conduct research for my Master's thesis. I am looking for interested volunteers, who would like to participate in my study about how people use their past writing experience when they are asked to write a new text type in their English for academic purposes (EAP) class. My role as a researcher is outside your EAP course and I have no power in your course. I do not have access to your coursework and, therefore, your participation cannot affect your marks. This study is for my own MA Thesis. As such, participation in my study is not an academic requirement and is not linked in any way to your EAP course or its mark. If you change your mind and decide to stop participating in the study, you will be able to leave the study up to March 15th 2013.

**I will not be correcting or assessing the content of your assignments and your participation will NOT influence your mark in this course.**

**Purpose:** In my study, I want to explore how EAP students' previous writing experience, both in English and in their native language(s), is used when they encounter new writing projects in their EAP class. I am also interested in learning more about the various types of academic writing you produced in your native language(s).

**Participants:** I am looking for up to six student participants.

**Participation Requirements:** As a student participant, you will first be asked to complete a three-page questionnaire. This should take no more than 10 – 15 minutes. Next, you will take part in a 15-30 minute one-on-one interview with me to gather information on your experiences writing in English and your first language. I will also ask you some questions about your previous education in your home country.

Later this semester, I will ask you for copies of the drafts and final copies of an EAP writing assignment, along with any teacher or TA feedback. After I analyze the results from our first interview, we will meet for a second one-on-one interview. The interview questions will continue to focus on your past academic writing and your current EAP writing. This second interview should also last approximately 15 to 30 minutes.

Over the semester you will be asked to participate in a total of two interviews and to fill in a questionnaire, which should take 90 minutes total of your time this term.

**I will not be correcting or assessing the content of your assignments and your participation will NOT influence your mark in this course.** All interviews will be audio-recorded so that I can transcribe them at a later time.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:** I can guarantee confidentiality, meaning that no one, except me, will know who you are or what you said or wrote. All of your writings and interviews will be labelled using a fictitious / made-up name (pseudonym) as soon as they are collected. ) Anything that could identify you will be removed from my data. The data will be used as a collection and will not be identified as coming from you to further hide

your identity. My research supervisor will only have access to the coded data (without your real name). All of the material collected will be stored in a locked cabinet or on my password-protected laptop. I will be keeping the data to allow for further analysis.

**Duration and Location:** Your participation will be required until the end of this term in April 2013. However, the deadline for withdrawal from the study is March 15<sup>th</sup> 2013. At the student participant's request, the material collected can be returned, destroyed or remain with the researcher to be used for this study. All interviews will be held on campus in a location and at a time of your convenience. You will participate in two 15-30 minute interviews and spend 15-30 minutes completing a questionnaire.

**Potential Benefits:** The potential benefits for you include gaining a better understanding of how you approach new writing tasks and how you can take advantage of your previous experience when writing a new type of text in English. This study will also provide you with an opportunity to practice your oral English.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me by email. We can arrange a meeting where I can answer any of your questions and ask you to complete the informed consent form.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please feel free to contact me at any time ([don\\_myles@carleton.ca](mailto:don_myles@carleton.ca)).

**Thank you very much for your time and consideration.**

**I hope to hear from you soon!**

**Researcher:** Donald Myles **Email:** [don\\_myles@carleton.ca](mailto:don_myles@carleton.ca)

**Researcher Supervisor:** Natasha Artemeva **Email:** [natasha\\_artemeva@carleton.ca](mailto:natasha_artemeva@carleton.ca)

**REB CLEARANCE:** This project, 13-1166, has been reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. Questions or concerns can be sent to the chair Prof. Andy Adler at 613-520-2517 or [ethics@carleton.ca](mailto:ethics@carleton.ca)

## Appendix B: Ethics Approval



**Carleton University Research Office**  
 Research Ethics Board  
 1325 Dunton Tower  
 1125 Colonel By Drive  
 Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6 Canada  
 Tel: 613-520-2517  
[ethics@carleton.ca](mailto:ethics@carleton.ca)

### Ethics Clearance Form

This is to certify that the Carleton University Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical clearance. The REB found the research project to meet appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* and, the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

**New clearance**

**Renewal of original clearance**

**Original date of clearance:**

Date of clearance	<b>7 February 2013</b>
Researchers	<b>Don Myles, Master's student</b>
Department	<b>Linguistics and Language Studies</b>
Supervisor	<b>Prof. Natasha Artemeva, Linguistics and Language Studies</b>
Project number	<b>13-1166</b>
Title of project	<b>Prior Genre Knowledge and Utilization across the L1/L2 Divide: How second language learners utilize their prior L1 and L2 knowledge of text types (genres) when encountering new text types in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class (working title)</b>

Clearance expires: **31 May 2013**

**All researchers are governed by the following conditions:**

**Annual Status Report:** You are required to submit an Annual Status Report to either renew clearance or close the file. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the immediate suspension of the project. Funded projects will have accounts suspended until the report is submitted and approved.

**Changes to the project:** Any changes to the project must be submitted to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board for approval. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

**Adverse events:** Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. You must submit a written record of the event and indicate what steps you have taken to resolve the situation.

**Suspension or termination of clearance:** Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Andy Adler, Chair  
 Carleton University Research Ethics Board

Louise Heslop, Vice-Chair  
 Carleton University Research Ethics Board

### Appendix C: Participant (Student) Informed Consent Form

 <p><b>Carleton</b> UNIVERSITY Canada's Capital University</p>	<p>School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies</p> <p>Carleton University, 236 Paterson Hall</p> <p>1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6</p>
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#### Learning Projects Student Participant's Informed Consent Form

Please read carefully. This informed consent form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of this learning project and the nature of your participation. This form must provide sufficient information so that you are in an informed position to decide whether you wish to participate in this learning project. There are no penalties of any sort, regardless of your decision.

<b>Course name and number:</b>	<b>ALDS 5909W M.A. Thesis</b>	
<b>Name, affiliation, and email of the supervising professor:</b>	<p>Natasha Artemeva</p> <p>School of Linguistics and Language Studies (SLaLS)</p> <p>natasha_artemeva@carleton.ca</p>	
<b>Student Conducting Thesis Research</b>		
<b>Name (Please Print)</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Signature</b>
Don Myles	don_myles@carleton.ca	
<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<p>Prior Genre Knowledge and Utilization across the L1/L2 Divide: How second language learners utilize their prior L1 and L2 knowledge of text types (genres) when encountering new text types in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class. (Working Title)</p>	
<b>Purpose of the learning</b>	<p>The purpose of this study is to learn how your past writing experience in your first language(s) and English affects your writing of new types of texts in your EAP class.</p>	

<b>project:</b>	
<b>Procedures:</b>	<p>I will ask you to sign the consent form.</p> <p>I will ask you to fill in a “genre awareness” questionnaire, which should take approximately 15-30 minutes.</p> <p>Our first interview will last 15-30 minutes. We will discuss your prior writing experience and your educational background in both your mother tongue and English. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed.</p> <p>The next interview will be later in the term at a date to be agreed upon by you and me. Both interviews will have a similar structure and questions and length 15-30 minutes.</p> <p>You will be asked to submit samples of your writing including the drafts and final copies for a selected EAP assignment (to be determined).</p>
<b>Duration and location:</b>	Your participation will be required until the end of this term in April 2013. All interviews will be held in a location and time of your convenience on campus. The two interviews will take approximately 30-60 minutes all together plus 30 minutes for the questionnaire.
<b>Anonymity/Confidentiality</b>	<p>I can guarantee confidentiality, meaning that no one will know what you said or wrote. All of your writings and interviews will be labelled using a fictitious / made-up name (pseudonym) as soon as they are collected. Anything that could identify you will be removed from the data.</p> <p>My research supervisor will only have access to the coded data (without your real name). All of the material collected will be stored in a locked filing cabinet or on my password-protected laptop. The data will be kept to allow for further analysis.</p>
<b>Potential benefits/potential discomfort/Probable risks (if any):</b>	<p>The potential benefits for you include gaining a better understanding of how to improve your academic writing by using your previous writing experience.</p> <p>There are no known potential discomforts or probable risks associated with your participation in this study.</p>
<b>Right to withdraw:</b>	The deadline for withdrawal from the study is March 15 <sup>th</sup> 2013. At the student participant’s request, the material collected can be returned, destroyed or remain with the researcher to be used for this study.
<b>Debriefing:</b>	If you request debriefing, you will receive a project report and feedback on your academic English writing. Please feel free to ask me questions at any time by email at don_myles@carleton.ca

**Consent:** *I have read the above description of the learning project and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this learning project.*

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name (Please print)

Participant's Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name (Please print)

Researcher's Signature

Date

### Appendix D: Participant (Faculty) Informed Consent Form

 <p><b>Carleton</b> UNIVERSITY Canada's Capital University</p>	<p>School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies Carleton University, 236 Paterson Hall 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6</p>
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#### Learning Projects Faculty Participant's Informed Consent Form

Please read carefully. This informed consent form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of this learning project and the nature of your participation. This form must provide sufficient information so that you are in an informed position to decide whether you wish to participate in this learning project. There are no penalties of any sort, regardless of your decision.

<b>Course name and number:</b>	<b>ALDS 5909W M.A. Thesis</b>	
<b>Name, affiliation, and email of the supervising professor:</b>	Natasha Artemeva School of Linguistics and Language Studies (SLaLS) Natasha_artemeva@carleton.ca	
<b>Student Conducting Learning Project</b>		
<b>Name (Please Print)</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Signature</b>
Don Myles	don_myles@carleton.ca	
<b>Title of the learning project:</b>	Prior Genre Knowledge and Utilization across the L1/L2 Divide: How second language learners utilize their prior L1 and L2 knowledge of text types (genres) when encountering new text types in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class. (Working Title)	
<b>Purpose of the learning project:</b>	This proposed study will investigate how English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students use their prior knowledge of written text types (i.e., genres) when encountering a new writing task in their EAP class. This study will examine the role of students' prior knowledge of written text types (genres) in their first language as well as their prior genre knowledge in an additional language, in this case, English, which the participants may have acquired from their previous English-language education.	
<b>Procedures:</b>	Initially, you will be asked to read and approve both your informed consent form and the ones to be given to the students. (Revisions will be made as is necessary.) You will be asked to provide me with the course syllabus and writing assignment instructions. I will conduct one or two short one-on-one interviews with you later this term, nearer to the midway point of the winter semester, regarding your students' academic writing. All interviews will be digitally recorded and stored on my password protected computer, any identifying	

	information (names, university, and class numbers) will be removed, and the collected data will be coded with pseudonyms for privacy.
<b>Duration and location:</b>	Your participation will be required until the end of the winter term in April 2013. The interview(s) will be held in a location and time of your convenience. Each interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
<b>Anonymity/Confidentiality</b>	I can guarantee confidentiality. All data collected will be coded with a pseudonym as soon as it is collected. Anything that could identify you or your students will be removed from the data (including your syllabus and writing assignments prompts). My research supervisor will only have access to the coded data. All of the material collected will be stored in a locked filing cabinet or on my password-protected laptop. The data will be kept for up to five years to allow for further analysis.
<b>Potential benefits/potential discomfort/Probable risks (if any):</b>	The potential benefits of participating in this research include adding to your understanding of how your students cope with new written assignments by utilizing or not utilizing their prior academic writing experience (genre knowledge) from both their L1 and L2. There are no known potential discomforts or probable risks associated with participation in this research.
<b>Right to withdraw:</b>	The deadline for withdrawal from the study is March 15 <sup>th</sup> 2013. At the participant's request, the material collected can be returned, destroyed or remain with the researcher to be used for this study.
<b>Debriefing:</b>	Your debriefing, if requested, will include a report on the findings of this study. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions regarding your participation in this study.

**Consent:** I have read the above description of the learning project and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this learning project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Name (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Name (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix E: Genre Awareness and Production Questionnaire

**Instructions:** Please answer all of the questions by using check (✓) or writing in the answer.

### Survey of Past Writing Experiences of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Students

#### General Background

1. **Age:**  18  19  20  21  22  23+

2. **Gender:**  female  male

3. **Nationality:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Language Background

1. How many languages do you speak and write fluently?  1  2  3  4+

2. What is your first language? (*Please indicate if raised bilingual.*)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Language(s)/dialect(s) used regularly with family:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Language(s)/dialect(s) used regularly with friends, at school, etc.:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How would you rate you academic writing in your first language?

Poor       Excellent

#### Educational Background

1. Type of school last attended:

public (state-funded) high school: location \_\_\_\_\_

private (independent) high school: location \_\_\_\_\_

college: program of study \_\_\_\_\_

university: major \_\_\_\_\_

language training school: location \_\_\_\_\_

**Prior English Writing Experiences**-Types of English writing did you do **before** coming to this EAP class. Mark an **X** besides the types of writing that you have written.

<b>Correspondence</b>	<b>For school</b>	<b>For work</b>	<b>Outside school and work</b>
blog (Blogger)			
email			
discussion board (online)			
personal letter			
instant messaging (MSN)			
text messaging (cellphone)			
<b>Creative writing</b>			
nonfiction			
fiction (stories)			
poetry (poems)			
song lyrics			
<b>Academic writing</b>			
analytical essay (analyse a topic or theme)			
argumentative essay (defend a position)			
book report			
compare and contrast paper			
descriptive essay (describe something)			
evaluation paper (evaluate or assess)			
five-paragraph essay (Intro, 3 body, conc.)			
interpretation of literature			
lab write-up/report			
opinion/position paper			
personal narrative			
summary			
<b>Informal writing</b>			
free writing			
journal (diary) writing			
lecture notes			
reading notes			
<b>Presentations/Speeches</b>			
informal presentation			
formal presentation			
speech			
storytelling			
<b>Business writing</b>			
business letter			

job applications			
resume / CV			
<b>Public writing</b>			
letter to the editor			
blog or online journal			
web page design			
web page text			
social network (Facebook)			

1. Are there any types of writing that you do regularly that are not listed above?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Of the types of writing you used for school (including high school, college and university), which three (3) did you do most often or regularly?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Of the types of writing you used for work, which three (3) did you do most often or regularly?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Of the types of writing you used outside of school and work, which three (3) did you do most often or regularly?

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix F: Interview #1 Questions for Student Participants**

- 1) Please tell me about your education prior to entering this University. Please include your high school and college or university. Where and When?
- 2) What types of academic writing did you write most commonly in your first language?
- 3) In your previous English education, what types of written texts did you produce?
- 4) What types of assignments in your EAP class do you find most difficult and why?
- 5) What are some of the difficulties in producing academic writing in your first language? Are they the same difficulties you face writing in English?
- 6) How does your first language writing experience (academic and/or non-academic) help you when you encounter new English writing tasks in your EAP class?
- 7) When your teacher asks you to write a new type of text, what are some of the strategies you use to complete the assignment?
- 8) Are any of your ESLA assignments similar to assignments you wrote for school (including high school, college, and university) in your home country? If so, which ones? How are they similar and /or different?
- 9) What types of texts do you prefer to write in your first language and which do you prefer to write in English?
- 10) Do you use your first language in the writing process in your EAP class or your other classes? i.e. outlines, drafts, note, etc
- 11) What makes some students in the class better writers? Is it the level of their English?
- 12) If someone is a good academic writer in their first language will they be a good academic writing in their second language?

### Appendix G: Interview #2 Questions for Student Participants

- 1) How would you define academic writing?
  - a. You said that you did little academic writing in your first language. With this definition can you explained what you meant?
- 2) What course did you take in you last school, university or high school?
  - a. What types of things did you read for those courses?
  - b. What types of things did you have to write for the class?
- 3) What courses are you taking now at this university?
  - a. What types of things are you reading for you classes here?
  - b. What types of things are the teachers asking you to write?
- 4) Is the academic writing from your ESLA course similar to the readings you are doing for the course?
  - a. Are all the things you read academic?
  - b. Why do you think they are different from what you are writing in your ESLA class?
- 5) Can you describe the writing process you used in you first language? (the steps)
  - a. What are the steps you use here in your English writing?
  - b. What are some of the similarities and differences?
- 6) How would your teachers in your home country tell you about an assignment?
  - a. What type of information would they give you?
  - b. What type of information do your teachers here give you?
- 7) You spoke of the almost total separation or difference between writing in your first language and your writing in English.
  - a. How do you know the two are different?
  - b. Who told you?
  - c. When and where did you find out there is a difference?
- 8) Many of you said that you did not use your first language in you process of English writing.
  - a. Why do you think it is important not to use your first language? How did you learn that it was bad to use your first language in ESLA class?

## **Appendix H: Interview #1 Questions Interview for Instructor**

- 1) I would like to focus on your perceptions of the ESLA course.**
  - a) How do you understand English for Academic Purposes (EAP)?
  - b) What do you focus on in your EAP class?
  - c) What are you hoping the students will take away (learn) from your class?
  - d) What is the purpose of the course? Why should the students take this course?
  - e) Do EAP courses prepare students for academic success in university?
  - f) Does, or should an EAP course take into account the majors or first language(s) of the students?
  - g) If so, how could you use this information in the classroom?
  
- 2) I would now like to look at the students' perceptions of the ESLA course.**
  - a) What do you think they understand EAP?
  - b) What do you think they would say the focus of the course is?
  - c) What do you think they feel they are learning from your course?
  - d) What do they think is the purpose of ESLA?
  
- 3) Let's discuss the students' prior first language and English writing experience.**
  - a) In your opinion, does your students' prior experience with writing in their first language in any way relate to the writing in your class?
    - i) (If needed) Does the student's first language writing experience have a positive or negative role in your class?
  - b) In your opinion, does your students' prior experience with writing in English in any way relate to the writing in your class?
    - i) Does it have a positive or negative effect?
  
- 4) Use these questions for Follow-up or for eliciting answers.**
  - a) Can you take advantage of this prior L1 writing experience? If so, how would you attempt to do this in the classroom?
  - b) Could you discuss the value of connecting their current writing to their past experience?
  
- 5) Thank you so much for your help. Is there anything else you would like to add before we end?**

## **Appendix I: Transcription Conventions.**

(Adapted from McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig (2003))

### **Page Format:**

1. Times New Roman 12 point font
2. Margins are one-inch on the top, bottom, right, and left of the transcript
3. All text is left justified

**Transcription Labeling:** Each transcript includes include the following labeling information left justified at the top of the document. Example:

**Student Participant ID:** #1 Greg

**Interview Name:** Interview #1

**Site/Location:** University

**Date of Interview:** March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Interviewer ID:** Don Myles

**Transcriber:** Don Myles

**Recording File Name:** Student Participant #1 Greg Interview 1 March 4th  
130304\_001.MP3

### **Transcribing Conventions:**

1. The participant's pseudonym was used the first time followed by the initial.
2. The time was indicated in minutes and seconds with round brackets (01:33).
3. I replaced the real names of the participants, informants, the university, and course specific identifiers with aliases. This was done to help ensure the confidentiality of the participants in my study.
4. Any sensitive information revealed in this transcription will be replaced with an alias or a generic form for example the course instructor's name will be replaced with a generic form in round brackets (university)
5. I have used [unclear] when I could not understand the participant's words.
6. In my transcription I have used [ ] to contain summary notes, editorial comments or clarification.
7. To signal louder volume I have chosen to use capital letter.
8. I have used "!" to signal excitement or anger.
9. I have used ( ) to indicate nonverbal sounds. In my transcriptions, I have chosen to ignore any background sounds likes coughs, banging doors or the voices of other people not related to this study. I have included in the round brackets any laughter, sighs, or other non-verbal sounds of my participants.
10. When the participant has mispronounced a word, I have tried to represent their pronunciation.
11. All repetitions of words or phrases by the participant were included in the transcript.
12. No efforts were made to clean up or correct the grammar in the participants' speech.
13. ... Before or after a word is used to represent a short pause of 2-5 seconds. Longer pauses by the participants are represented by (long pause)

## Appendix J: Coding Scheme from Student Participants Interviews

### I. Reported Academic Writing Experience in L1 and English

#### A. Prior L1 & English Education

- i. Prior L1 Education
  - a. L1 Academic Writing
    - i. Teacher's Assessment of L1 Academic Writing
    - ii. Student Participants' Evaluation of L1 Academic Writing Level
    - iii. Amount of L1 Academic Writing
  - b. L1 Education – General Information
    - i. Location and Level of L1 Education
    - ii. Language of Instruction of L1 Education
    - iii. Date of Completion of L1 Education
    - iv. L1 Classroom Activities
    - v. Major or Discipline of L1 Education
- ii. Prior English Education in Native Country
  - a. Private Classes in Native Country
  - b. Prior English Academic Writing in Native Country
    - i. Amount of English Academic Writing
    - ii. Student Participants' Evaluation of Prior English Academic Writing
  - c. Prior English Education in Native Country – General Information
    - i. Prior English Classroom Activities
    - ii. Prior English Class Lengths
    - iii. Skills focused on in Prior English Education
    - iv. Complexity of Prior English Education
    - v. Grade Levels of Prior English Education
    - vi. Reason's for Prior English Education
- iii. Prior English Education in Canada – General Information

- i. Location of Prior English Education in Canada
- ii. Level of Prior English Education in Canada

## **B. Current English Education**

- i.** Current EAP Education
  - a.** Current EAP Academic Writing
    - i. Specific difficulties in EAP Academic
    - ii. Student Participants' Evaluation of Current EAP Academic Writing
  - b.** Current EAP Classroom Activities
- ii.** Current English Major or Disciplinary Academic Writing
  - a.** Disciplinary English Academic Writing
    - i. Comparison of EAP and Disciplinary Academic Writing
    - ii. Student Participants' Evaluation of Disciplinary English Writing
    - iii. Specific difficulties in Disciplinary English Writing

## **C. Writing Process and Strategy**

- i.** Role of Language Skills in Learning Academic Writing
  - a.** Role of Reading in Learning L1 Academic Writing
  - b.** Role of Reading in Learning English Academic Writing
  - c.** Role of Speaking in Learning English Academic Writing
- ii.** EAP Academic Writing Strategies
  - a.** Ask Teacher for Help
  - b.** Use of Prior Content
    - i. Teacher's Strategies
    - ii. Use of prior content knowledge
  - c.** Consider the Teacher's Questions
  - d.** Seek Outside Help
  - e.** Use of Models in Academic Writing
  - f.** Use of L1 in English Academic Writing
    - i. Use of Translation from L1 to English

- ii. Thinks in L1 & Translates in their Head
- iii. Does not use L1 in any English Academic Writing
- iv. Translation from English to L1
- iii. L1 and English Academic Writing Processes
  - a. L1 Academic Writing Process
    - i. Limited Research Needed or Lack of Resources
    - ii. Difficulty Articulating Implicit Knowledge
  - b. English Academic Writing Process
    - i. Reflect of the Question
    - ii. Role or Research
    - iii. Draft and Review
    - iv. L1 in the Head – English on the Paper

## **II. Perceptions of Language and Academic Writing**

### **A. Perceptions of L1 Academic Writing**

- i. Lack of awareness of L1 academic writing
- ii. L1 academic writing lacked structure
- iii. Some genres are better in L1
- iv. L1 writing in school not academic

### **B. Perceptions of English Academic Writing**

- i. English is superior for research
- ii. L1 superior for literature and literary arts

### **C. Perceptions of Languages**

- i. To learn a new language only need grammar and vocabulary
- ii. People think in a specific language
- iii. Some languages are more complicated than others
- iv. Additional language learners have limits compared to native speakers

### **D. Perceptions of Being a Successful English Academic Writer**

- i. Only need to give sufficient effort to succeed
- ii. Need to focus on learning vocabulary

iii. Need to have a writing ability (a gift?)

**E. Perceptions of Writing in the Literary Arts and Science/Research**

- i. Perceptions of Literary Arts Writing
- ii. Perceptions of Science and Research Writing

**F. Perceptions of Plagiarism and Paraphrase**

**G. Perceptions of the Structure and Rules in Academic Writing**

**H. Perceptions of the relationship between L1 and English academic writing**

- i. Differences
  - a. Differences in Citation
  - b. Differences in Organization
  - c. Everything is Different
  - d. Differences in grammar and vocabulary
  - e. Complete lack of connection
  - f. Importance of structure vs. content in academic writing
- ii. Similarities
  - a. Similarities in text types used
  - b. Similarities in vocabulary
  - c. Similarities in evaluation
  - d. Similarities in structure
  - e. Similarities in content
  - f. Similarities in writing styles used
- iii. Connection between classes in L1 and English
  - a. Similarities
  - b. Differences

**III. Genre and Academic Writing Awareness in L1 and English**

**A. Prior L1 and Prior English Genre and Academic Writing Awareness**

- i. Prior L1 Genres and Text Types
  - a. Creative Writing
    - i. Enshah (انشاء)-Persian

- ii. Short Stories (短篇小说 Duǎnpiān xiǎoshuō)-Chinese
- b. Exams
  - i. Math Short Answer Problems (Hall-e Masaleh)-Persian
  - ii. Short Answer Questions (简答题 Jiǎn dǎtí)-Chinese
  - iii. Long Answer Questions (论述题 Lùn shùtí)-Chinese
- c. Math Problems (equations) – (تمرین کاردان مر کاردان نی تدر)-Persian
- d. Statistical Analysis Reports (ی آمار ی ها گ زارش)-Persian
- e. Final / Term Papers
  - i. Final Course Paper (پ ی نه ها م قلا ه)-Persian
  - ii. Term Paper (Реферат)-Russian Informant says Реферат is a Summary
- f. Essay
  - i. Opinion or Position Paper (Эссе)-Russian Informant says Эссе is a composition or opinion essay based on literature
  - ii. Essay (论文 Lùn wén)-Chinese
  - iii. Six Page Essay (Доклад)-Russian Informant says Доклад is a Report
- g. Summary
  - i. Summary (总结 zǒng jié)-Chinese
  - ii. Summary (Kholaseh-nevisi خلاصه یس یذ و)-Persian
  - iii. Summary (Изложение)-Russian Informant describes Изложение as a retelling of a story. Giving the Gist or to interpret a story in your own words
- h. Presentations (презентация)-Russian
- i. Reflection (观后感/读后感 Guān hòu gǎn/dúhòugǎn) – Chinese
  - i. Reflection of a reading (读后感 dú hòu gǎn)-Chinese

- ii. Reflection of a Video (观后感 guān hòu gǎn)-Chinese
  - j. Notes
    - i. Reading Notes
    - ii. Lecture Note
- ii. Prior English Genres, Text Types and types of writing in Home Country
  - a. Creative Writing
  - b. Essay
  - c. Diary
  - d. Summary
- iii. Prior English Genres and Text types in Canada-Resumes

## **B. Current Genre and Academic Writing Experience**

- i. EAP Genres and Text Types
  - a. Lecture Notes
  - b. Reflections
  - c. Summaries
  - d. Research Papers
  - e. Presentations
- ii. Discipline English Genres and Text Types
  - a. Essay
  - b. Summary
  - c. Research / Term Papers

## **C. Writing in the Literary Arts and Science/Research**

- i. Literary Arts Writing
- ii. Science and Research Writing

### **NOTE**

Yellow highlighted Items indicate a disagreement between the Expert Language Informant and the Student Participant.

### Appendix K: Prior L1 Genre Resources for All Six Student Participants

Student Participant	General Term	English Name	L1 Name	Descriptions
<b>#1 Greg  Mandarin Chinese</b>	Composition 作文	Scripts	剧本	*Never Produced
		Novel	小说	*Never Produced
		Essay	论文(Lùn wén)	
		Movie Reviews	电影评论	Similar to the Reflection of video
		Feedback	反馈	*Never Produced
		Narratives	叙事	“is the way to write stories” (04/03/2013).
	Creative Writing 创作 The scale of creative writing is more narrow. Must be creative and different from narrative.	Literary works		*Never Produced
		Short Stories	(短篇小说 Duǎnpiān xiǎoshuō)	Wrote some short stories in my Chinese class (04/03/2013).
	Reflection 观后感/读后感	Reflection of a Reading	读后感. dú hòu gǎn	Responding to a reading, article or story
		Reflection of an Video	观后感 guān hòu gǎn	Responding to a video.
	Summary	Summary	总结 zǒng jié	“Of an article, newspaper story, or news report” (04/03/2013).
	Exams or Test	Short Answer	(简答题 Jiǎn dǎ tí)	“On an Exam or test” (03/04/2013).
		Long Answer	(论述题 Lùn shù tí)	“On an Exam or test” (03/04/2013).
Note: About the meaning of composition and creative writing, it is really close in China. Usually Chinese student just use composition instead of creative writing.				
<b>#2 Marcia  Russian</b>	Essay	Opinion or Position Essay	Эссе	“Expresses your thinking, your point of view” (05/0/2013).
	Summary	Article	Изложение	“A summary of an

		Summary		article, for example, you should write the meaning of the article in a brief format” (05/0/2013).
	Term Paper		Реферат	“The same as in Canada, usually 20-26 pages” (05/0/2013).
	6-Page Paper		Доклад	“6 page paper” (05/0/2013).
	Presentations		презентация	
<b>#3 Jan Arabic</b>	Exams	Short answer Questions		“We studied this curriculum and then we have to answer questions. We answer questions in short answer (maximum one page) depending in the question whether it is only one question or it has sub questions (06/03/2013).
	Math	Solving Equations		“in mathematics we don’t like, we don’t have to use like writing like language, all of this like symbols” (06/03/2013).
	Writing on a topic High School			“I meant during high school we were given on topic related to our life and we asked for different things such as opinion, description, process, problems and solution” (06/03/2013).
	Writing on a topic University			“In university, the instructor gave us a topic related to course or we were asked to pick up a topic related to area we study and research and write” (06/03/2013).
<b>#4 Cindy</b>				
<b>#5 Peter</b>	Exams	College Entrance Exam	高考 gāo kǎo	“Write 8000 character answers to specific questions” (07/03/2013).
	Analysis	engineering analysis	工程分析 gōng chéng	“Analysis of like ah, because of my major is

			fēn xī	electrical engineering so we need to analysis like a case, a specific case” (07/03/2013).
	Notes	Reading Notes		
		Lecture Notes		
	Math Problems			
<b>#6 Alice  Persian</b>	Math	Short Answer on test or Exam	<b>Hall-e Masaleh</b>	[Solving problems (like in Math) or/ Answering explanatory questions]
	Composition	Impression on a topic	<b>Ensha</b> انشاء	“In this type of writing you can use whatever you want to tell your story or point. There is just a topic and you just need to write your opinion about this topic... It means a kind of writing literature it was a part of our Persian classes, Persian language classes. That means we have to write, I mean they gave us the topic and we have to write about our opinion every week about that topic. But it... wasn't academic reading, writing. (14/03/2013).
	Summary	Summary of articles	<b>Kholaseh-nevisi</b> خلاصه نویسی	“Often you summarize a story and it is similar to English summery but not exactly the same. We did not follow the rigid rules as English version.” (14/03/2013).
	Mathematical Practice	Mathmatics or Physics problems	<b>Tamrin kardan</b> تمرین کردن	“We should find a solution for a math or physics... question. So it was full of formula and numbers and a little writing just a few words

				to explain the steps and the important point was to solve the question there was not any mark for writing” (14/03/2013).
	Final Project	Course Final Paper or Project		“In university after each course and at the end of my bachelor I did this. [We] chose a topic related to the course and applied what I learned during the course on it... but again there is not any mark for your writhing style in this level. If the prof can understand your work, it is good and the important part was the statistical part and the prof wanted to know whether you understand these specific statistical methods or not” (14/03/2013).
	Report	Statistical Analysis Report		“...reporting our data and interpreting how we found from these data” (14/03/2013).
	Composition	Poems		Not in School
		Short Stories		
		Fiction		
<p>Note: We were not engaged in writing that much, since writing was based on answering some explanatory questions.          Dar Emtahanat ma bishtar soalhayi dashtim ke bayad hal mikardim dar natijeh ba neveshtan kheili dargir nabudim.          در امتحانات ما بیشتر سوالهایی داشتیم که باید حل میکردیم در نتیجه با نوشتن خیلی درگیر نبودیم.</p>				

### Appendix L: Sample Transcription from Alice 14/03/2013

**DM:** You said that in your first language, in Persian, you studied statistics at university. What types of academic writing did you do in university in your statistics and in your other courses?

**A (3:13):** The system in my country and here is a little different. And in my major there is no a lot of essays or writing. We just have some exams or projects, maybe the writing for or projects, reporting our data and interpreting how we found from these data. And also at the end I wrote my project.. Final project, yah. I think it is called final project.

**DM:** Or here a thesis?

**A (3:57):** Yah, It is not really a thesis because it is for undergrad.

**DM:** Here, that may still be called a thesis.

**A:** They call it final project and I work on a problem of classification, but for that matter, I translate a chapter of a book about the classification to my language. So, that was what I had done. I have done.

**DM:** So did you do any courses in university that weren't mathematics?

**A (4:48):** I passed something but in industrial engineering, because I worked at the time in industrial engineering and my major was statistics. So, I pick kinda a minor in industrial engineering so there is similar to my major there is just numbers. And our university system, in my country, is really different. There is not a lot of writing in universities in undergrads.

**DM:** Why do you think that is?

**A (5:35):** Because it is. Here professor ask us to write something, reflection papers, reflection project, essay for mid-term even in second year. But in my country no, it is not that way. It is rely.. Our knowledge it is relay, rely on the marks in exams.

**DM:** But in your exams, the answers are still written?

**A (6:08):** Yah, but short, mean short phrases. I mean most of them are solvable, I mean you have to solve a formula. There is the problem and you have to solve it. But solve... I can't... [writing some notes in Persian] OK?

**DM:** OK

## Appendix M: Advanced EAP Course Outline

### SCHOOL OF [Language] Advanced English [for Academic Purposes] Section [xx]

**Term:** Winter 2013  
**Day:** [deleted days]  
**Time:** [deleted time]  
**Classroom:** [deleted class location]  
**Instructor:** [Thelma]  
**Office:** [deleted office number]  
**Telephone:** [deleted telephone number]  
**E-mail:** [deleted email address]  
**Office hours:** [deleted schedule] (or by appointment)

### COURSE INFORMATION

#### [EAP] CREDIT COURSES: PURPOSE AND PROGRESSION

All [EAP] credit courses are designed to help you develop the **language skills** required for successful academic study and the **learning strategies** that can help you achieve this success. These courses also encourage critical thinking and problem solving since analysis of your own and other people's ideas is important in every academic program.

Whether you are at the Introductory, Intermediate, or Advanced level, the main objectives are similar: course content and assignments are designed to:

- introduce, practise, and reinforce the listening, speaking, reading, and writing strategies essential for successful academic study
- develop a range of academic vocabulary and rhetorical structures appropriate to a North American university context

The differences between levels are:

- length and complexity of reading and listening materials
- length and complexity of spoken and written activities and assignments
- expectations regarding course-level standards required to meet task specifications
- amount of support students receive in completing activities and assignments

The most common requirements for university study that we focus on directly or indirectly at all levels are:

- thinking analytically to help understand and present different points of view and issues related to a topic
- evaluating ideas, contexts and perspectives to help establish levels of importance in information, and potential conclusions or solutions
- listening to lectures, discussions and instructions to help comprehend, record, respond to, and incorporate relevant information into your work

- reading a variety of texts with understanding to help identify relevant material and use this information accurately and appropriately when explaining/expressing ideas, without plagiarizing
- communicating what you know and think in appropriate written and spoken forms so that others can understand your ideas
- setting priorities and organizing your time effectively to complete all assignments on time and to the best of your ability
- understanding the cultural values and expectations that shape the academic behaviours, goals and accomplishments considered important by the university community
- meeting the expectations and performance standards of university level work

### **LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT:**

[Advanced EAP] is a full credit course, running for 12 weeks (one term), 6 hours per week. Students who pass this course with a **[required grade] or better** will have fulfilled the language requirement for [the University].

## **[Advanced EAP]** **OVERVIEW AND ORGANIZATION**

### **INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH:**

As your instructor, I believe your success is a shared responsibility. This means your success in [Advanced EAP] depends on your effort and willingness to commit to the demands and course work which I have established for this level. My responsibility is to develop and support your English language needs in an academic context with materials and assignments that are interesting, relevant and challenging. I am committed to helping you succeed, but you must understand that learning is a 2-way street and your successful outcome depends on your hard work and perseverance. **This is a University Credit course and requires a significant commitment of time and dedication outside the regularly scheduled class.**

English language skills will be practiced through the use of thematic units which integrate all language skills and a combination of individual, pair and group work. Thematic units use a theme-based approach where topics vary throughout the term. As there are differences across disciplines, a theme-based approach is a flexible and realistic approach to meeting the needs of [EAP] students in a classroom that is made up of students from a variety of disciplines. Through a variety of topic choices, language skills and strategies are practiced by using authentic materials and completing academic tasks and assignments similar to those students will be expected to do in their disciplines.

### **COURSE GOALS:**

This course is designed to provide you with an opportunity to become familiar with a variety of assignments that you are likely to encounter in first and second year university courses. The course content is organized around two main themes. These themes enable you to practice academic skills and strategies such as paraphrasing, summarizing, referencing, reading for main points, notetaking, listening for key ideas, researching for

library material, as well as defining, evaluating and synthesizing relevant information. You will also have an opportunity to practice a variety of oral language activities related to university learning, in groups and through informal information exchange activities. Additionally, you will practice several forms of writing, which will be useful as you enter into your own fields of study. Writing practice will focus particularly on communicating understanding, purpose, language forms, structures and academic vocabulary. During the term, you will be expected to work independently, in pairs and in groups depending on the nature of the task. You are encouraged and welcome to speak to me at any time if you have concerns about the course objectives, my approach, and how they relate to your own personal learning goals.

### **REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:**

Course readings will be accessible online (online academic articles, online journal articles, e-books) & instructions will be given in class or sent to you on [the Learning Management System] on how to access/print these readings.

Other handouts and worksheets will be provided in class while other course material may be posted on [the Learning Management System]. It is your responsibility to ensure you have access to [the Learning Management System] and that you check the course link **daily** for updates, materials and homework help.

Recommended materials are the following:

- a) an English-English dictionary\*\*
- b) a thesaurus\*\*
- c) a grammar reference text\*\* (for home use)
- d) a 3-ring binder for course notes and handouts

\*\*Grammar texts and dictionaries can be found/used in the [schools' resource room] or found in most bookstores.

\*\*Electronic dictionaries/translators/cellphones/ipads/blackberries/laptops/etc. will **NOT BE PERMITTED** for in-class assignments.

### **EVALUATION:**

The evaluation looks at your performance on writing, reading, listening and speaking tasks throughout the term as well as attendance and participation. Evaluation depends on continuous effort, cumulative learning and consistent work habits (NOT isolated and inconsistent effort). Attendance and participation are key to success. At the end of term, I expect you to use English at a proficiency level needed to be successful in English university studies. The [Faculty] stipulates that "Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean."

Your final course grade is NOT available on [the Learning Management System] or from the course instructor. Your final course grade will be available on [University website] once grades have been approved by the faculty Dean.

**EXAMS:**

There are no formal exams during the exam period. All in-class assignments done throughout the term contribute toward the final course grade.

**ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTS:**

**Instructors reserve the right to amend this weighting to fit changing needs. Primary assignments may be graded by more than one instructor.**

Thematic Unit 1 (in-class assignments)	20%
Thematic Unit 2 (in-class assignments)	25%
WebCT Writing Log	15%
Research Project	35%
<u>Effort &amp; Participation</u>	<u>5%</u>
TOTAL	100%

**Grade percentage equivalents:** This is the grading system we use:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	<u>C+ = 67-69</u>	D+ = 57-59	F = 49 or below
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	<u>C = 63-66</u>	D = 53-56	
A- = 80-84	<u>B- = 70-72</u>	C- = 60-62	D- = 50-52	

**ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION:**

You will be asked to do the following types of assignments:

1. Thematic Unit Assignments. There will be two (2) theme-based units (see 'instructional approach' and 'course goals on pp. 2-3). The evaluated assignments will consist of listening, reading, speaking and writing activities, completed in class. They may include summaries, quizzes, case analyses, reading comprehension, essays, listening/notetaking, etc. Evaluation and feedback will be ongoing.
2. [Deleted] Writing Log. Throughout the term, writing prompts (based on course readings) will be given to you and you will write/submit short answers on [the Learning Management System]. The goal is for you to "solidify" your understanding of course content & to improve your writing. You will receive feedback from me about writing weaknesses. You will then meet with an [Advanced EAP] TA to discuss your writing. At the end of term, you will write a reflection about this assignment. More details will be provided and discussed in class.
3. Research Project. This is a long-term project which involves exploring a specific topic in your program of study. This project aims to develop your research skills and to produce different types of research-based writing related to your topic. Details will be discussed in class.
4. Effort & Participation. The effort/participation grade is not based on attendance. It is based on your overall contribution to the class, on the degree of participation and effort in course activities (individual, pair and group), and your readiness for class (punctuality and completion of homework). It is also based on your use of [the Learning Management System], use of TAs and office hours. Please note that absences and late arrivals (start of class and after break) affect your ability to participate. This is not a free mark. It begins at zero and is based on merit.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

All assignments must be handed in on the date specified. *There will be a 2% deduction for all late assignments.* If you are unable to complete an assignment because of serious illness or other critical circumstances, you must contact your instructor **before** the due date (not after), explaining why the assignment will be late. At the instructor's discretion, you may receive approval to complete the assignment at another time. In the case of a **major assignment missed due to illness**, a **medical certificate** covering the **relevant dates** is required as soon as you return to class.

**REWRITE POLICY:**

You may rewrite assignments for personal improvement and instructor's feedback. Rewritten assignments will **not** change your original marks.

**KEEPING COPIES OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:**

It is **your responsibility** to provide a replacement copy if an original assignment goes astray. Make sure that you have your name, student #, instructor's name, and [Advanced EAP] (+section) on any work that you hand in at the [main office]

**GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS:**

**All assignments submitted for evaluation (not practice) must:**

- be typed in size 12 font, double-spaced, in Times New Roman style with 1 inch margins
- include a cover page with full name, student number, course number and section, instructor's name, date due, and assignment title
- be numbered throughout
- be stapled if longer than 2 pages in length

**RETURNING GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:**

Some in-class end of term assignments may not be returned to you, but you will have the opportunity to see the graded pieces during office hours.

**OTHER INFORMATION****ATTENDANCE:**

According to the Undergraduate Calendar, students admitted with an English as a Second Language Requirement (ESLR), must be registered in and attending the required [EAP] course(s) to be permitted to register in any other courses. Students who have not registered appropriately will be deregistered from all credit courses. This includes those students registered in credit courses without the required [EAP] course registration and those registered in more non-ESL credits than their results indicate. Registration will be denied to students who have not satisfied the ESLR if they do not show continuous registration, attendance or progress in their required ESLA courses (as determined by [the department]).

[Department Website]

Students are expected to complete the ESLR within one calendar year of their initial enrolment in credit courses. In exceptional circumstances, permission to continue in a second fall/winter term registration in [EAP] courses may be granted by the [University].

Attendance is compulsory in all [EAP] courses. If you do not attend class, you are not meeting the English language requirement that is a condition of your permission to register in courses at [the university].

**You will lose 2% of your final grade for each class that you miss without a valid reason** (for example, 2 classes missed = 4% lost). Special circumstances will be considered by the instructor and **must be supported** by appropriate documentation. **Note:** Missing 30 minutes or more of a class (late arrival/early departure/extended break/etc.) will be considered being absent from the class. Students who miss **8 or more** classes for any reason will be seriously disadvantaged and may not be successful in the course.

**If you join the class after the first day of classes** you are responsible for all material covered and all assignments required from the first day of class. Missed work must be submitted **within one week** of joining the class if you wish to receive a grade.

**If you are absent from a class** during the course for any reason you are still responsible for all material covered and for all assignments.

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

**Religious & Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the [Equity] website [deleted website]

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The [Academic Accommodations Center] provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact [Academic Accommodations Center] at [xxx-xxx-xxxx] or [deleted email address] for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the [Academic Accommodations Center], contact your [Academic Accommodations Center] coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from [Academic Accommodations Center], meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [Academic Accommodations Center] website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*):

[deleted website]

You can visit the [Equity] website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at [deleted website]

**COMMUNICATION BY EMAIL :**

The university has a policy to use **ONLY** the [university] email account when communicating with students. Instructors cannot respond to emails from other accounts. Check your [email] account daily for important messages from [the university], including the [EAP] bulletin that sets out the rules for the English Second Language Requirement.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

“[University] is a community of scholars dedicated to teaching, learning and research. Sound scholarship rests on a commitment to a code of academic integrity that stresses principles of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility. The University demands integrity of scholarship from all of its members including students. The quality and integrity of academic work is paramount in achieving student success.

The University states unequivocally that it demands academic integrity from all its members. Academic dishonesty, in whatever form, is ultimately destructive to the values of the University. Furthermore, it is unfair and discouraging to those students who pursue their studies honestly. The integrity of university academic life and the degrees conferred by the University is dependent upon the honesty and soundness of scholarship. Conduct by any person that adversely affects this process is a serious matter. Students who violate the principles of academic integrity through dishonest practices undermine the value of the university degree. Dishonesty in scholarly activity cannot be tolerated. Any student who violates the standards of academic integrity will be subject to appropriate sanctions.”

[University’s Undergraduate Calendar, Academic Regulations]

[deleted website]

**PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:**

One form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. Plagiarism is an instructional offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. Plagiarism is defined in the University undergraduate calendar as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own" [deleted link]. Suspected plagiarism cases will be reported to the [EAP] coordinator / [Director] and may be referred to the [office of the Dean].

**Please read the information on our plagiarism/cheating policy & consequences on the [school’s]web site** [deleted website]

**EXTRA HELP:**

Extra help is available from a number of University resources [deleted]. If you need help with a particular assignment, please consult your instructor before getting assistance from other sources. Remember: having another person substantially edit or rewrite the work you submit for grading is a form of cheating, and is unacceptable.

**CELLPHONES:**

Please **TURN OFF** cellphones at the beginning of every class. Leave your cellphone/laptop and other electronic equipment (blackberries, iphones, MP3 players, ipads, etc.) in your bag. Please **DO NOT** check cellphone/text messages during class or you will be asked to leave your cellphone on the teacher’s desk.

**CLASS CONDUCT:**

To ensure an optimum learning environment, students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times. Disrupting a class is considered to be an Instructional Offence. If a student exhibits disruptive behaviour in class and chooses not to refrain from such behaviour at the request of the instructor, the student will be asked to leave the class. The student's behaviour will be reported to Campus Security and the Director of [the school].

**IMPORTANT [EAP] INFORMATION****[EAP] WEB SITE :**

Please go to the [EAP] web site [deleted website address] for important information that directly affects your continuing studies at [the university]. You can also consult the University undergraduate calendar regulations for more information at [deleted website link]

Students are responsible for knowing and following the University and [EAP] regulations, and for registering according to their ESLR.

**PLANNED BREAK IN STUDY:**

Students not planning to study for one or more terms must complete and submit a Break in Study form available on the [school's] website: [deleted website]

If a student is away from studies for three or more terms, the student may be required to take a [school] approved English language proficiency test again, and register according to the new results.

**Important:** If you are planning to withdraw from an [EAP] course, you must first drop all other courses on [the school's website] before going to the Registrar's Office [deleted office location] to drop your [EAP] course. You can only remain registered in other university courses if you are officially registered in and **attending** your [EAP] course.

**UNIVERSITY & OTHER DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- [deleted date] : Last day for registration and course changes
- [deleted date] : Winter Break, no classes
- [deleted date] : Statutory Holiday, University closed
- [deleted date] : Last day of classes
- [deleted date] : Examinations (including Saturdays)

**EXITING THROUGH A LANGUAGE TEST SCORE OR JUMPING A LEVEL:**

At any time, you may **satisfy the ESLR** by submitting the appropriate score from one of the approved language tests [deleted]. For more information, consult the University undergraduate calendar regulations at [deleted website link]

In order to jump a level (e.g. [Introductory to Advanced]), you must submit a valid [school] approved English Language test score that places you into a higher level. The results must be officially received by [the school] no later than two weeks prior to the start of classes for the term.

**COURSE SCHEDULE \*\***  
**[EAP] – Winter Term 2013**  
**[deleted date]**

<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>
[deleted date]: FIRST CLASS – short diagnostic (listening, notetaking, summary writing); discuss course outline	[deleted date]: Start “Research Project”; Start Thematic Unit 1
[deleted date]:	[deleted date]:
[deleted date]: Thematic Unit 1 In-Class Evaluation	[deleted date]: Thematic Unit 1 In-Class Evaluation
[deleted date]: WINTER BREAK – no classes	[deleted date]: WINTER BREAK – no classes
[deleted date]: Start Thematic Unit 2	[deleted date]:
[deleted date]:	[deleted date]:
[deleted date]:	[deleted date]:
[deleted date]:	[deleted date]:
[deleted date]: Thematic Unit 2 In-Class Assignments	[deleted date]: Thematic Unit 2 In-Class Assignments
[deleted date]:	[deleted date]:
[deleted date]: (25 <sup>th</sup> “extra” class)	

\*\* This is a tentative schedule. The instructor reserves the right to reassign due dates if necessary

**Please allow one week for evaluated assignments to be returned to you.**