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Second Language Writing From Sources: An Ethnographic Study of an Argument Essay Task

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ABSTRACT

Writing from sources is a common academic task for L2 students in higher education. It is a task that requires the orchestration of numerous skills such as reading source texts, incorporating information from the source texts within the written text, and reading the rhetorical context to interpret the task. Being such a complex activity, it has received relatively little attention. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the complexity of a writing-from-sources task within an L2 environment.

Using an ethnographic design, I examined the writing of four Chinese (L1) students with varying levels of English (L2) proficiency completing an argumentative writing-from-sources essay task for a required writing class. The task spanned two and a half weeks and required the participants to cite five sources within a 1500-word essay. Over the course of writing, I interviewed each participant several times about their writing process, observed the participants during class, and collected all notes, drafts, and reading materials.

The results revealed the complexity of the writing-from-sources task. Constructing a suitable cognitive representation of the task was one key to success and there were a number of personal and contextual factors that influenced the creation of the participants’ task representations, factors such as individual background experiences, the writing process, and information from and interactions with the teacher and other people within the writing context. These factors varied in the strength of their influence from the beginning to the end of the essay assignment, and I present a tentative theory of task representation to explain the points at which these influencing factors had the greatest impact within the writing process.

Low L2 proficiency constrained the writing performance of some of the participants. This resulted in one participant avoiding elements of the writing task requirements in order to earn passing marks and two other participants producing plagiarized texts and receiving failing marks on the assignment. The two participants who plagiarized showed no ill intentions and, consequently, felt receiving zero marks for their writing efforts was unjust.
DEDICATION

They say that behind every good man is a magnificent woman. If this is true, then I must be a good man because my wife is absolutely outstanding. To my wife, Rebecca, who fills my life with joy.
Although a PhD thesis has been dubbed a “solitary” work, this is simply not true. Many people and organizations have contributed to this effort and the few acknowledgements that I can write here are certainly inadequate.

First and foremost, I must thank my supervisor, Rod Ellis, who shared his knowledge and expertise with me. At the outset, Rod told me that the project I was interested in was outside his specific field of expertise (although I did not then, and do not now believe any subject within even the far reaches of second language learning to be outside Rod’s expertise), but to Rod’s credit, he encouraged me to go forward with my project always offering sound advice and input, yet never manipulating my project to suit his preferences or interests. Rod always gave frank and particularly prompt feedback to drafts and other work I submitted to him. And regardless of whether his feedback meant I was off track and needed to make substantial revisions or I could move forward in my project, I always felt recharged and motivated by the depth and clarity of his insights. Thank you Rod. It has been a wonderful pleasure to work with you.

The teachers and students at AIS St. Helens, where I collected my data, also deserve a resounding “thank you.” The teachers of the Study Writing class were very willing to participate in my research, which meant they had to endure my constant classroom observations, asking about research participants, collecting drafts and other information, and reviewing drafts of my work, and they did all of this for no reward or compensation.

And the AIS students who were willing participants in my research also deserve my deepest gratitude. They allowed me to watch them in class, tolerated my constant follow-up about interviews and other data I needed, participated in numerous hours of interviews, and willingly shared information about their experiences, which were not always joyful or successful and occasionally deeply personal and emotional. This research is a tribute to these students and their quest to obtain second language academic literacy.

Another group of people who significantly contributed to this research project was all those who participated in the departmental graduate student research seminars. On numerous occasions, the graduate students reviewed my work in progress and gave me insightful perspectives on my data that indelibly shaped my project. And they were very accommodating to my persistent pleas to discuss my project. Rob Batstone can probably never know what a magnificent job he does with organizing and running these graduate student research seminars. He was consistent with organizing the seminars, allowed students to set the agenda so that it met their needs, and tactfully shared his expert and insightful perspectives on student presentations in a way that did not diminish any of the students’ viewpoints and allowed everyone to feel comfortable sharing ideas. This created an open and immensely helpful atmosphere.

I also need to thank the New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission who provided me with a Bright Futures Scholarship. This amazing and incredibly generous scholarship allowed me to focus on my study and research with very little worrying about procuring student fees and providing for my family while I studied. This made my studies relatively stress-free, which permitted me, I firmly believe, to learn far more than I would have otherwise. This scholarship, in every way, made my work possible.

Finally, these acknowledgements would be incomplete without recognizing the incomparable support I received from my family. To Nana and Granddad, thanks for filling in the emotional, social, and financial gaps while I worked long hours. But most of all, thanks for being a central part of Emily and Christopher’s lives. The relationships you built with them is worth infinitely more to me than the contents of the following pages.
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Qualitative research basically tells a story. And because this is a report of a qualitative research project, I will introduce it by telling a story, my story, of how I became interested in this research project. Telling my story will not only introduce the topic of the research, but it will also provide the reader with some insight into my background, which may help the reader better understand the conclusions I came to and better judge the validity of those conclusions.

My teaching and research have always been closely intertwined. When teaching, I frequently encounter situations that cause me to ask questions. Some of these questions then become the focus of my research in order to find answers. The answers I uncover through research then inevitably affect my teaching as I incorporate this new knowledge into my pedagogy. And so it was with this research project. It was born out of experiences I had while teaching that raised questions worthy of deeper investigation.

But before I explain the specific experiences that led to this research project, I need to explain a bit of my professional background. My research background began when I was working on a master’s degree in TESOL at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. While discussing with my thesis supervisor the range of possible research topics in applied linguistics, he suggested a topic focusing on the transfer of L1 writing process to L2 writing. The topic fascinated me and thus began my interest in L2 writing. I subsequently applied to teach in the associated intensive English program (IEP) at the university and was assigned to a writing class, which became my laboratory for informally testing my emerging ideas on my research topic.

After completing my MA TESOL, I was hired to work full-time at the IEP and became the coordinator for the writing classes. While teaching, I became disillusioned with the curriculum’s obsession with timed writing. Many students wanted to pass the writing portion of the TOEFL test, which then consisted of writing a 30-minute essay based on
personal experience and opinion, and the teachers were very obliging of this demand by almost exclusively assigning TOEFL-style writing. This raised questions in my mind about the relevance of such instruction to the students’ future academic goals and the washback effect of the TOEFL (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996). After researching the range of writing skills required of new university students, I helped change the curriculum in the upper intermediate and advanced levels of English proficiency to include, among other things, writing assignments that incorporated information from source texts.

After implementing the new curriculum, the teachers and I began to encounter some issues with which we did not have to previously deal. One of those issues was an increased incidence of plagiarism, possibly a predictable outcome given the shift in focus towards using sources in the students’ writing. In reaction, I consulted with the teachers and university guidelines to establish a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Any amount of plagiarism, whether two sentences or two paragraphs, resulted in a failing grade for the assignment, or failing grade for the final exam portfolio. I helped put this policy in place with little investigation into the causes of the plagiarism but assumed, as most people might, that plagiarism was generally the result of academic dishonesty. I left the IEP feeling confident about that plagiarism policy. However, having completed this research project, which includes several investigations into the causes of plagiarism, I cringe at the thought of the plagiarism policy I helped create.

After finishing at the IEP, I found myself in New Zealand teaching writing at AIS St. Helens, a small private tertiary college with approximately 80% international students. When I first started teaching at AIS, the writing course, Study Writing, was a supplementary elective course and not required for a degree. However, because many of the international students struggled with meeting an acceptable writing standard, Study Writing was made a required course for all new students. This shift in purpose for the Study Writing course necessitated a change in the curriculum and I was designated as the person to reevaluate the curriculum and
make the needed changes. This led me to conduct a brief survey of written assignments given by lecturers at AIS, which showed that most assignments involved writing from readings. This led to the reorientation of the Study Writing curriculum towards writing-from-sources instruction, a familiar direction given the writing curriculum at the IEP I had just left.

At this point, having restructured the curriculums of two writing programs to include writing-from-sources instruction, I understood the importance of building writing-from-sources skills in my students. However, I wanted to know more about the difficulties students encountered while engaged in writing-from-sources tasks so that I could better help my students improve their writing skills and be successful in their regular academic courses. Thus emerged the topic for this research project: L2 writing from sources.

From a review of the literature, I was aware of some of the general obstacles L2 students face when engaged in a writing-from-sources task; however, I was very much interested in the student population that I was teaching. This, along with my preference to work closely with individuals, led me to an ethnographic research design, which allowed me to focus on the contextualized experiences of the four students who were participants in this research. The resulting research project, reported here in this thesis, was guided by this general research question:

1) What is the nature of individual L2 students’ experiences when engaged in a writing-from-sources task within an intensive academic writing course?

After I had collected the data and began a closer examination of it, two other questions emerged regarding how the participants constructed mental representations of the writing task and the causes of plagiarism in some of the participants’ essays. Specifically, those two questions were:

2) What factors influenced the participants’ representations of the assignment task throughout the process of writing?
3) What factors contributed to a participant producing a final written product that the teacher or the institution considered plagiarized?

This study, therefore, was a close examination of four students’ experiences while working on a writing-from-sources argumentative essay assignment. It examined these students’ reading and writing processes in relationship to the students’ backgrounds and contexts. And the study resulted in my reexamining the way I approach pedagogical issues related to writing from readings—specifically designing writing-from-readings tasks for the Study Writing class at AIS and addressing individual cases of student plagiarism.

The following chapters provide the detailed information on this study. In the second chapter, I review some of the research related to writing from readings. Some of the research is presented in order to delineate the research space into which my study fits, and some of the research I discuss provides background information to the topics that arose in my study, specifically task representation and plagiarism. Chapter three explains my ethnographic research methodology, provides background information on the four research participants and the context of the study, and details the analysis methods I used on the data.

Chapters four, five, and six present the results of the study. Chapter four contains four case studies, one for each participant, that provide insight into the nature of each participant’s experience while engaged in a writing-from-sources task. The case studies set the stage for the presentation of results and discussion in chapters five and six. Chapter five illustrates how the participants constructed a mental representation of the writing task throughout the two-and-a-half weeks of writing and concludes with a tentative theory of the factors that facilitate and impinge upon the task representation throughout the construction process. Chapter six describes ten factors that led to plagiarism in two of the participants’ final drafts as well as other issues surrounding the plagiarism, such as the participants’ intentions and the effect of receiving zero marks for their essays.
Chapter seven, the final chapter, summarizes the results from chapters four, five, and six and discusses the implications on the local context where the study was conducted. It also provides potential implications for other contexts that are similar to the one in this study.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 – Introduction

Academic writing is not a skill that is used or developed in isolation from other language skills. Reading plays a significant role within writing tasks. Students use reading for many writing functions such as creating an understanding of the writing task, finding a purpose for writing, developing ideas and content, examining good models of writing, searching for supporting evidence, and rereading and evaluating their own writing in order to revise. Because of the close connection between reading and writing skills and their use in academic writing tasks, this chapter will investigate the use of reading and writing within academic writing-from-sources tasks.

The chapter is guided by the general research question that was the focus of this study, which asked: “What is the nature of individual L2 students’ experiences when engaged in a writing-from-sources task within an intensive academic writing course?” While writing from sources can take numerous forms such as reacting to a reading, summarizing a single source text, and producing an argumentative synthesis of multiple sources, a writing-from-sources task is operationalized within this research study as a writing task for which the participants must read source texts and then cite those texts within the body of an academic argumentative essay.

In addition to operationalizing writing-from-sources tasks, I need to clarify from the outset a few other points of terminology that occur frequently, specifically strategy, process, and skill. In order to align my terminology with current trends, I have principally drawn my definitions from Macaro’s recent clarification of these terms (Macaro, 2006). A strategy is a conscious or semi-conscious behavior that directed towards achieving a particular goal, is transferable to other tasks, and is at the lowest level of articulation—in other words, a strategy.
cannot be divided into subordinate strategies. A process “consists of clusters of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in interaction with one another” (p. 330) in order to bring about changes. These strategies occur in either state-like processes (e.g. top-down and bottom-up processes in reading) or stage-like processes (e.g. planning, formulation, and revising in writing). And a skill is “the ability to carry out a language task with relative expertise to a relatively successful degree” (p. 331) and results in a measurable product (e.g. reading comprehension, written summary, spoken language). A skill is often made up of a sequence or cluster of processes and strategies. For example, summarizing a text is a skill that is comprised of a series of processes such as breaking down a text into its component propositions, selecting the most important propositions, and reassembling them. And the processes of selecting the most important propositions consists of strategies such as using headings and subheadings to determine the hierarchy of propositional importance and assigning higher importance to repeated ideas. These three terms form a sort of hierarchy with strategies being the most specific or foundational, skills being the most general or inclusive, and processes falling between the two.

So far, the field of L2 writing has produced very little research that synthesizes the skills, processes, and strategies L2 students draw upon when engaged in reading-to-write tasks. However, this chapter will highlight some of the key theoretical reading and writing models as well as pertinent literature in order to build a framework for the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data that I collected for this research project. The first section explores what we know about the relationship between L2 proficiency and L2 writing. The second section outlines a few reading and writing theories that have had a major impact on their respective fields and the section derives implications of each for L2 students. The third section discusses our current understanding of the cognitive relationship between reading and writing skills. The fourth section moves into specific literacy processes and tasks that combine reading and writing, such as summary writing, synthesis writing, and writing
objective essays from sources. The fifth section outlines three other issues related to L2 writing-from-sources that are a part of writing in an academic setting: contrastive rhetoric, task representation, and plagiarism. The final section summarizes the preceding discussions in light of the general research question guiding this project.

2.2 – L2 Writing and L2 Proficiency

Second language proficiency plays a central role within L2 writing because some degree of L2 proficiency is obligatory for producing an L2 text. And it is generally recognized that differences in language proficiency distinguish L1 writers from L2 writers (Grabe, 2001a). Because L2 proficiency is a key variable underlying much of the research reviewed in this chapter, it is important to discuss this issue first in order to lay some groundwork before examining some of the other issues concerning L2 writing-from-sources.

2.2.1 – Writing Expertise and L2 Proficiency

Two of the most difficult variables to disentangle within L2 writing are writing expertise and L2 proficiency, and some L2 writing process research has “implicitly confounded these two seemingly different factors” (Cumming, 1989, p. 86). In some of this research, what appeared to be improvements in the writing process due to more advanced L2 proficiency could have also been attributed to a higher degree of writing expertise, which can be defined as one’s ability to weigh the writing context with its multifaceted social constraints and bring the appropriate processes and strategies to bear on the writing task in order to produce a piece of writing that is well-suited to the audience and purpose of the writing context. In trying to understand the role of L2 proficiency in L2 writing, it is important to first consider the two theories that have influenced the research explicitly investigating the roles of L2 proficiency and writing expertise within L2 writing.
There are two general theories that have made an impact on our understanding of the transfer of writing expertise across linguistic boundaries: the linguistic interdependence hypothesis and the linguistic threshold hypothesis. In relation to writing, the interdependence hypothesis states that writing in an L2 uses the same core processes as writing in an L1. In other words, L2 writing is only distinguished by the language in which a text is produced but the language operations used to create the text are the same across languages (Cummins, 1979). Therefore, once a particular language operation has been acquired, whether in the L1 or L2, that same operation is available to all languages given a minimum level of linguistic proficiency. This theory suggests that L2 proficiency plays little to no role in the expertness of the L2 writing processes. Rather, the writing language operations one has developed determine the expertness of one’s L2 writing processes.

The second theory, the threshold hypothesis, has generally been applied to L2 reading; however, some researchers have analyzed L2 writing data that suggest the existence of a threshold and thus loosely applied the theory to writing (Kamimura, 1996; Roca de Larios, Marin, & Murphy, 2001; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2003). In relation to L2 writing, the theory states that a writer must reach a minimum level of L2 proficiency before writing performance in the L1 and L2 correlate. The difference between L2 reading and L2 writing that makes this theory more tentative when applied to writing is that a writer can freely switch between the L1 and L2 for most of the processes used while writing, whereas in reading this is not possible—intake must occur through the L2. When applied to writing, the threshold hypothesis suggests that L2 proficiency is a factor that can inhibit lower L2 proficiency writers from drawing upon their writing expertise and thus, prevent them from writing well in the L2.

One of the first, and by far the most complex, studies to attempt to disentangle writing expertise and L2 proficiency provided strong support for the linguistic interdependence position. Cumming (1989) studied the writing of 23 Francophone students distributed among
three levels of writing expertise (basic, intermediate, and expert) and two levels of ESL proficiency (intermediate and advanced). He found that “writing expertise and second-language proficiency are psychologically different” (p. 118). Writing expertise had a significant effect on the participants’ compositions and composing strategies with L2 proficiency only playing a facilitating role rather than producing “qualitative changes in the thinking processes or decision-making behaviors used for composing” (p. 121). In other words, improvements in L2 writing noticed across intermediate and advanced L2 proficiency levels are most likely attributable to writing expertise rather than L2 proficiency.

A subsequent study examined writing expertise and L2 proficiency from a different perspective. Carson and Kuehn (1992) observed the role that attrition of L1 reading and writing abilities as students spent time in an L2 environment played in the development of L2 literacy skills. The participants were 48 native Chinese speakers studying in the U.S. in either basic writing courses for matriculated university students or pre-academic intensive English programs. The results suggested “that discourse competence in L1 writing does transfer to the L2, and that lack of aptitude in L1 writing will also handicap the writing in L2” (p. 177), a finding that supports the linguistic interdependence position. However, the data also suggested that about six months of formal education in the L2 were necessary before L1 writing skills were available in the L2, a result that suggests the operation of a linguistic threshold. In addition, the data also revealed an interesting pattern of attrition. There was an inverse relationship between length of time in the L2 environment and L1 writing scores, indicating that writing ability may be somewhat context dependant and when left unused, it may fall into a pattern of atrophy, which suggests that writing expertise is not entirely a general skill that transfers across linguistic boundaries. Rather, writing expertise may involve skills particular to a context and the language used within that context.

A more recent study by a large team of researchers conducted an extensive statistical study that investigated the roles of writing expertise and L2 proficiency in L2 writing among
eighth grade adolescents in the Netherlands (Schoonen et al., 2003). Two hundred eighty-one
eighth graders wrote three texts in L1 Dutch and three texts in L2 English. In addition to these
texts, the researchers conducted tests in both the L1 and L2 to measure each participants’
writing proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, orthographic knowledge, grammatical
knowledge, speed of lexical retrieval, and speed of sentence building. A seventh test
measured the participants’ metacognitive knowledge and was only conducted in the L1
because it was assumed that this knowledge is not language specific. Two results are pertinent
to the discussion here. First, the speed of linguistic processing was positively correlated with
writing proficiency in both the L1 and L2, with higher correlations for L2 writing; however,
the speed measures made no contribution to predicting either L1 or L2 writing proficiency.
Additionally, lexical retrieval had a much higher correlation with L2 writing than L1. This
suggested that “L2 writing is more dependent on L2 linguistic knowledge and processing
speed than is L1 writing” (p. 193) and that a linguistic threshold for the speed of access to
linguistic information might be in operation. However, the researchers state that this threshold
may be fairly weak when applied to L2 writing as compared to L2 reading because in L2
writing, it is most probable that writers will compose texts that are within the performance
ability of their cognitive and linguistic skills, whereas in L2 reading, the linguistic complexity
of the text is fixed. A second result relevant to the discussion here was that L1 writing
proficiency and metacognitive knowledge were predictors of L2 writing proficiency. From
this result, it seems that writing expertise is transferable between languages.

The picture that emerges from these studies is that writing expertise and L2
proficiency have independent effects on L2 writing. Expertise appears to be transferable
between languages and can predict, to a large measure, L2 writing performance. However, L2
proficiency that is below a threshold level for a particular writing task may inhibit the full
operation of writing expertise within the L2. Increased L2 proficiency may have a minor
facilitative effect on the writing processes, especially if the writer has obtained a measure of
writing expertise in the L1, but it is not sufficient to transform an unskilled writer into a skilled L2 writer. However, the question still remains regarding the effect of L2 proficiency on the subprocesses involved in L2 writing.

### 2.2.2 – L2 Proficiency and the Subprocesses of Writing

By far, the area of L2 writing research that has produced the most information on the role of L2 proficiency in L2 writing is writing process research because L2 proficiency is almost always a variable within this research. Writing researchers generally divide the writing process into three broad categories: planning, formulating, and revising. Planning generates the overall concept for writing including the organization of text and the content to include in that organization. Formulating puts words to ideas and transcribes them. And revising reviews the transcribed ideas in order to correct errors in features such as language use, mechanics, and organization. Each of these areas is examined below.

#### 2.2.2.1 – Planning

Planning can be defined as the process that generates the content and organization for a text before the writer generates the specific language that manifests that content and organization. It is the first writing process that occurs when producing a text and is interleaved with the other writing processes throughout the course of composing a text (Hayes & Nash, 1996). And because planning is ideational and not a language function, it can occur in the L1 or L2 (Woodall, 2002).

One of the first and still most often cited studies looking at planning in L2 writing was conducted by Jones and Tetroe (1987). These researchers looked at the planning processes of six L1 Spanish ESL students over three months. The participants wrote six papers, four in English and two in Spanish, while producing think-aloud protocols. The results showed that the participants’ planning processes were the same in both languages, and that L2 proficiency
did not inhibit the transfer of the L1 planning processes to the L2. Lower L2 proficiency did “constrain the effectiveness of the process and reduce the quantity, though not quality, of planning” (p. 55), and it tended to cause participants to switch to the L1 to facilitate their planning when L2 vocabulary was not immediately accessible. Thus, Jones and Tetroe found that L2 proficiency was not a variable that affected planning because lower L2 proficiency could be overcome in planning by switching to the L1.

Friedlander (1990) also studied the planning process in L2 writing. Although his study did not look at L2 proficiency as a variable, it can provide some insights on the role of L2 proficiency in planning. This study investigated the effect of the language of planning on written products of 28 Chinese ESL writers with unknown individual L2 proficiency—no data was collected to measure the participants’ L2 proficiency. The writers were given two writing tasks, one concerning Chinese culture and one concerning American culture, and half the writers were told to plan the essay in the language that corresponded to the task and half were told to plan in the non-corresponding language. The result was that the “ESL writers were able to plan more effectively and write texts with better content when they used the language of the topic knowledge to plan their responses” (p. 118). Friedlander’s results suggest a relationship between schema, or knowledge, and the language in which it was acquired. If schema were simply stored topically, language should have no effect on the development of content in writing. Writers, then, should be able to retrieve knowledge regardless of the language used to access it. However, this study suggests that the Chinese participants who used a language different from the language of the topic knowledge produced lower quality content in their written products because they had more difficulty accessing the appropriate schemata for planning their writing. Extrapolating these findings to the effect of L2 proficiency, it is possible that higher L2 proficiency would allow for more efficient retrieval of information during planning, particularly if that information is stored in
the L2. Thus, L2 proficiency may have an effect on planning if the content knowledge is closely related to the L2.

It seems from these two studies that during the planning process, low L2 proficiency can be overcome by switching to the L1. However, switching to the L1 may cause problems with retrieving information, particularly if the information is most closely associated with the L2. Thus, increased L2 proficiency may have a facilitative effect on the planning process that results in better content generation depending on the particular writing topic.

2.2.2.2 – Formulating

Formulating is the process by which thoughts are put into words and transcribed into the developing text. It seems logical that of the three subprocesses in writing, formulating would be the process that most distinguishes L2 writing from L1 writing because it is the only process that cannot be performed through the L1. Because it is the most difficult and problematic process to investigate, researchers have chosen to investigate the other writing processes before moving to formulation. Therefore, research on the formulation process is comparatively recent.

In one of the first articles that investigated formulation within the L2 writing process, Zimmermann (2000) proposed a model of the L2 formulation process. The model was based on data collected from L1 German students who had completed 9 years of English study and were mainly 4th year English majors, presumably studying at a German university. The participants produced think-aloud protocols while completing a variety writing tasks in both L1 German and L2 English. From this data, Zimmerman created a model of the L2 formulation process. The model suggested that “there seem to be very few L2-specific subprocesses” (p. 88) revealing a large degree of similarity between L1 and L2 formulation processes. The subprocesses unique to L2 writing were tentative formulations in the L1, L2 problem solving, and simplification.
Regarding the role of L2 proficiency in the formulation process, Zimmermann mentions very little. In fact, his study seems to suggest that the model of the formulation process is almost universal. He stated, “It might be argued that this is not specifically a model of L2 writing, but to a large extent of text production including speaking” (p. 88). This blurring of the lines between L1 and L2 text production and the spoken and written mediums could be a result of the high L2 proficiency among Zimmermann’s participants. Although he does not report the participants’ L2 proficiencies, they were advanced students of English who exhibited characteristics of other advanced L2 writers. For example, Zimmermann noted that his participants did very little translation of tentative L1 formulations into the L2 but used the L1 to generate content and control the writing process. This behavior parallels the patterns noted in the literature on language switching (which is discussed under the section titled L1 Use in L2 Writing), in which higher L2 proficient writers did not translate from the L1 but used the L1 for higher order writing processes such as global planning and managing the writing process (L. Wang, 2003; W. Wang & Wen, 2002; Woodall, 2002). Thus, Zimmermann’s study suggests that for advanced L2 proficiency writers, L2 proficiency may have little effect on the process of formulation in L2 writing.

A second study on L2 formulation processes was conducted by Roca de Larios, Marin, and Murphy (2001). These researchers collected think-aloud protocols from 21 L1 Spanish students representing three levels of L2 proficiency and composing 60-minute argumentative essays in both Spanish and L2 English. The results showed a significant effect for language proficiency indicating that formulation is a more dominant process for lower L2 proficiency writers, and in higher L2 proficiency writers, formulation more equally shares the composing time with other writing processes. This effect, however, was not equally distributed across the three levels of L2 proficiency. Participants with mid- and high-level L2 proficiency showed similar formulation patterns and were clearly separated from the low-level L2 proficiency group, suggesting the presence of a threshold level of L2 proficiency. The researchers suggest
that increased L2 proficiency allows for more interaction among the many processes that occur within L2 writing.

However, there is one troubling aspect of this study (Roca de Larios et al., 2001) which the authors mention in passing as a limitation; however, it could potentially negate the effects found regarding L2 proficiency. The researchers did not account for the role of writing expertise within the data analysis and it appears that the participants’ L2 proficiency level also corresponded with their writing expertise. The low L2 proficiency participants were 16-to-17-year-old high school students; the mid L2 proficiency participants were 19-to-20-year-old university students; and the high L2 proficiency participants were 23-to-24-year-old recent university graduates. Although on a background questionnaire none of the participants reported ever receiving explicit writing training (Spain does not traditionally teach writing explicitly within the educational system), it seems that as educational level increased, the participants encountered more requirements to produce texts covering a wider range of subjects and genres. And greater experience generally produces a greater measure of writing expertise (Carter, 1990).

Further support for this potential flaw in research design comes from the data itself. For the analysis, the researchers divided the composing time into thirds so that they could compare the participants’ composing behaviors at the beginning, middle, and end of the writing time. The data showed that the distribution of formulation processes across the three segmentations of the writing process was similar across L1 and L2 writing regardless of L2 proficiency. However, this was not likely the predicted outcome because, as the researchers indicated, “the locus in which L2 writing may largely reveal its own specificity, in contrast with L1 writing, is that in which the writer tries to translate an idea…into a linear piece of written language” (p. 500). In other words, writers can use their L1 to support the other writing processes, but because the process of formulation is inextricably tied to L2 use, formulation is the process that should separate L1 writing from L2 writing. Furthermore, the
patterns of formulation across the three proficiency groups resemble the composing patterns characteristic of developing expertise in writing. For example, the low L2 proficiency participants spent the largest percentage of their time formulating during the first time segment and the smallest percentage during the last time segment. This contrasts with the high L2 proficiency participants who spent the largest percentage of time formulating during the middle time segment because they spent most of their time planning during the first time segment. And more time spent planning before writing is a salient characteristic separating more expert writers from inexperienced writers (Cumming, 1989; Grabe, 2001a; Hayes & Nash, 1996; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Krapels, 1990; Raimes, 1985, 1987; Sasaki, 2000; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986; Zamel, 1983). Thus, the effects attributed to L2 proficiency in the Roca de Larios et al. study may also be attributable, in part or in whole, to the participants’ varying levels of writing expertise.

Because of problems with the research designs, it is difficult to describe from the two formulation studies reviewed above the effect of L2 proficiency on the process of formulation during L2 writing. It appears that increased L2 proficiency may facilitate and streamline the formulation process, but the strength of this effect is difficult to measure.

2.2.2.3 – Revising

Revising is generally defined as any change in text after it has been written down. Second language proficiency may play a key role in the L2 revising process. Writers with lower L2 proficiency may make more grammatical and lexical errors when formulating text because formulation requires such a large degree of working memory (Kellogg, 1996) that it may be difficult for writers to draw upon their explicit knowledge in order to monitor their output when initially generating text. When revising, the demands on working memory may be less, which would allow for more explicit language processing resulting in lower L2 proficiency students noticing errors when revising.
Hall (1990) conducted one of the first studies on the L2 revising process. His study only used participants with advanced L2 proficiency making it difficult to know the effect of L2 proficiency on the revising processes across a range of proficiencies; however, his study did reveal something about the interaction of the L1 and L2 within the L2 revising process for advanced L2 proficiency students. Hall found that the four participants in his study used the same revising processes across their varying L1s and L2 English suggesting that writers have an underlying revising system that is utilized across languages (Cummins, 1979). However, there were several differences that distinguished the two processes, such as spending more time on L2 revisions and putting more effort into grappling with L2 semantics and syntax. Hall suggested that:

revising in a second language is not simply a mirror image of that process in the first language. The system appears to be more flexible…. Writers can adapt not only to the problems imposed by different texts but also to the problems imposed by different languages (p. 57).

This suggests that the processes for revising in the L1 and L2 for high L2 proficiency writers, though similar, are not identical, and the varying L1 and L2 contexts each present unique challenges that the writer must overcome.

Stevenson, Schoonen, and de Glopper (2006) conducted another study on the revising process. Their study too did not specifically examine L2 proficiency, but provided some interesting findings about revising in L2 writing and the transfer of L1 revising processes to the L2. The participants were 22 eighth-grade students, half of which were Dutch monolinguals and the other half Turkish- or Moroccan-Dutch bilinguals. The participants had all studied English for 3.5 years and were considered to have elementary-level L1 Dutch writing skills. The participants used computers to write four 30-minute argumentative essays, two in Dutch and two in English, while thinking aloud. One finding confirmed the results of other studies, specifically, that writers revise more when writing in the L2 than the L1. A
second finding was that an additional language did not provide bilingual writers an advantage over the monolingual writers. And an unexpected third finding was that relatively low L2 proficiency did not preclude the use of higher-level revision processes in the L2 writing tasks. In other words, revising in the L1 and L2 was essentially the same process for these participants.

The results of these two studies on the revision process suggest that L2 proficiency plays little role in the transfer of revision processes from the L1 to the L2. However, the fact that L2 writers spend more time on revising in the L2 seems to suggest that L2 proficiency does play some role, but it is unclear exactly what that role may be.

2.2.3 – L1 Use in L2 Writing

One phenomenon that researchers have observed in the composing processes of L2 writers is language switching. Language switching is defined as L1 use that occurs spontaneously and privately while working on an L2 writing task that does not explicitly require L1 use as part of the defined task. For example, a translation task would be an example of L1 use that is not language switching because the act of translation itself presupposes L1 use. Although language switching has been observed in writing process studies for most of the past twenty-five years (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Cumming, 1989; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Lay, 1982; Pennington & So, 1993; Raimes, 1985; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Whalen & Menard, 1995; Zimmermann, 2000), until recently, researchers had not explicitly investigated its relationship to L2 proficiency. Three recent studies on language switching have demonstrated that writing in an L2 is a different experience from writing in an L1—because L2 writers tend to function in two languages while writing—and L2 proficiency has an effect on the amount and nature of language switching that occurs with L2 writers while they are engaged in L2 writing.
One of the first studies to specifically examine the relationship between L2 proficiency and language switching was conducted by Woodall (2002). He looked at the differences in language switching between two L2 proficiency levels (intermediate and advanced) and two L1-L2 relationships (cognate, Spanish-English, and non-cognate, Japanese-English) across two writing tasks (narrative and argument essay) and found that lower L2 proficiency resulted in more frequent language switching while writing. However, there were other factors that affected language switching, specifically task difficulty, the L1/L2 relationship, and the linguistic environment. The more difficult argument essay task resulted in longer L1 use during the writing process. In other words, once a writer had switched to the L1 during the argument essay, the writer tended to use the L1 for longer periods of time. The L1/L2 relationship painted a more complex picture for language switching. For the non-cognate language group (Japanese-English), intermediate L2 proficiency writers switched more often and for longer periods of time than the advanced L2 proficiency writers. However, this result was reversed for the cognate language group (Spanish-English), in which the advanced L2 proficiency writers switched to their L1 more frequently and for longer periods than the intermediate L2 proficiency writers. The linguistic environment also played a role in language switching with foreign language learners performing much more of the language switching than the second language learners.

Immediately following Woodall’s (2002) study, Wang and Wen (2002) reported on a similar research project that confirmed some of the results from the Woodall study and conflicted with others. In this study, sixteen L1 Chinese students spanning four levels of L2 English proficiency wrote a narrative and an argument essay within a foreign language environment. Like the Woodall study, they found that increased L2 proficiency reduced the incidence of language switching. Furthermore, the four levels of L2 proficiency seemed to show a threshold of L2 proficiency below which L2 writers were more likely to engage in L1 use while composing. However, unlike Woodall, they found that language switching was
significantly lower for the presumably more difficult argument essay task, a pattern also noted in other research (Manchon, Roca de Larios, & Murphy, 2000). Additionally, the data showed that language switching was clustered around composing activities that were not involved in text production, such as controlling the writing process and generating and organizing ideas.

A third study on the effect of language proficiency on L1 use in L2 writing soon followed the previous two (L. Wang, 2003). This study again confirmed some findings of the previous two studies and presented some conflicting results. For this study, eight L1 Chinese students divided into two L2 proficiency levels wrote a letter and an argument essay in English within a second language environment. The major result of the study was that the higher L2 proficient participants engaged in more language switching than the lower L2 proficiency participants, a finding that contradicted the previous two studies. The researcher offered several explanations for the contradiction, such as variations in coding and operationalizing language switching. However, an additional explanation may be that the higher L2 proficient writers had less writing expertise than the lower L2 proficient writers, a variable implicated in increased language switching (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). Another result from the study was that higher L2 proficient writers engaged in language switching for different purposes than lower L2 proficient writers. The higher L2 proficient writers used language switching to attend to discourse while lower L2 proficient writers used language switching to verify word choices and backtranslate phrases. The study also found that the higher L2 proficient writers switched to the L1 more during the easier letter writing task, supporting Woodall’s (2002) study and creating a mixed bag of findings concerning the role of the writing task on language switching. Adding to this confusion, the lower L2 proficient writers engaged in an equal amount of language switching across both writing tasks.

These three studies paint a complex picture of the interaction of L2 proficiency and language switching in L2 writing, which is difficult to disentangle because L2 proficiency interacts with other factors such as task difficulty, L1/L2 relationship, the linguistic
environment, and even writing expertise. However, from these studies, it seems that there may be an L2 proficiency threshold below which writers use significantly more language switching. Below the threshold, language switching may be necessary in order to support critical functions such as text production, which consumes the largest percentage of composing time. Above the threshold, writers may have sufficient L2 proficiency to perform the text production processes in the L2 and still have adequate reserves of cognitive capacity to perform other essential, and higher order writing processes. Therefore, L2 proficiency plays a key role in helping L2 writers balance their attention between local linguistic concerns and the broader goals of the developing text.

2.2.4 – Summary

It seems from the studies reviewed in this section that several conclusions can be made about the role of L2 proficiency in L2 writing. First, L2 proficiency and writing expertise have different effects on L2 writing performance and both are necessary to become a better writer. Higher levels of L2 proficiency alone will not make one a better L2 writer just as extensive writing expertise cannot overcome a lack of L2 knowledge and proficiency. Second, the subprocesses of writing are generally not qualitatively affected by L2 proficiency except where the process is an obligatory L2 productive task, such as formulating L2 text. However, L2 proficiency can affect the amount of time spent on a particular writing process; most notably, low L2 proficiency increases the time required to formulate text. Third, low L2 proficiency can be overcome by switching to the L1. This facilitates the application of writing expertise and L1 writing processes to L2 writing by reducing the drain on cognitive resources caused by low L2 proficiency. And fourth, the relationship between the L1 and L2 may affect the need and purposes for switching languages with a more cognate relationship between the L1 and L2 resulting in different language switching behaviors than an L1 and L2 with a less cognate relationship.
One assumption that underlies the previous discussion and needs mentioning is that L2 writing simply cannot occur without a measure of basic L2 proficiency in place. Although researchers have tried to weigh the various effects of writing expertise and L2 proficiency on L2 writing, they have done this with writers who have had a basic knowledge of the L2. This is easily noted in the intermediate and advanced L2 proficiency of most of the research participants. Beginning L2 proficiency writers have rarely been research participants in these studies, and when they were, the writing tasks were suited to their L2 capabilities. Therefore, at the most beginning levels of L2 proficiency, it logically follows that L2 proficiency plays a significant role in the writing outcome simply because it determines the topics a writer can be successful with and the level of sophistication at which the writer can deal with a topic.

With this understanding of the roles writing expertise and L2 proficiency play in L2 writing, we can now look at some of the general theories of reading and writing and better understand how they apply in L2 contexts.

2.3 – Reading and Writing Theories

Most of the theoretical work done in reading or writing has occurred independent of the other domain resulting in a large body of theoretical knowledge for reading and a large body of theoretical knowledge for writing and very little theoretical knowledge concerning the overlap and combination of the two skills. Thus, before one can understand the intersection of reading and writing, the two must be first examined separately. This section, therefore, discusses various reading and writing theories, their descriptions of the reading and writing processes, and the implications for second language learners within academic settings, as a preface to the following section, which looks at the combination and interaction between reading and writing skills.
2.3.1 – Reading Theories

There are currently numerous theories of the L1 reading process that have informed the field of L2 reading and each theory focuses on a specialized aspect of the reading process (see Ruddell, Ruddell, & Singer, 1994). Cognitive-processing models focus on decoding, background knowledge, and word recognition within the reading process. The environmental models examine the role of sociocultural contexts, psychological contexts, and the transactions between reader and text to create meaning. While all of these models have contributed pieces to the reading puzzle, some models seem to contribute more core components, which form the basis for other models. Because not all models can be described here, I will outline two of these key models, which are pertinent to interpreting the data within the context of this research project, and highlight their core components.

2.3.1.1 – Schema Theory

Schema theory is a cognitive theory of the reading process. Cognitive theories emphasize psychological processes and deal with reading issues such as attention allocation and automatic processing (Samuels, 1994), interactions between orthographic, phonetic, and contextual input (Adams, 1990), the role of orthographic and linguistic knowledge sources (Rumelhart, 1977a), developmental processes in the hierarchical organization of reading knowledge (Singer, 1994), and bottom-up processes for meaning construction (Kintsch, 1988). Schema theory is a cognitive theory that describes the role of a reader’s background knowledge in comprehending text (Nassaji, 2002).

Schema are units of knowledge compiled into networks of conceptually related information, and these knowledge networks, or structures, are called schemata (Rumelheart, 1977a, 1977b). Schema theory considers reading an interactive process within which a reader’s previously acquired knowledge and culture become the basis for interpretation and comprehension of texts (Anderson, 1994; Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, & Goetz, 1977).
When engaged with a text, readers access the appropriate schemata and draw upon them to form the basis of their interpretations of the text.

One of the basic premises of schema theory is that the text does not in itself carry meaning. It is only a vehicle that directs readers in retrieving information from their own background experiences and relating the text to those experiences in order to construct knowledge. Reading, therefore, is an interactive process between the text, the reader, and the reader’s background knowledge and requires more than mere linguistic knowledge.

A key feature of schema theory is the organization of the schema and the information processes that occur as a result of that organization. Schema are hierarchically organized with the most specific on the bottom and the most general at the top. For example, schema related to reading processes would have letter recognition and decoding skills at the bottom of the hierarchy, and world knowledge and life experiences at the top. This organization creates two modes of information processing known as bottom-up and top-down processing (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Bottom-up processing is data driven and incoming word features are mapped against existing schema to find an entry point into the system. Top-down processing is conceptually driven and readers make general predictions about the text’s meaning, which identifies an insertion point within the schemata in which to put the concepts generated by the text.

Both bottom-up and top-down processes occur simultaneously during reading (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Rumelheart, 1980). In order to create a valid interpretation of the text, the results of the two processes must be in complete agreement. If a reader has generated a prediction about the text’s meaning (top-down processing) that is not confirmed by the incoming word data (bottom-up processing), he/she must revise the prediction or recheck the data from the text to resolve the mismatch. Also, if a writer creates a text supposing that the reader will have particular schemata when the reader actually lacks the schemata, the reader
will fail to comprehend the text. The appropriate schemata must be in place for the reader to comprehend.

There are also different types of background knowledge within schema theory, the most important of which here are *formal* and *content* schemata (Carrell, 1983, 1984b; Sharp, 2002). Formal schemata make up one’s knowledge of the rhetorical organization and different structures of texts. Content schemata are one’s understanding of a subject or content area. When engaged in reading, readers use their formal schemata of text structures such as stories, scientific reports, newspaper articles, business reports, academic essays, and cause-effect and problem-solution organization to aid in making general predictions about content.

2.3.1.2 – Transactional Theory

The transactional theory is an environmental model of the reading process. Environmental models emphasize the context in which reading takes place and include such factors as the social context of the classroom and the teacher’s influence on meaning creation (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994); the interaction between language, cognition, society and human development (Goodman, 1994); and the role of affect and cognition on the reading process (Mathewson, 1994). The transactional theory is a multidisciplinary reading model that attempts to describe the reader’s encounters with all varieties of texts (Rosenblatt, 1978).

The transactional theory of literacy views readers, writers, and texts as existing within a literary ecosystem where they are engaged in a dynamic interchange. Each participant is influenced and conditioned by the other participants as well as the environment in which the interchange occurs (Rosenblatt, 1994). This theory separates itself from traditional scientific views of the world where “self” and “object” were separate entities that interacted but could be measured independently in order to come to an objective view of the world. Indeed, this theory posits the interconnectedness of the universal environment where it is impossible to compartmentalize.
Within literary transactions, readers create meaning where meaning is the process that occurs during an encounter with a text. “The ‘meaning’ does not reside ready-made ‘in’ the text or ‘in’ the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text” (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 1063). Readers do not, however, create meaning ex nihilo, rather the meaning is either an extension or restructuring of the reader’s linguistic-experiential reservoir, which is the amalgamation of an individual’s linguistic knowledge and background experiences. Therefore, meaning creation is a unique process with unique results for each individual as well as each textual encounter. While this view of the role of background experiences is similar to schema theory, the difference is in the ways in which the information is accessed and the role of the environment on how that information is accessed.

Concerning the linguistic side of the linguistic-experiential reservoir, there are many levels of understanding within an individual’s linguistic knowledge. At one level, an individual shares public associations of lexemes—meaning senses of words and phrases that are common to many speakers of the same linguistic community. On another level, an individual has private associations of lexemes—interpretations and understandings that grow out of the individual’s unique pool of experiences and linguistic encounters. As readers transact with text, they create meaning “by applying, reorganizing, revising, or extending public and private elements selected from [their] personal linguistic-experiential reservoirs” (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 1061). As readers select and mix the public and private elements to apply to a text, they create a unique meaning for the text and, consequently, each textual encounter can become a unique experience. For example, on one encounter, a reader may create meaning using a majority of public associations while on another encounter with the same text, the reader might use more private associations and create a different meaning from the text.

A second factor that influences the meaning creation process is the reader’s stance. When transacting with a text, the reader’s stance lies within the efferent-aesthetic continuum.
On the efferent side, the reader focuses on information to be extracted and retained from the text. When reading with an efferent stance, a reader interprets the text using public associations of lexemes and mentally analyzes and organizes information so that it can be retained after the reading event. An efferent stance is common when reading expository texts and is thus the common stance for reading academic texts. On the aesthetic side, the reader focuses his/her attention on the reading experience itself, or what he/she is living through while reading. Readers use an aesthetic stance when they savor the feelings and emotions a text evokes through using private associations. Readers often use an efferent stance when reading fictional narratives and poetry. The adoption of a particular stance influences the meaning created through the literacy transaction—efferent stances create more scientific meanings and aesthetic stances create more artistic meanings. Although a text can be read with an efferent stance, aesthetic stance, or some combination of the two, readers are guided on which stance to adopt by their purpose for reading and textual cues.

The communication between readers and writers can be facilitated through similarities within their linguistic-experiential equipment. When readers and writers share many similarities, it is more likely that the reader will arrive at a meaning closer to the one intended by the writer. These linguistic-experiential commonalities can be derived from membership in the same social and cultural groups, similar education levels, and membership in the same discourse communities. When the reader and writer share more commonalities, they derive meaning from similar linguistic-experiential reservoirs and readers are more likely to see the nuances, implications, and tone of thought within the text.

2.3.2 – Implications for L2 Readers

Both schema theory and the transactional theory highlight elements within the reading process that are potentially problematic for L2 readers, particularly in academic settings.
Schema theory explains that for true comprehension, readers must understand the relationships between the elements in a text; it is not enough for the elements to be concrete or individually imaginable (Bransford & Johnson, 1972). When confronted with a difficult text fraught with academic vocabulary, some L2 readers resort to their dictionaries, relying solely on bottom-up processes. According to schema theory, this will not result in a valid interpretation of the text, or at least an interpretation the text’s author or the student’s teacher would agree with, because simply understanding the L1 definitions of each word in a text is not enough to understand the relationships between the elements and create a complete understanding. A complete understanding must come from a match between interpretations created through both bottom-up and top-down processes. Hence, schema theory predicts that linguistic proficiency plays a role along with encyclopedic knowledge in L2 academic reading comprehension.

And L2 reading research has found support for this prediction. Researchers have suggested that a threshold of general language proficiency exists below which L1 reading skills cannot transfer to the L2 reading process (Alderson, 1984; Clark, 1980; Cummins, 1979). This threshold, however, is not at a fixed level of language proficiency; rather, it is determined by the difficulty of the reading task to each individual and is thus different from text to text and from individual to individual. Several empirical studies have tested the threshold hypothesis and found support for it (Bossers, 1991; Carrell, 1991; Lee & Schallert, 1997). In order to be successful readers at tertiary institutions, L2 students need a minimum level of language proficiency, which is partially determined by the difficulty of the individual texts they are required to read (Pretorius, 2005).

There is also evidence of a vocabulary threshold within L2 academic texts below which L2 students overemphasize bottom-up processing and fail to use the normal balance of bottom-up and top-down processing schema theory requires for comprehension. In order to comprehend a text, 95% word recognition is required (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Laufer, 1992; I.
S. P. Nation, 2006). In academic texts, 80% of the tokens come from the General Service List (see West, 1953), which is the 2,000 most frequent words in English (Caroll, Davies, & Richman, 1971) and 10% of the tokens are accounted for by the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000). While these two lists account for 90% of all the tokens in academic texts, this is still short of the 95% word recognition required to surpass the proficiency threshold. Studying frequent words that are outside the GSL and AWL but specific to an academic domain, such as biology or economics, adds another 5% coverage to academic texts within that specific domain. This would bring the total vocabulary knowledge to 95% boosting the learner beyond the vocabulary threshold and allowing the learner to learn words from context (P. Nation, 1997). Therefore, if a student knows this core of word families when reading an academic text, schema theory suggests that he or she should be able to balance the use of bottom-up and top-down processes and create text interpretations that are congruent with both processes.

The transactional theory provides a slightly different explanation of the linguistic difficulties encountered by L2 readers as they transact with text and attempt to create meaning. The transactional model emphasizes the role of public and private associations of lexemes in arriving at a meaning that is close to the one the writer intended. If understanding public and private associations is critical to the creation of meaning from a text, then L2 students are clearly at a disadvantage because many of them draw upon their L1 background knowledge to make L2 semantic interpretations and lack the experience with the L2 required to have deep understandings of L2 public associations which would help them arrive at meanings typical of a native speaking student (Bengeleil & Paribakht, 2004; Donin, Graves, & Goyette, 2004; Nassaji, 2004). Second language learners generally learn new words by mapping them onto preexisting L1 conceptual frameworks (Ijaz, 1986; Ringbom, 1987) and this can create confusion between L1 and L2 meanings (Swan, 1997). When an L2 reader
does not have access to the appropriate word meaning, the reading transaction will result in an interpretation that is unlike the one intended by the text’s author.

Schema theory states that L2 readers, like all readers, will interpret texts based on their background experiences. However, L2 readers’ experiences may be culture specific and possibly quite different from those of local native speakers leading to different interpretations of the text (Steffensen, Joag-Dev, & Anderson, 1979). Thus, variations in background experiences are a particularly important issue in tertiary education where L2 students are expected to read expository texts, about subjects of which they may have little knowledge or experience, and then build their knowledge in a way that is consistent with the goals of the class. And this is problematic because deviations from the accepted text interpretations could possibly lead to failure.

The distinction between formal and content schemata within schema theory demonstrates that L2 readers face particular difficulties because of the mismatch between their L1 formal schemata and the rhetorical features of L2 texts. This mismatch is demonstrated in the field of contrastive rhetoric, which has shown that L2 writers are influenced by their L1 formal schemata when producing texts in the L2 (Conner, 1996; Kaplan, 1966). This mismatch is also seen in the different expectations placed on readers and writers across languages and cultures. Some languages use reader-based prose, such as English, while other languages use writer-based prose, such as Japanese (Hinds, 1987). In these situations, schema theory predicts and research confirms (Carrell, 1984a; Sharp, 2002) that the incongruencies between the rhetorical organization of the text and the reader’s formal schemata result in noncomprehension.

Similarly, the transactional model indicates that commonalities between reader and writer with linguistic-experiential equipment facilitate meaning creation in the reader that is close to the writer’s intentions. However, many L2 readers lack genre knowledge in the L2 and struggle to become full members of L2 discourse communities, which would allow them
to arrive at acceptable interpretations of the text (Canagarajah, 2001; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1998).

Both schema theory and the transactional theory help to predict some of the difficulties L2 students struggle with as they attempt to create meaning from academic texts. Within the realm of the academy, L2 students’ survival depends on their ability to make meaning from texts with complex vocabulary and unfamiliar text structures in order to learn from what they read and then write about what they learn.

2.3.3 – Writing Theories

Compared to the field of reading, writing is a field of inquiry that has emphasized pedagogy and practice in its research direction. Consequently, there are fewer theories of writing, which are less comprehensively developed than the theories of reading. Nevertheless, I will describe one key theory that has deepened in perspective and broadened in scope through extensive research and testing and has heavily influenced the field of writing.

2.3.3.1 – Cognitive Processing Theory

One of the most often cited theories of writing is the Flower and Hayes (1981) cognitive process theory of writing. Since being published, this theory has been the basis of much subsequent writing research and discussion leading Hayes (1996) to publish a comprehensive revision of the model (see Figure 1). While this new model is based on 15 years of research subsequent to the earlier model, Hayes admits that it is still a work-in-progress and leaves some of its details to be filled in by other more knowledgeable researchers. The new model contains two major components: the task environment and the individual. This design suggests that both social and cognitive factors play a role in writing.
The task environment is divided into two sections: the social environment and the physical environment. The social environment represents all of the factors that influence the writing processes and are external to the writer. Examples of these factors are communicative purpose, familiarity with the audience, generic conventions, level of collaboration with others while writing, and the immediate surrounding culture of the writing as well as any culture that has had an influence on how the writer fashions text. This last point seems to indicate that Hayes has provided some consideration for L2 writers in this updated model by recognizing that writers come from unique backgrounds, which influence how and what they write. The physical environment is all of the tangible and material elements within the writing context that can influence the way in which text is produced. For example, these may be a computer, pen and paper, generated text, alphabet wall charts, books or articles, background noise, and atmospheric temperature, just to name a few. Hayes admits that his description of the task
environment is sparse because he is “a psychologist and not a sociologist or a cultural historian” (p. 5). And he encourages research into the social and cultural factors that influence writing because research in these areas “is essential for a complete understanding of writing” (p. 6).

The second major component of Hayes’s model is the individual, which includes the subsections motivation and affect, working memory, cognitive processes, and long-term memory. Motivation in writing is a complex issue that is affected by numerous cognitive, social, and environmental factors such as believing in a predisposition to write well, conflicts among an individual’s writing goals and purposes, the perceived difficulty of the writing task, the methods and tools available to accomplish the task, and the topic of the writing task. These areas do not represent an exhaustive list of factors that affect motivation levels (Dornyei, 2005), and as current research stands, there is much more we need to know before we can more accurately determine the role of motivation in writing and all the factors that influence it.

Working memory is the cognitive component that carries out all non-automated tasks. It controls processes such as logical reasoning, problem solving, decision making, storing phonological and visual information, and retrieving information from long-term memory. Kellogg (1996) created a model of working memory in writing showing that working memory plays the central role in text production because it controls the text production processes of formulation, execution, and monitoring. The key component of working memory is the central executive, which controls and directs the other components within the system and controls the distribution of processing capacity when demands on any one system become too great.

The third subsection within the individual component in Hayes’s model is cognitive processes. According to Hayes, cognitive processes are divided into three main areas: text interpretation, reflection, and text production. Text interpretation is the process of creating
internal representations from linguistic and graphic inputs. This process mainly involves both
textual and graphical reading, but also includes listening. Hayes argues that there are several
types of reading involved within text interpretation. First, writers read for comprehension
when gathering information to use in their writing, or in other words when writing from
sources. Reading for comprehension only requires the decoding of a text’s meaning. It does
not require readers to solve problems with textual incoherence and surface errors except
where they interfere with comprehension. And in these cases, once the barrier to
comprehension is resolved, these errors are no longer retained in memory. Second, writers
read their own texts in order to revise them. Reading to revise also requires readers to read for
comprehension of a text; however, it also requires readers to identify local and global textual
errors and then store them in short-term memory in order to resolve them when revising.
Third, writers read to understand the focus and constraints of the writing task. Reading to
understand the task activates particular schema needed to appropriately shape and accomplish
the writing task.

Therefore, the function of text interpretation within the writing process is to supply
information input. Sometimes that input comes from source texts providing background
information to the writer. Sometimes the input is aural input through video programs or
conversations. Sometimes the input is the writer’s own text that has already been produced for
the writing task. But whatever the input, the writer interprets it in unique ways in order to
create an internal representation of its meaning. The theories of reading discussed previously
seem to relate to this portion of Hayes’s model because they discuss the ways in which
readers create meaning from textual input.

The second of the three cognitive processes is reflection. Reflection is the process of
reorganizing and reshaping the internal representations created through text interpretation.
There are three main subprocesses within reflection: problem solving, decision making, and
inferencing. First, problem solving is the process of assembling steps to achieve a goal. The
process of problem solving is a central part of the writing process as writers engage in activities such as stringing together main points to create an argument or a set of phrases to create a sentence. Second, decision-making is the process of evaluating and selecting from several alternatives to achieve a goal. Writers are constantly engaged in this process as they work on tasks such as determining which source texts to read, what tone to use, the best global organization to apply, and which grammatical and semantic selections to make. And third, inferencing is the process of deriving new information from old information, or, in other words, making helpful extensions of available information. This occurs both consciously and unconsciously in such activities as inferring opinions and attitudes of the audience and finding the main idea of a text where it is not explicitly stated.

The third cognitive process in Hayes’s model is text production. In this process, writers assign semantic and grammatical content to the ideas developed during text interpretation and reflection. After giving the ideas a linguistic form, if the writer judges the form as satisfactory, then it is written down. This process is usually repeated at the clause level rather than the sentence level as the demands on working memory usually constrain writers to producing smaller chunks of text, and this is particularly true with L2 writers (Matsuhashi, 1981; Uzawa, 1996; Whalen & Menard, 1995).

The final subsection of the individual component in Hayes’s model is long-term memory, within which he discusses three topics: task schemas, knowledge of audience, and extended practice. Task schemas are knowledge packages of processes and strategies that are used to accomplish specific tasks such as writing a business letter, reading a textbook, reading graphs, and editing. These are built up over time through experience with reading and writing text. Knowledge of audience becomes particularly active when writers compose text for audiences with which they have a personal relationship. For example, when writing for friends or acquaintances, writers will use information from interactions with these people to shape their text, which is the case for most academic writing when the classroom instructor is
the audience. However, when the audience is abstract, writers will likely judge the appropriateness of their text on their own reactions to it. Extended practice builds various kinds of knowledge such as genres, strategies, and standards for writing, which are all important to the development of writing skill. In a landmark essay on writing expertise, Carter (1990) demonstrates the critical role of extensive experience in moving from using general processes and strategies that work in a wide range of situations to developing and using fine-tuned processes and strategies for highly specific contexts and rhetorical situations. Long-term memory, then, stores information and knowledge gained through writing experiences in order to build a more expert and efficient writer.

With Hayes’s encouragement for others to fill out and help complete the model, I would like to suggest two elements that seem absent from the model but are critical for this research project. They are both associated with the concept of task representation, which I discuss in detail in a later section titled 2.5.2 – Task Representation. I call these two elements the projected task and the perceived task. The projected task fits within the task environment section of Hayes’s model and is the impetus for writing that comes from the task environment. For example, in an academic setting, the projected task is initiated by the teacher who gives a writing assignment, and by so doing, the teacher projects specific guidelines and expectations for the writing to the student. In other settings, the impetus could be things such as a person on the phone asking you to take down a message or a meeting at which your assigned role is to make notes of the proceedings.

The perceived task fits within the individual section of Hayes’s model and is how the writer interprets the projected task and attempts to successfully complete it, or in other words, it is the individual’s task representation. Hayes includes a narrower view of the perceived task under the cognitive process of text interpretation, when a writer reads an academic assignment sheet. However, interpreting a projected task is much more complex than reading an assignment sheet (Prior, 1995). It requires writers to draw upon past writing experience and
topical background knowledge and interpret contextual cues in order to formulate a representation of the writing task as the writer perceives it (Flower, 1990).

Sometimes the projected and perceived tasks can be very different as is often the case in academic writing when students produce writing (which represents the perceived task) that does not meet the expectations of the teacher (representing the projected task). And sometimes the projected and perceived tasks can be practically isomorphic—for example, when the projected task and perceived task both originate in the individual, like when writing a personal diary. The interaction between projected and perceived tasks plays a critical role in the performance of the writer on many academic tasks, and, therefore, is an essential component to consider when interpreting the actions of academic writers.

2.3.4 – Implications for L2 Writers

There is currently no L2 theory of writing—or a theory of writing that was specifically designed to deal with L2 writing issues—and as Grabe (2001a) has pointed out, such a theory would need to account for writing in both L1 and L2. Although there are a few elements of Hayes’s model where Hayes mentions issues related to L2 writers, the basic underlying assumption of the model is that it works for all writers in all contexts. The problem with this assumption is that the model is not dynamic enough to show how L2 writing factors interact with other components in the model.

Although Hayes includes working memory in his model of writing, he himself admits that he has not fully developed every component of the model nor described the interactions between components. It is significant, however, that “the central location of working memory [in figure 1] is intended to symbolize its central importance in the activity of writing” (Hayes, 1996, p.8). This is because “all of the processes have access to working memory and carry out all non-automated activities in working memory” (p. 8). In both L1 and L2 writing, language production is, to varying degrees, a non-automated activity (Schoonen et al., 2003). In
Kellogg’s (1996) model of working memory within the writing process, language planning occurs within the formulation system and Kellogg states that “the formulation system presumably places the heaviest burden on working memory” (p. 62). However, we can surmise that in L2 writing, language production is a less-automated activity than it is in L1 writing as evidenced in the studies of formulation and other writing processes reviewed earlier (Roca de Larios, Manchon, & Murphy, 2006; Roca de Larios et al., 2001; Stevenson et al., 2006; Zimmermann, 2000). Thus, it requires a larger portion of working memory capacity and leaves less or virtually no working memory capacity for other cognitive processes. And this heavier draw on working memory for text production reduces the amount of time left for the other writing processes and generally causes shorter L2 texts, although they are qualitatively equivalent to L1 texts (Roca de Larios et al., 2001). This reduced capacity may become even more evident when L2 writers are engaged in writing-from-sources tasks that require the writers to obtain information from reading sources, process it in order to make sense of it, and then store it in short- and long-term memory while trying to translate it into a linguistic format that is grammatically and semantically comprehensible, acceptable to the intended audience, and constructed to suit the appropriate genre.

2.4 – Reading-Writing Connections

This section builds on the reading and writing theories previously mentioned by highlighting theories and research that connect the two processes of reading and writing. It should be noted at the outset of this section that most models of the writing process invariably include rereading one’s own writing as part of the writing process, and Hayes’s model is no exception; however, reading processes within writing models are not well developed nor do they explain the cognitive and social connections between reading and writing. Therefore, it is necessary in this section to look beyond the theoretical models discussed previously and examine our current, yet incomplete, understanding of the complex ways in which reading
and writing interact with each other. After discussing theoretical perspectives on the reading-writing relationship, I look at research that has investigated academic tasks in which reading and writing are combined. These studies provide evidence for further understanding the reading and writing relationship and are particularly useful for applying these theories to L2 learners and contexts.

2.4.1 – General Reading-Writing Relationship

There are three general theories of the cognitive connections between reading and writing that try to explain how the two interact within the domain of literacy.

2.4.1.1 – Shared Knowledge and Processes

One of the first theories on the reading-writing relationship states that there is a core of knowledge and processes that ties the two together because both reading and writing draw upon this core. In one of the earliest and most extensive studies on the reading-writing relationship, Loban (1963; 1964) found that students with high reading abilities also had high writing abilities and students with low reading abilities had low writing abilities. He found that this was consistently true across twelve grade levels. The shared knowledge and processes theory of the reading-writing relationship is appealing to teachers and curriculum developers because it suggests that practice in one skill will cause improvement in the other. Subsequent studies have found evidence that refutes the generalizability of Loban’s conclusions and the shared knowledge and processes theory (Firth, 1980; Martin, 1977; Tierney, 1983). These studies all identified good readers who were poor writers or good writers who were poor readers.

While the general shared-knowledge-and-processes theory suggests a bi-directional relationship between reading and writing in which improvement in one skill results in improvement in the other, another view of this theory is unidirectional (Carson, 1993). The
most common version of this theory states that knowledge and processes can only move from reading to writing. Thus, writing can draw upon skills gained in reading, but improved writing skills provide no benefit for reading. The other version of this theory goes in the opposite direction with reading drawing upon the knowledge and processes learned through writing. Evidence supporting these theories comes from the very studies mentioned above that refuted Loban’s findings.

The idea that knowledge and processes acquired in one area are transferable to the other has also been suggested in the L2 domain. Krashen (1985) has posited that comprehensible input is the necessary and sufficient condition for acquiring a second language. Once sufficient input has occurred, output will happen naturally. Applying this input hypothesis to reading, Krashen believes that massive doses of extensive reading will lead to improved writing performance, writing style, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary usage (Krashen, 1989). In other words, the activity of reading creates the core of literacy knowledge and processes from which the activity of writing draws. Thus, Krashen supports a unidirectional relationship between reading and writing where improved reading skills support writing. Like the shared knowledge and processes theory, Krashen’s theory has drawn criticism (Gregg, 1984), to which Krashen has responded (1999; 2004).

2.4.1.2 – Separate, but Interacting Competencies

A second theory on the reading-writing relationship suggests that reading and writing are separate skills from each other, but they interact with each other in complex ways. Several studies in support of this theory (Shanahan, 1984; Shanahan & Lomax, 1986, 1988) have found that the correlations between reading and writing measures accounted for 43 percent of the variance. These studies also found that the nature of the interactions between reading and writing changed as the students’ literacy skills matured. For students at the beginning of their literacy development, phonics and spelling accounted for most of the variance while story
structure competence and vocabulary breadth accounted for most of the variance with more advanced students. However, one of the criticisms of the research that supports the interaction model is that these studies have examined the products of reading and writing and only assumed a relationship between the products and the processes involved (Langer & Flihan, 2000).

2.4.1.3 – Generative Processes

A third theory of the reading-writing relationship comes from cognitive psychologists who believe that reading and writing are generative processes that draw upon a similar pool of cognitive strategies and processes. Readers and writers create meaning by drawing on background knowledge and experiences and then relate those with the text. To help create this meaning, they draw on processes such as goal setting, knowledge mobilization, refinement, review, self-correction, and self-assessment (Tierney & Pearson, 1983). Differences occur between reading and writing as individuals choose which of those processes to apply in a particular literacy situation. Criticism of the research in support of this model centers on the research methods of cognitive psychology, namely think-aloud protocols, retrospective recalls, and interviews. Critics argue that these data collection methods, particularly think-aloud protocols, either fundamentally alter the processes being researched or idealize them rendering the conclusions invalid (Bosher, 1998; Witte & Cherry, 1994). However, advocates counter that any affect on the process is minimal and that there are no research alternatives that can produce such richly detailed cognitive data (Raimes, 1985; Smagorinsky, 1994).

2.4.1.4 – Implications for L2 Students

While these theories have provided a general framework of the reading-writing relation, we must be cautious in the ways we apply them to L2 learners because they do not address linguistic and cultural issues prominent in the field of L2 literacy. Specifically, some
of the issues these theories do not address are the transfer of reading and writing skills across languages, the effect of L2 proficiency on the L2 reading-writing connection, and the role of multicultural genre awareness. However, in order to improve the quality and efficiency of L2 literacy instruction, we need to more fully understand how reading benefits writing and writing benefits reading in L2 contexts (Grabe, 2001b).

2.4.2 – Studies of the L2 Reading-Writing Relationship

Despite the limitations with current reading-writing relationship theory, some researchers have begun to look at the reading-writing relationship within L2 contexts.

2.4.2.1 – A Correlational Study of L1-L2 Reading-Writing Relations

One of the first studies investigating the reading-writing relationship in L2 contexts looked at the relationship across L1 and L2 for two different L1 backgrounds, Chinese and Japanese (Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990). All 105 participants were studying in the United States in either preacademic intensive English programs or in required composition courses for matriculated students. To measure reading proficiency, participants completed cloze passages utilizing L1 and L2 expository texts with a comparison-contrast rhetorical pattern. To measure writing proficiency, the participants wrote L1 and L2 essays that elicited comparison-contrast rhetorical patterns.

The results showed a gradual increase in L2 reading and writing scores as the participants’ L2 proficiency increased suggesting that L2 proficiency played a key role in the development of L2 literacy. Conversely, there was an inverse relationship between the participants’ L1 reading and writing scores and their L2 proficiency. In other words, as L2 proficiency increased, L1 reading and writing scores decreased. The researchers attributed this apparent attrition of the participants’ L1 reading and writing skills to the increased amount of time spent in the U.S. Participants with higher L2 proficiency had typically lived
longer in the host country and thus had longer periods of L1 dormancy. Thus, L1 and L2 reading and writing skills may be contextually developed, and when removed from a particular context of use for a time, the skills and processes that apply to that context remain inactive and deteriorate.

When examining the effect of education level, the data showed that the L1 reading and writing relationship for the Chinese participants correlated with L1 educational level but that reading and writing were more directly related in the L2. In other words, as L1 educational level increased, Chinese students exhibited a stronger link between their reading and writing skills in the L1; however, L2 educational level (the amount of study conducted in the L2) did not have this same increasing predictive effect on L2 reading and writing. Unlike the Chinese participants, the Japanese participants did not exhibit a relationship between their L1 educational level and L1 reading-writing relationship, and this remained true in the L2 as well.

The overall result of this study paints a complex picture of the reading-writing relationship. Although the results of the study suggest that reading and writing skills can transfer from one language to another, there are a multitude of variables that impinge on and affect this transfer such as first language, education level, and background experiences. The researchers made some pedagogical suggestions that further explain this complex relationship. They suggested that teachers draw on interlingual transfer of literacy skills at the lower L2 proficiency level, but that intralingual input is more helpful at the higher L2 proficiency levels. In other words, at higher L2 proficiency levels, teachers should focus on directly building L2 literacy skills in the L2 rather than relying on L1 transfer. And at lower L2 proficiency levels, teachers should work on transferring L1 literacy skills to the L2. This suggestion is based on the idea that the nature of reading-writing relationships changes as L2 proficiency develops.
This study provides support for an L2 application for one of the theories outlined above. The separate-but-interacting-competencies theory suggests that the nature of the reading-writing relationship changes as beginners shift from processing text at the word level and placing an emphasis on decoding skills to more advanced functions that focus on top-down processes of using background knowledge and drawing on deeper understanding of word knowledge to interpret text. The implication is that a measure of linguistic knowledge is necessary to process and produce text at deeper levels. The study reviewed here also suggests that as knowledge depth of the L2 increases, there are stronger interactions between L2 reading and writing skills.

2.4.2.2 – The Effect of Pleasure Reading on L1-L2 Reading-Writing Relationships

Another quantitative study of reading-writing relationships was designed to test Krashen’s extensive reading hypothesis (Krashen, 1987), which suggests a unidirectional relationship between reading and writing where massive doses of reading input will improve writing and grammar proficiency. Flahive and Bailey (1993) had 40 ESL students fill out an L1 and L2 pleasure reading questionnaire, take an L2 reading comprehension test, write an L2 argumentative essay, and take two tests of L2 grammar ability. The results of the study showed that grammar, reading, and writing were statistically interrelated. The amount of pleasure reading and general L2 reading achievement were also related. And L2 reading achievement was moderately related to L2 holistic writing, but the amount of pleasure reading was not. There was no relationship between the quantity of reading and the quality of L2 writing. The data also indicated that the quantity of pleasure reading did not lead to increased L2 grammatical proficiency.

The researchers made three general conclusions from their data. First, Krashen’s extensive reading hypothesis was not supported by the data. Second, they found that students who did more pleasure reading performed better on L2 reading comprehension tests, which
suggests that skills gained through pleasure reading transfer to academic reading tasks, a
result supported by other research (Spack, 1997a). And third, there is a “unified language
proficiency factor underlying reading comprehension, writing ability, and the various
measures of grammatical ability” (Flahive & Bailey, 1993, p. 137).

Krashen’s extensive reading hypothesis draws on the shared-knowledge-and-processes
theory of reading and writing because the extensive reading hypothesis suggests that
improvement in reading will lead to an improvement in writing as well. However, the data in
this study does not support this position and helps show the complex nature of the reading-
writing relationship by indicating that L2 proficiency plays a role in the interaction between
reading and writing in a second language, a conclusion consistent with the previous study
(Carson et al., 1990).

2.4.2.3 – The Effect of L2 Extensive Reading on L2 Writing

Tsang (1996) investigated the effect of extensive reading and frequent writing on
descriptive writing skills. One hundred forty-four students in Hong Kong schools (grades 7-
10) were given either extensive reading, extra writing, or mathematics practice as extra work
on top of their regular school work and to be done outside of their regular school activities.
Over a 24-week period, the reading group read eight books in the L2 and completed brief
review forms, the writing group wrote eight essays in the L2, and the mathematics group
completed eight math assignments consisting of 10 to 15 multiple choice questions each.

The results indicated that the extensive reading program produced the highest gains in
descriptive writing, but these gains were focused on particular aspects of writing, specifically
content and language use. Other areas such as organization, vocabulary, and mechanics,
showed a lack of improvement. The researcher suggested that exposure to specific discourse
types through extensive reading may improve organization while graded readers and explicit
instruction in punctuation and paragraphing should yield improvements in vocabulary and
mechanics respectively. Neither the frequent writing nor mathematics groups showed statistically significant improvements in writing over the 24 weeks of the study. The researcher suggested that frequent writing practice without instruction produces little gain in NNS students’ writing skills. However, this is possibly due to the low L2 proficiency level of the participants. It is likely that “the value of uninstructed writing in L2 increases as proficiency in L2 increases” (p. 227).

The data from this study cast a different light on the theories of the reading-writing relationship. The data here seems to suggest that extensive reading may be a more efficient method for producing writing gains, which would support the unidirectional shared knowledge and processes theory similar to the one posited by Krashen. However, if the data showed that the extra writing group made no gains while the extensive reading group did, then there would be strong support for a unidirectional influence of reading on writing. However, the extra writing practice did produce gains in writing—only the extensive reading treatment produced significantly higher gains in the areas of content and language use within their writing—which suggests that reading and writing may be separate but interacting competencies.

2.4.3 – Summary Writing

Summary writing is a skill that lies at the juncture between reading and writing because it requires the writer to use both reading and writing in harmony to accomplish the summary task. Rumelhart (1977b) defines summary writing as the act of paring down a text to its major constituents, which requires the writer to distinguish between the critical parts and details in a text. While summary writing is common task in academic settings, it involves a very different set of processes from the average academic composing task (Hare, 1992; Hidi & Anderson, 1986). For example, in most academic writing situations, students generate both the content for the paper and a global plan for organizing the content. In summary writing,
however, students extract content from the source text and typically derive their organizational plan from the source text. The process of summary writing includes making decisions about which information from the source text to include in the summary. To do this successfully, students must understand the underlying hierarchy of propositions in the source text and be able to select from that hierarchy the most important elements to include in the summary. In other words, students must pare a text down to the most basic elements that still convey the central message of the source text.

The quality of a written summary is affected by factors that do not usually account for poor academic writing. Poor academic writing can be generally attributed to factors such as insufficient language skill, difficulty in accessing memory to generate content from world knowledge, and the difficulty of sustaining a discourse without a responding partner. However, poor summary writing is usually the product of poor choices of content selection from the source text (Hare & Borchardt, 1984) and the inability to integrate and coordinate the information of the source text into a single condensed text (Hare, 1992; Kintsch, 1989).

Besides the factors that affect successful summary writing, there are a number of other factors that can alter the summary writing processes, one of which is the characteristics of the source text. Source texts become more difficult to summarize as they become longer, use expository or unfamiliar genres, and increase in linguistic and conceptual complexity. Longer texts require more decisions regarding which information to delete from the summary, which increases the cognitive processing load (Hahn & Goldman, 1983). Expository genres typically deal with more complex concepts and do not have a linear and easily predictable structure, all of which increases the cognitive processing load (Marshall, 1984). Unfamiliar or low-frequency vocabulary and elaborate or complex sentence structures also lead to an increase in the cognitive processing load (Brown & Day, 1983). The difficulty of a summarizing task, therefore, partially depends on the unique characteristics of the source text.
The writing conditions such as the presence or absence of the source text while composing and constraints on the length of the summary also alter the summary writing processes. The absence of the source text while composing increases the cognitive load on working memory by requiring the writer to access long-term memory stores to retrieve the relevant information for summarization. Writing without the source text present may lead to more inaccuracies in the summary (Hidi, 1985); however, it can also lead to more active processing of information while reading and increased retention of the information in the source text (Hidi, 1984a, 1985). Summarizing tasks that require shorter summaries increase the cognitive processing load because writers are required to condense the macropropositions of the text into fewer words, and this task requires more decisions on combining and deleting information (Hidi & Anderson, 1986).

Even though there are many variables that can affect the summarizing processes, there is a general consensus among summarization process theorists on the basic processes involved in producing a summary (Brown & Day, 1983; Johnson, 1983; Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978). One process is the selection of content to include in the summary, which occurs through processes such as deletion of irrelevant or unimportant content from the source text. A second process is substituting superordinate terms for several lower-level, specific concepts. A third process is the combining, integrating, and transforming of propositions, which often goes beyond the source text, in order to create an accurate and concise representation of the source text. While these three processes provide the basics for summarization, the way in which summarizers apply them to specific summarization tasks is determined by the factors mentioned previously.

Because of the limited amount of research in L2 summarizing, there is little data to compare with the theories and conclusions of L1 summary writing research. At this point, we can only speculate from general L2 reading and writing research at what some of those differences may be. For example, it is likely that L2 proficiency will have an effect on the L2
writer’s ability to produce a successful summary because low L2 proficiency can limit reading comprehension and increase demands on cognitive resources in order to formulate language while composing. L1-L2 cultural differences may also have an effect if the L2 student has different formal schemata of text structure because cultural differences can have a negative effect on reading comprehension (Carrell, 1984a, 1984b; Sharp, 2002) and potentially the organization of the summary. However, the traditional starting point is to assume that the L2 summarizing processes would vary little from those presented in the L1 research.

2.4.4 – Studies of L2 Summary Writing

There have been few specific studies on L2 summarizing. However, the few studies that have been conducted will be reviewed in this section and their conclusions will be compared with the conclusions from L1 summary research to begin to develop an understanding of the summary writing processes specific to summarizing in an L2.

2.4.4.1 – University ESL Students’ Summary Writing

Johns and Mayes’ (1990) studied the summary writing of 80 ESL university students. Forty low-proficiency and 40 high-proficiency ESL students wrote summaries of a business article taken from a business reader prepared for ESL university students. The students wrote 100-word summaries of the 588-word text. This study tested the hypothesis that ESL students’ ability to write summaries would vary based on their amount of preparation for academic writing tasks and their level of English proficiency. More proficient students would have 1) greater control over the manipulation of complex sentence structures and therefore produce more correct paraphrases, 2) more combinations of idea units, 3) more accurate macropropositions where external information is introduced into the summary through reader inference of the text, and 4) fewer distortions of the original text.
The data from this study only partially supported hypotheses #1 and #2 above and did not support #3 and #4. In the conclusions, the authors pointed out that the lower-proficiency students used more direct copying of single idea units than the higher-proficiency students. They suggested that the lower-proficiency students had trouble distinguishing between main ideas and details thus demonstrating that they had not adequately acquired the rules for deletion. Therefore, “the findings indicate…that there are few significant differences between high- and low-proficiency ESL university students in the idea unit manipulation which produces summary products” (p. 265).

Based on the results of the available body of L2 reading and writing research, it would be logical to conclude that L2 proficiency would be a factor in students’ ability to produce a successful summary because L2 proficiency is one predictor of performance in most studies of L2 reading proficiency. However, this study of L2 summary writing processes would indicate that L2 proficiency might play only a minor role in summarizing in the case of ESL university students. But a closer look at some of the variables may explain the conclusions. As was pointed out in the second section of this chapter, writing expertise and L2 proficiency are separate competencies that when not controlled for may confound the results. In this study, very little information was given on the participants’ writing backgrounds. However, the information that was given suggests that writing expertise could have been an intervening variable accounting for part of the result. The higher L2 proficient participants were enrolled in a sophomore composition class and had completed 2.5 more years of English study than the lower L2 proficient participants. One could infer from this that the higher L2 proficient participants had already completed at least two semesters of university study in English, which is probably two semesters of experience more than the low L2 proficient participants. Also, the extra 2.5 years of English study that the higher L2 proficient participants had also may have included writing training. Thus, it is possible that not only higher L2 proficiency, but also more developed writing expertise could have led to the research outcome.
To offer other possible confounding variables, the source text was taken from a low-intermediate ESL business text that was created with controlled vocabulary, grammar, and sentence length making the source text possibly well within the L2 ability of every participant. The word length requirement of the summary task only required the participants to write a summary of about 20% the length of the source text—a summary length that probably did not require overly demanding selection and combination of ideas. And the participants had the source text present as they composed the summary—also a condition that reduces the cognitive demands of the task. Therefore, even though the research attempted to look at the effect of L2 proficiency on the production of a written summary, the difficulty of the summarizing task probably did not match the variations in L2 proficiency among the two participant groups thus reducing the helpfulness of the conclusions in trying to determine the differences between L1 and L2 summarizing processes.

2.4.4.2 – Composing an L2 Reader-Based Summary

Sarig (1993) conducted a case study of an EFL student producing study-summaries, which are summaries created in order to learn and remember information from texts. The student, who had advanced English proficiency and good background knowledge of the text topics, was given five Hebrew and eight English texts to read and then summarize in Hebrew, the participant’s L1. The participant produced think-aloud protocols as he read and wrote writer-based summaries, which are simpler to produce than reader-based summaries because they do not require the writer to consider the reader by providing a more concrete and transparent text structure.

The data revealed that the participant spent two-thirds of his time on activities related to reading and comprehending the source text and one-third on writing activities that produced the study-summaries. While the processes of composing study-summaries from L1 and L2 texts were related to a considerable extent (correlation: r= .74), the biggest difficulty
came with combining and transforming the ideas from the L2 texts. Despite having strong background knowledge in the topics covered in the source texts and a high L2 proficiency, the participant was unable to truly transform the information in both the L1 and L2 source texts and write it in the form of a reconceptualization, which combines the information in the text with the reader’s schemata to produce new knowledge.

The results of this study complement the results of other studies which show that selecting content and superordinating terms are easier summarizing processes to develop than condensing and transforming textual propositions (Day, 1986; Hidi, 1984b; Hidi & Anderson, 1986; Johns, 1985). However, the results do not reveal any unique processes that would help us differentiate L1 and L2 summarizing.

2.4.4.3 – MBA Students’ Summary Writing

Yang and Shi (2003) examined the summary writing processes of six MBA students, three native English speakers and three native Chinese speakers with TOEFL scores over 600. The participants produced think-aloud protocols while producing a first draft of a class assignment to write a two-page summary and examination of a business case study followed by recommendations for marketing. Participants had the opportunity to read the case study before attending the data collection session for producing a first draft. Data consisted of the think-aloud protocols, retrospective interviews, written drafts, and final drafts with the instructor’s grades. The researchers coded the data for cognitive processes.

The results showed that at the graduate educational level and with advanced English proficiency, L1 and L2 students’ summary writing processes are fundamentally the same. The participants all employed common patterns of writing processes and strategies to accomplish the task, and all six participants were engaged in careful selection and critical analysis of text to include in their writing. The biggest difference between the participants was the ways in
which individuals interpreted the summary task, which seemed to be a function of their previous writing experiences.

Like the previous study, this study involved participants with advanced ESL proficiency, and the results of these two studies suggest that there is very little difference between native speaking and advanced ESL proficiency students’ summarization processes and strategies. And if the results of the Johns and Mayes study are accurate, then it may be the case that L2 proficiency plays very little role in the summarization processes. Thus, L1 and L2 summary writing may be very similar.

2.4.5 – Synthesis Writing

Synthesis writing is another writing task common to academic contexts. Despite the unique characteristics of the processes and products that set synthesis writing apart from other forms of academic writing, including summary writing, it has so far received relatively little attention from L1 researchers and very minimal attention, if any, from L2 researchers. This dearth of research, however, has not prevented us from building a basic understanding of the processes and products of synthesis writing.

2.4.5.1 – A Three-Point Model of Synthesis Writing

Spivey (1990) describes three processes that occur as writers engage in synthesis writing: organizing, selecting, and connecting. Writers use variations of these processes while engaged in reading and composing for synthesis writing. And all three of these processes are heavily influenced by the writing task, the writer’s representation of the writing task, and numerous individual factors such as topical knowledge, world knowledge, and discourse knowledge.

Organizing is the mental and physical structuring of a text. When making sense of a text, readers create a representation of a text’s meaning that has logical and organized links
between the idea units (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978). Often readers’ representations are isomorphic representations of the texts read (McGee, 1982; Richgels, McGee, Lomax, & Sheard, 1987). While composing, writers will sometimes transfer the organization of a source text to the text they are composing. This is especially common in summary writing (Hidi & Anderson, 1986). However, for most synthesis writing tasks, writers create a new organization for their composition that is independent of the organization in the sources they have read. In this case, writers construct a new framework for their text while dismantling and reconfiguring information from multiple source texts (Spivey, 1984).

Selecting is the unconscious ranking of textual information in a hierarchy of importance relevant to the reader’s purposes. Usually, readers perceive information that is foregrounded in the text, or textually relevant, as important and therefore remember it (Cirilo & Foss, 1980). However, when readers come to a text with purposes that are not aligned with the textually relevant information, like when a writing task has induced a particular reading purpose, they can perceive information other than what was foregrounded in the text (Pichert & Anderson, 1977). This variation in the perception of textual information can also be caused by the beliefs, attitudes, and motives the reader brings to the text. When writing, weighing the textual relevance of a piece of information is one way that writers select information from source texts to include in their writing. A writer may measure the textual relevance of the information within a single text when writing from a single source text, but may shift to weighing the textual relevance intertextually, or between texts, when writing from multiple source texts. In other words, writers are more likely to use information that is foregrounded in several texts when composing from multiple sources (Spivey & King, 1989). Writers’ content selections from source texts are also affected by the emerging structure of the texts they are composing.

Connecting is the process of integrating information drawn from the text and background knowledge. When reading, readers use inferencing and the knowledge they bring
to the text to fill in gaps in the text (Bower, Black, & Turner, 1979; Kintsch, 1974). This process merges the reader’s background knowledge with the new information drawn from the text to the extent that after a time, one cannot differentiate between information originating in the text and inferential material added to the text to fill in the gaps (Bransford, Barclay, & Franks, 1972; Bransford & Franks, 1971). In writing, writers composing from sources interweave content drawn from source texts with previous knowledge. The shape of this interweaving depends on a writer’s plan for the text he is producing, the relevance of the content available in the source texts to the writing task, and the knowledge base of the writer. This reshaping of information is what creates new meaning in the synthesized text.

These three processes of organizing, selecting, and connecting text describe a set of choices available to writers as they determine how to use various texts in their writing. Each writer uses these options differently depending on individual factors, the writing task, and the context of the writing. However, successful synthesis writing may not be determined as much by how each writer uses these three processes, but more so by each writer’s reading ability. Looking at the larger picture of the synthesis process, it is clear that there is a significant overlap between general reading ability and success at synthesizing texts (Spivey & King, 1989). Reading ability, therefore, will likely play a key role in L2 students’ abilities to synthesize texts.

2.4.5.2 – Implications for L2 Students

Spivey’s (1990) three-point model of synthesis writing (organizing, selecting, and connecting) identifies some challenges for L2 students engaged in synthesis writing in academic contexts. There are challenges with both reading and writing within all three points in the model that affect L2 students’ ability to synthesize texts.

Within the reading side of organizing, Spivey indicates that readers use textual cues to aid in creating a mental organization of a text. Textual cues that map the organization of a text
and indicate the relationships between propositions are often not apparent to L2 readers (Cohen, Glasman, Rosenbaum-Cohen, Ferara, & Fine, 1998) and may result in an inaccurate mental representation of meaning. Consequently, when writing, L2 writers may not be aware of how to create textual cues to guide the reader (Conner et al., 1995; Kaplan, 2005; Ventola & Mauranen, 1991). Until they learn how to appropriately construct texts that effectively guide the native speaking reader, L2 writers typically transfer L1 writing strategies, rhetorical patterns, and linguistic conventions to their L2 writing (Conner, 1996; Kaplan, 1966), which can result in texts that “are considered odd at the very least” (Conner, 1996, p. 167).

Spivey points out that appropriately selecting information to include in a synthesis requires the ability to identify textually relevant information in a source text, which is linked to both reading ability and cognitive maturity. For L2 readers, L2 reading ability is also linked to L2 proficiency (Alderson, 1984; Clark, 1980; Lee & Schallert, 1997). Even though L2 students may have sufficient cognitive maturity to perform a synthesis task, they may lack the L2 proficiency that would allow them to use the full extent of their reading abilities and successfully identify and select textually relevant information.

Writers depend on readers to draw inferences and fill the informational gaps in a text when connecting content with preexisting schemata. However, L2 readers interpret texts with different schema than native speaking readers (Carrell, 1984a; Hinds, 1987; Sharp, 2002). This leads the L2 reader to extend and interpret the text in ways that are unintended by the text’s author but consistent with the L2 reader’s background knowledge. In academic settings, this discrepancy could disadvantage L2 students who come to different interpretations of a text than the native speaking students and teacher.

2.4.6 – Other Writing-From-Sources Research

Although both summary and synthesis writing are forms of writing from sources, there are other academic writing tasks that involve reading, writing, and analytical skills other than
the ones outlined for summary and synthesis writing. The use of sources is also common in advanced academic tasks such as critical reviews, argument writing, case study writing, interpretive essays, and research papers (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). The following section reviews studies that are also relevant to some of these other writing-from-sources tasks.

2.4.6.1 – Writing an Objective Essay Using Sources

Kennedy (1985) investigated the L1 composing-from-sources behavior of three fluent and three not-so-fluent college freshman readers. The six participants were given three articles and asked to write an objective essay based on them while producing think-aloud protocols. The data were transcribed and analyzed for similarities and differences in participants’ reading and writing processes.

Several notable findings emerged from this study. First, the fluent readers spent more time reading and rereading the articles, making notes, copying quotations into their notes, and revising their notes. Once they began their essays, they wrote from their notes incorporating them into their essays. The not-so-fluent readers did not transact with the text while reading and did not reread the articles before beginning their essays. Once they started writing, they went back to the readings in order to pull direct quotations from them.

Second, although both groups of readers engaged in the same reading and writing processes, such as rereading the source text, taking notes, and incorporating information from the source texts into the essay, the fluent readers used more effective strategies, such as marking the text, relating the information to prior knowledge, and evaluating their own comprehension of the source texts. This finding supports other research showing that one difference between good and poor readers is the strategies they select for a given context (Macaro, 2006; Olshavsky, 1977).

Third, the fluent readers spent more time planning their essays. Part of their planning was the manipulation and transformation of the source texts in their reading notes. Thus,
when they began to compose, they worked from their notes rather than the source texts. The not-so-fluent readers jumped into writing their texts soon after reading. As a result, they planned at the sentence level while composing their essays. They also frequently went back to the source texts to find quotations for their essays.

In interpreting these findings, Kennedy says that “this study’s three major findings indicate that subjects ‘writing from sources’ did not proceed in sequence through prereading, reading, postreading/prewriting, and writing stages” (p. 444). Furthermore, the participants’ specific reading and writing processes were not limited to specific stages within the whole process, but more closely resembled state-like processes. For example, participants took notes and made plans through all of the reading and writing stages regardless of the specific task in which they were engaged. This would suggest that the process of writing from sources is not an exception to the recursive pattern of the general writing process (Emig, 1971).

The data revealed two basic problems with the not-so-fluent readers. First, they failed to interact with the texts. They passively sat on their hands and did not mark passages in the text or take notes while reading. In order to be a truly fluent reader, one must actively interact with the text in meaningful ways that construct an interpretation of the text and build comprehension (Marshall, 1981; Rosenblatt, 1994; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). Second, because these readers did not interact with the text, they were unable to learn from or extract information from the sources texts. As a result, their essays were full of quotations rather than well integrated information from the source texts.

2.4.6.2 – Implications for L2 Students

One of the major implications of this study concerns L2 proficiency. As has been previously mentioned, L2 proficiency plays a key role in L2 reading comprehension. Without sufficient L2 proficiency, L2 reading comprehension breaks down greatly reducing a reader’s ability to interact with the text. And a lack of interaction with source texts would possibly
result in low L2 proficiency writers following processes more similar to the not-so-fluent readers in this study.

Another implication is that even if an L2 writer has sufficient L2 proficiency to allow for adequate comprehension of the source texts, without the knowledge of and ability to use the more effective processes of the fluent readers (e.g. annotating the reading text, summarizing, paraphrasing), the L2 writer will be more similar to the not-so-fluent readers. In other words, adequate L2 proficiency is not the only requirement for L2 writers to produce a well-written writing-from-sources paper. They must also be able to employ more effective processes. Thus, while L1 writers must work to build their repertoire of effective reading processes to be successful at writing from sources, L2 writers must work to build both reading and writing skills as well as L2 proficiency, which can compound the difficulty of successfully completing a writing-from-sources task for L2 writers.

It is also worth noting that one the strategies the not-so-fluent readers used was copying quotations from the source texts. Because they did not have a global comprehension of the source texts, they resorted to copying quotations from them. Using quotations in this manner resulted in very little manipulation of the source texts. And L2 writers, who may struggle to comprehend source texts because of factors mentioned previously, are sometimes accused of borrowing text from sources without adequate transformation (Pecorari, 2003).

2.4.6.3 – Writing From Historical Documents

Another study looked at how L1 students read and used multiple source documents in various historical writing tasks (Stahl, Hynd, Britton, McNish, & Bosquet, 1996). The participants were 10th grade advanced placement history students and the task was to read various documents on the Tonkin Conflict and the Tonkin Resolution and write either a description or an opinion of the event.
The data showed that students created consistent internal models of the event after reading two texts, but reading more texts did not improve the consistency. The students took literal notes from the readings gathering facts on the incident. When writing a description, students stuck close to the texts they read. When writing an opinion, students ignored the information in the texts even when they had taken copious notes.

The authors use this data to create a model of multiple-text processing. This model contains four components: selection, processing, constructing, and integrating. Selection is choosing ideas from the reading texts to include in the writing. In this study, students consistently chose to include in their writing the same ideas from the shorter texts, but varied widely in the ideas they included from the longer texts. Students were also able to filter out information in the reading texts that had little or no relevance to their writing purpose.

Processing is how a student read the information in the various texts. The data showed that the writing task made little difference in how students processed the reading texts. Constructing is building an internal representation of the information. The students’ representations became more consistent after reading one text and even more consistent after two texts; however, additional texts had very little effect because the students seemed to look for overlap in texts rather than new knowledge and perspectives with which to challenge their internal representations. And integrating is using the information from the source texts in the writing. The task in this study influenced the level of integration with the description task eliciting writing that adhered closely to the reading texts (typically one reading text) and the opinion task eliciting global statements that were not clearly tied to any single text.

2.4.6.4 – Implications for L2 Students

It is possible that L2 students too would be able to build consistent internal models of a historical event through reading two texts just as in this study. However, while this study assumes a particular level of reading skill, L2 students would require sufficient L2 proficiency
in addition to the assumed reading skill in order to comprehend the texts. Without both, it is questionable whether two texts, or any amount of reading, would allow L2 students to form a consistent internal model of a historical event.

One finding from this study that may have direct application to L2 students is that the writing task can affect how a writer utilizes source texts. First, a writer’s purposes for reading a source text can be affected by the writing task. Reading that is directed by purposes derived from a writing task is a different kind of reading from reading that is driven by the purposes inherent in the text (Kroll, 1993). Second, some tasks lend themselves to a closer adherence to the source texts while composing and other tasks lead to more general use of the source texts. This seems to be a principle that would apply equally to both L1 and L2 writing tasks.

2.4.6.5 – Writing From a Literary Source Text

Ruiz-Funes (1999) conducted a case study of an L2 Spanish student writing an argument essay based on a literary play. The participant was a third-year Spanish student who was enrolled in an upper division Spanish composition course and considered to be a skilled writer. Data consisted of reading and writing logs in which the participant recorded her thoughts and actions while reading and writing, stimulated-recall interviews after reading and writing episodes, and the final written product along with preliminary drafts.

The researcher analyzed the data in terms of a four-component process for writing-from-readings developed for an L1 context (Stein, 1990). The four components are structuring, elaborating, synthesizing, and monitoring. Structuring is the process of reshaping information and ideas from the source text; elaborating is the process of transacting with the source text by activating prior knowledge to construct meaning from it; synthesizing is the process of combining information from the source text with other sources of information in order to examine the relationships among them; and monitoring is the process of confirming the direction of the developing text by comparing it with the source text.
The result of the case study was that this L1 writing-from-sources process also held true within the L2 writing-from-sources task with this participant. Because the participant was a skilled writer and was not at a beginning level of L2 proficiency, it seems that the processes typically used in a writing-from-sources task such as this are consistent across languages. However, the researcher acknowledged that at a lower level of L2 proficiency, this result could have been different.

2.4.7 – Summary of Key Findings

Although several theories of the reading-writing relationship have been posited, we do not yet have a complete picture of how the development of reading affects writing and vice versa. It may be that reading and writing share the same core of knowledge, which would lead to an improvement in one skill if there is also an improvement in the other skill. Other theories suggest that reading and writing are separate competencies that interact with each other in complex ways or that reading and writing simply draw on similar cognitive processes. Consequently, when teaching students to perform writing-from-sources tasks, it is unclear how the balance of reading and writing instruction leads to improved performance on writing-from-sources tasks (for a discussion of the pedagogical integration of reading and writing in L2 contexts, see Belcher & Hirvela, 2001; Hirvela, 2004).

Writing from sources involves many different processes that vary depending on the particular task. Summarizing a single text and synthesizing multiple texts are two separate skills that involve different processes. The most apparent difference is in the process of creating an organization for the information. Summarizing generally borrows the organization of the original text while synthesizing across texts with different organizations requires the writer to create an original organization that suits the selected information. Selecting the information to include also varies across summary and synthesis writing. Selecting information in summary writing involves creating a hierarchy of propositions in a text and
selecting the most important propositions from that hierarchy while selecting information in synthesis writing requires the writer to identify information in a text that is relevant to the purposes of the synthesis but may or may not be important to the purposes of the source text. Beyond summary and synthesis, changes in the purpose of a writing task, for example between arguing a position and expressing an opinion, can affect how a student reads the source texts and utilizes them within his or her own writing. Pedagogically, this means that in order to be successful at writing from sources, students need to learn a host of strategies and processes that may be more or less connected but are all employed in unique ways that vary depending on the task.

Writing from sources poses a number of potential stumbling blocks to L2 writers. The most overarching of these seems to be the need for a minimum level of L2 proficiency, which is necessary to properly interact with source texts while reading and adequately comprehend their meaning. Without at least a basic comprehension of the source texts, it does not seem possible to incorporate, in an acceptable manner, information from those texts into one’s own writing.

In addition to a minimum level of L2 proficiency, reading and writing skills are also necessary. Reading skills allow a reader to interact with a text in order to construct meaning from it and use that meaning while planning for a written composition. Thus, unlike L1 readers who already have language competence and work mainly to build a larger repertoire of reading processes in order to advance their reading skills, L2 readers must work to build both a minimum level of L2 proficiency as well as an expanded pool of reading processes. Effective writing processes help a writer to plan content, create an organization, formulate language, and revise and edit. Second language writers who have not fully developed these processes must work to build them along with L2 proficiency. Thus, while simultaneously working to improve their L2 proficiency, L2 students must also work to improve their reading and writing skills. Thus, while L1 students work to improve two skills—reading and
writing—in order to advance their performance with writing from sources tasks, L2 students must work on three skills—reading and writing skills in addition to L2 proficiency—in order to make the same advancements in their performance on writing-from-sources tasks.

2.5 – Reading-Writing Issues in Academic Settings

This section discusses three other issues that are integrally connected to writing in an L2 and likely have some impact a student’s performance on a writing from sources task within an L2 academic setting. First is the issue of contrastive rhetoric and the effect of L1 rhetorical patterns on L2 writing. Second is the role of task representation, or a writer’s understanding of the requirements of the writing task, in appropriately applying one’s writing skills to successfully negotiate academic writing assignments and rhetorical situations. And third is plagiarism in L2 writing.

2.5.1 – Intercultural Rhetoric

One area of research that has been influential on the field of L2 writing and deserves discussion here is intercultural rhetoric. This field describes differences in preferred rhetorical patterns among L2 writers with the same cultural background.

2.5.1.1 – Historical Overview

Work in intercultural rhetoric began in 1966 with Kaplan’s article that described the different organizational patterns L2 writers with varying L1 backgrounds use when writing academic paragraphs in English (Kaplan, 1966). The article was a product of Kaplan’s search for “solutions to an immediate pedagogical problem” (Kaplan, 1988, p. 277) that he noticed among his students, specifically that his students’ L1 backgrounds seemed to influence the organizational patterns within their writing. Kaplan’s purpose for this groundbreaking study was “to educate the teachers of L2 writing who have to be aware of the differences in rhetoric
Kaplan’s original article presented the now famous “doodles” that depict the rhetorical preference of native English-speaking writers as direct, Semitic writers as parallel, Oriental writers as indirect, and Romance and Russian writers as digressive. Although Kaplan’s model was not intended to serve as a general model of text structure across academic and professional writing contexts, nor was it intended to describe composing processes across cultures (Connor & Kaplan, 1987), it brought to the fore the insight that because language and writing are cultural phenomena, differing cultures give rise to differing rhetorical tendencies, and these linguistic and rhetorical conventions of the native culture often transfer to writing in the L2 causing interference (Connor, 2002). Kaplan has indicated that his initial notion of culturally influenced rhetoric emanated from the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which states that our perception and thought patterns are influenced by the limitations of the language used to express them (Matsuda, 2001).

From this beginning in 1966, the field of intercultural rhetoric worked for the next twenty-five years in parallel to the field of contrastive analysis employing the developing techniques of linguistic text analysis. While contrastive analysis studied the differences between the grammatical patterns of languages in an attempt to predict the errors students would make when learning an L2, researchers in intercultural rhetoric examined the features of coherence, cohesion, and discourse structure within L1 and L2 academic texts in order to understand and predict the writing difficulties students with a particular L1 background would have (Connor, 2003; Connor & Kaplan, 1987; Purves, 1988). Although the field of contrastive analysis failed to achieve a significant predictive power, the field of intercultural rhetoric found some support (Connor, 1996).

Around 1990, intercultural rhetoric broadened its scope, moved away from an intense focus on textual analysis, and began to include in its investigations the rhetorical contexts and

(Kaplan, 2005, p. 387).
cognitive variables that affect writing. Researchers examined several contextual areas including writing classes and the effects of culture on the social construction of knowledge (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Nelson & Murphy, 1992), the effect of culture on the development of literacy (Carson, 1992), writing in graduate school and professional contexts (Casanave, 1995; Connor & Kramer, 1995; Prior, 1995), and the writing of L2 academics and professional writers (Connor et al., 1995; Gosden, 1996). This focal expansion within intercultural rhetoric has continued through to today with researchers exploring intercultural rhetoric in the wider context of “mainstream writing” within the U.S. (Connor, 2003) and continuing to broaden and diversify the definition of culture (Atkinson, 2004).

2.5.1.2 – Contributions of intercultural Rhetoric to L2 Writing

Although intercultural rhetoric has made numerous contributions to the field of L2 writing, this section will outline a few of its most influential contributions. Probably the most significant contribution has been to help teachers move beyond the sentence level, examine the structure of discourse in L2 student writers’ texts, and consider the differences between discourse features across languages and cultures (Kaplan, 2005). When Kaplan’s 1966 article was published, second language writing instruction served to reinforce oral patterns and was largely focused on grammatical accuracy at the sentence level. Intercultural rhetoric played a key role in moving L2 writing beyond this point and towards pedagogical models targeted at the discourse level, such as current-traditional rhetoric, the process movement, EAP, and genre approaches (Reid, 1993; Silva, 1990).

The field of intercultural rhetoric has led us to understand that cultural background is one factor that can contribute to differences and difficulties in learning to effectively and appropriately construct texts in an L2. Before learning the expectations of the L2 audience, L2 writers may rely on their L1 knowledge of text construction and compose L2 texts that can
seem incoherent and illogical to native speaking readers (Connor, 1996). Intercultural rhetoric has served to heighten teachers’ awareness of students’ L1 rhetorical backgrounds and the rhetorical knowledge and experience L2 students bring into their L2 compositions so that teachers can help students more effectively communicate through writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

A further contribution is that intercultural rhetoric has shown that students can only discover the rhetorical style of an L2 by studying L2 texts (Kirkpatrick, 2000). Although the writing process movement became prominent in the 1970s and early 80s, intercultural rhetoric research showed that L2 students could not deduce the appropriate form of a written product only by exploring the process for generating writing. As Kirkpatrick (2000) put it, “a person who has never seen a watch would be hard put to make one even if provided with all the individual pieces” (p. 83). Thus, exploring the writing process may be necessary, but it is not alone sufficient to help developing L2 writers understand the complexities of L2 rhetoric (Leki, 1991).

Intercultural rhetoric has also shown that reader expectations can be different across languages, cultures, and writing tasks resulting in varying patterns of writing. Hinds (1987) research suggested that Japanese essay writing is writer-based with the primary responsibility of text interpretation placed upon the reader while English writing is reader-based, which places the burden of responsibility on the writer to make his or her intentions explicit and clear to the reader. In Japanese argumentative writing, the reader is expected to follow the writer’s line of thinking through a balanced presentation of an argument with the writer only coming to the true point at the end of the essay (Hinds, 1990). In contrast, English-speaking readers expect the writer to make explicit his or her position in the introduction and make statements unambiguously supporting that position throughout the essay. Although some have disputed the claims of Hinds’s research (Kubota, 1998; McCagg, 1996), it nevertheless has raised our awareness of cultural expectations regarding reader and writer roles.
And intercultural rhetoric has uncovered cultural differences in classroom behaviors that can affect writing. Students may vary in their preferences for group work and the types of interactions they feel comfortable engaging in with their peers (Nelson & Murphy, 1992). They may also vary in the types of feedback they are willing to give regarding their peers’ writing (Allaei & Connor, 1990). And in teacher-student writing conferences, students may have differing patterns of interaction (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990).

2.5.1.3 – Criticisms Against Intercultural Rhetoric

Although intercultural rhetoric has made many contributions to the field of L2 writing, throughout its history, it has faced considerable opposition. Below are some of the criticisms laid against intercultural rhetoric.

Using the paradigm of critical pedagogy, Kubota and Lehner (2004) raise several problems with intercultural rhetoric which are targeted at what they term “traditional” intercultural rhetoric. They argue that intercultural rhetoric has emphasized the differences that separate rather than the similarities that unify and this has reinforced existing power structures and created an insider-outsider mentality. Supporting an exclusive attitude towards English has reinforced English’s position as a dominant language and culture by exoticizing other languages, which labels them as inadequate or undesirable (Leki, 1997). However, Connor (2005) countered this argument by pointing out a fundamental difference between critical pedagogy and contrastive rhetoric. The central aim of intercultural rhetoric, originating in Kaplan’s founding work, has always been pedagogical while proponents of critical pedagogy have admitted that critical pedagogy “is more concerned about how language can affect personal and social change than it is with ‘how to teach language’ more effectively” (Crookes & Lehner, 1998, p. 327). Intercultural rhetoric has studied differences in order to help L2 students expand their understanding of and skills within rhetoric and
writing across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Whereas within critical pedagogy, the study of difference itself seems to be problematic.

Some researchers have criticized intercultural rhetoric for focusing too closely on texts and neglecting other contextual factors that influence writing. Scollon (1997) accused intercultural rhetoric of ignoring the influences of oral traditions on the construction of texts. Work in L2 writing that focuses on the construction of identity and multiculturalism has criticized intercultural rhetoric for oversimplifying the complex interplay of multiple sociocultural and psycholinguistic factors while writing in both an L1 and L2 (Spack, 1997b; Zamel, 1997).

Recently, Atkinson (2004) has suggested that intercultural rhetoric has not employed a sufficiently current and diverse conceptualization of culture. Since its conception, intercultural rhetoric has used the notion of received culture as the basis of its research. Received culture is the idea that cultural groups can be defined by political, geographic, and linguistic boundaries, and these boundaries lump large numbers of people together under sweeping generalizations (Atkinson, 1999). When researchers use this definition of culture, they typically use terms such as Asian culture, Afro-American culture, and Latino culture. This criticism of intercultural rhetoric seems particularly valid when one considers that culture is one of the three central components comprising intercultural rhetoric (the other two being writing and second language learning).

As various critical voices have been raised, the field of intercultural rhetoric has changed its tack and adopted fresh paradigms in response. Ulla Connor has generally led the charge into new areas for intercultural rhetoric, and in 1996, she outlined five new directions for intercultural rhetoric: 1) more genre-specific research, 2) research into the process of literacy acquisition across languages and cultures, 3) research on the level of adequacy or near-nativeness required in various contexts, 4) more gender-based research, and 5) research on effective classroom interactions (Connor, 1996). In addition to this research agenda for
intercultural rhetoric, Connor (2004) has proposed numerous research methods that move beyond text analysis in order to accomplish the research goals.

2.5.1.4 – Intercultural Rhetoric and Chinese Writers

In Kaplan’s (1966) founding article on intercultural rhetoric, he included Chinese writers as part of the Oriental category of writers and suggested that they utilize an indirect style of writing. Kaplan subsequently theorized that this indirect style was derived from the ba-gu wen, or Eight-Legged Essay, style used for the ancient Chinese civil service examination (Kaplan, 1972). This theory proved to be too simplistic to explain the complex social, cultural, and historical factors that have influenced the Chinese writing style.

It is not likely that Chinese rhetorical patterns are currently influenced by Eight-Legged Essay style of writing as Kaplan claimed. The Eight-Legged Essay format had a limited use and was only employed for the civil service examination, which was abolished in 1901. It is doubtful that this form of writing has unconsciously persisted in Chinese rhetoric because of the changing demands on and contexts for writing over the subsequent years in China (Kirkpatrick, 1995, 2004). Modern Chinese schools teach the bai-hua writing style, which employs deductive paragraphs that begin with a proposition and contain direct support for that proposition. Furthermore, researchers have noted that a preference for indirect writing in English may be a product of Chinese students receiving instruction that focuses on grammar and sentence-level issues rather than organization and discourse (Mohan & Lo, 1985).

There is further evidence that the rhetorical styles of Chinese and English may be more similar than Kaplan originally suggested. Researchers have found both inductive and deductive styles of prose in Chinese and English newspaper accounts of the same story (Scollon & Scollon, 1997) and linear development, rather than circular, in Chinese sales.
letters (Zhu, 1997, 2000). This indicates, at the very least, that the Chinese and English styles of writing parallel each other in some contexts.

However, differences still remain between Chinese and English rhetorical styles. Chinese newspapers seem to have a comparatively ambiguous quotation style compared with English newspapers; however, this may be due to a lack of standardized practices within the Chinese news reporting industry (Scollon & Scollon, 1997). Chinese information sequencing patterns seem to follow a because-therefore sequence in some formal oral contexts (Kirkpatrick, 1993) and formal written contexts (Kong, 1998). This sequence provides the reasons for a claim before making the claim and is likely due to issues of face relationships and social expectations.

Although there are points of similarity and difference between Chinese and English rhetorical styles, determining why these similarities and differences exist is difficult. Differences in academic contexts could be due to developmental factors in writing because organizational skills typically develop late, around the age of seventeen (Mohan & Lo, 1985). Similarities could exist because writers adapt to the contexts in which they write initially transferring prior knowledge and experience to a new context until they gain more experience and knowledge of the conventions typical of the genre and situation in which they are writing (Kirkpatrick, 1995, 2004).

2.5.2 – Task Representation

When confronted with any academic writing task, the first thing a student must do is create an understanding of what skills, products, and processes the task requires and make a plan of action that will lead to a written product that appropriately fulfills the writing task. This process is known as task representation. Flower et al. (1990) define task representation as “an interpretive process that translates the rhetorical situation—as the writer reads it—into the act of composing” (p. 35). This process of translating the rhetorical situation is a highly
complex, dynamic, and context specific process that plays a key role in successful student writers.

In very simplified terms, it is possible that there are two factors that determine a student’s success or failure in negotiating the rhetorical context of the classroom and the writing tasks assigned therein. The first factor would be the student’s level of writing competence, which would include traditionally taught academic writing skills such as reproducing standard modes such as cause-effect, comparison-contrast, narration, persuasion, and argumentation; producing grammatically accurate and syntactically complex texts; understanding and replicating various classroom and subject genres; creating cohesion within a text; and summarizing or synthesizing source texts. These skills have historically been recognized in the field of writing as essential skills for successful academic writers and have thus maintained a prominent place in L2 writing pedagogy (Reid, 1993; Silva, 1990).

The second factor for success with an academic writing task is how the student applies those skills, which is determined by how the student perceives the requirements of the writing task, or in other words the student’s task representation. If the student applies skills that lead to a written product that does not match the task as the teacher defines it, the student will likely receive a low grade even though he/she possessed the writing skills and the content knowledge required to receive a high grade (Hamp-Lyons, 1991). In this case, the task representation, not the student’s writing skills, would determine the success or failure of the student. Within this simplified example, we can see that possessing an adequate level of writing competence may not be sufficient to produce successful writing, but that success is more likely to occur through both the possession of writing competence and the skillful application of that competence through creating an accurate task representation for each writing task.

The problem with narrowing down academic writing success to the level of writing competence and the application of those skills through task representations is that this is an
An oversimplified view of what actually occurs. The individual student is not the only participant in any academic rhetorical situation and success with writing is not, therefore, determined by the individual. Rather, writing success in academic settings is determined by a multitude of historical, situational, and interpersonal factors and understanding all of the factors that interact together to affect academic written genres is crucial (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Berkenkotter, Huckin, & Ackerman, 1991). Genre studies have helped to identify many of these factors and highlight the complex interactions between the written texts, the roles of readers and writers, and the contexts within which these participants interact (Johns, 1997). Indeed, genre theory has moved well beyond the process movement (Hyland, 2003)—which suggests that writing follows an idealized process over which writers can develop control by repeatedly moving through it—and has shown that writer’s processes are “varied, dependent on their past writing experiences, the demands of the context, writers’ roles vis-à-vis the readers, and the socially determined constraints of the genre itself” (Johns, 2003, p. 198). In other words, each writing task involves a social process that requires writers to negotiate the rhetorical context and frame their texts in disciplinarily appropriate ways (Hyland, 2000).

As part of that social process, teachers too create representations of the tasks they assign, and it would seem logical that the grades a teacher gives student papers are influenced by how close the papers match the teacher’s task representation, as is the case in holistically scored essays (Connor & Carrell, 1993). A good paper, in theory, will fulfill all the expectations of the teacher and consequently receive a high grade. And a high grade would logically represent successful writing. However, we know that teachers grade academic writing tasks based on more than what is in the paper. Teachers base classroom grades on numerous classroom and student factors such as attendance in class, class participation, judgments of the student’s efforts and understanding of concepts taught in class, length of time in the program of study, and the inclusion of concepts in the paper in which the teacher is personally interested (Casanave, 1995; Leki, 1995; Prior, 1995).
Despite the complex nature of constructing a task representation, Flower et al. (1990) have proposed a simple theory of task representation construction that is organized around three principles. The first principle is that writers create, rather than select, task representations. When confronted with a writing task, writers do not select a task representation from a file of prefabricated task representations each designed to suit a particular rhetorical situation. Rather, the writer’s schemas, past experiences with writing, strategies, and known writing conventions and patterns all converge, whether conscious or not, to create anew the writer’s task representation and help the writer decide how to approach and successfully accomplish the writing task.

The second principle of task representation construction is that it is a process that extends over the course of composing. In order to construct a task representation that best adheres to the demands of the rhetorical context, writers must notice cues emanating from that context, incorporate the cues and implications of the cues into a developing representation of the task, and use their experience and judgment to adjust their task representation to fit those cues. Task cues come from a variety of sources such as a printed writing assignment sheet, a teacher’s in-class comments, readings and source texts, and other students in the class. Because most writing occurs over time and these cues emanate from various sources within the rhetorical context over the span of writing, students’ task representations are constantly challenged and possibly revised over the course of composing.

This continuing process of constructing a task representation is seen in ethnographic studies of writing tasks. In one case study of a graduate geography seminar, the construction of a task representation for the final exam spanned the whole semester (Prior, 1995). The course outline handed out on the first day of class gave some indication of the writing tasks involved in the final exam. As the final exam drew closer, students began asking questions about the writing task for the final exam and what it would require. In response to the questions, the professor began giving clues to length and types of essays required. This cuing
continued until the last day of class. The actual writing tasks on the final exam varied from some of the descriptions that the professor had given in class, which no doubt, required the students to again adjust their task representation for the final exam writing assignment. In this case, students had a whole semester to build a task representation of the final exam.

The third principle of task representation construction is that an unstable task representation can lead to inconsistencies and disjointed text in the final written product. Because writers represent tasks over time rather than in a single instance, their changing perception of the task is likely to lead to revisions in their plans and paper. If these revisions of plans occur later in the writing process, it is possible that the writer will shift directions in the middle of writing, which would lead to inconsistencies in the text.

Because task representation occurs within individual writers, and writers’ background experiences and abilities to notice contextual cues vary, there can be considerable variation among the task representations of writers engaged in the same task (Yang & Shi, 2003). Ruiz-Funes (2001) investigated the task representations of 14 Spanish-as-a-foreign-language students all given the same topic. The results showed that the final texts revealed considerable variation across the participants in the ways they interpreted the writing task. She concluded that “given the same reading-to-write assignment, FL students interpret the task in different ways and therefore produce different types of papers” (p. 233). The next step in the process of researching the task representation creation process is to “explore the factors that lead students to interpret a task in different ways” (p. 233).

2.5.3 – Plagiarism

One point of tension that frequently emerges at the intersection of L2 writers and writing-from-sources tasks is plagiarism. The research on plagiarism has revealed that it is a phenomenon of academic writing that is more complex than the average teacher’s typical assumption that L2 students plagiarize because they are lazy or dishonest. The literature on
plagiarism discusses three issues—patchwriting, authorial identity, and cultural differences—which attempt to explain what is occurring within the phenomenon of plagiarism and set plagiarism apart from the realm of academic dishonesty.

Patchwriting is a process of writing from sources during which students copy from source texts and alter the language to varying degrees but not to the extent of becoming acceptable paraphrases or summaries. Patchwriting is different from plagiarism because it is considered a positive developmental stage in learning to write from sources (Howard, 1995). In academics, L1 students new to a university generally do not have much experience writing from sources. In learning to use sources in their writing, these students typically go through stages of patchwriting before arriving at a sufficient ability to correctly and acceptably write from sources. The stages of patchwriting involve copying from source texts and using various strategies such as deleting words, altering grammar, and substituting synonyms (Howard, 1993). If a student does not correct the patchwriting before submitting a final draft, it results in plagiarism. However, the difficulty of patchwriting in academic settings is that it can potentially be misconstrued as deliberate plagiarism when teachers do not recognize a student’s progression through the patchwork stages to a full ability to write from sources (Hull & Rose, 1989). Second language students are no different from L1 students in moving through the stages of patchwriting. When they arrive at the university, most L2 students have had very little to no training at all in writing from sources in the L2, and many of these students have had very little experience with writing from sources in their L1s to support their L2 writing from sources.

Constructing an authorial identity involves processes that can lead to written products containing characteristics of plagiarism (Scollon, 1995). The challenge for academic writers who are new to a discipline or new to the academy is how to assume the role of authorship and create an authorial identity for oneself within an unfamiliar context while at the same time avoiding plagiarism (Herrington, 1985; McCarthy, 1987). This can be a particular
challenge because part of the process of creating an authorial identity occurs through imitating other authors, a learning process supported by Vygotskian theory (McInerney & McInerney, 2006), and imitation can lead to the unintentional appropriation of other voices and texts. However, it is through this imitation that new authors “serve a kind of apprenticeship during which they come to understand not only the appropriate rhetorical forms, but also the underlying issues that make writing interesting and arguments effective” (Applebee, 2000, p. 105).

Cultural differences also play a role in the occurrence of plagiarism in L2 settings. In contrast to Western ideas of plagiarism that condemn the use of another’s words without proper recognition of the source, Pennycook (1996) points out that in China, a keen application of another’s words to a suitable rhetorical situation is highly praised. Sowden (2005a) explains that in China, explicitly citing a widely recognized source could be construed an insult because the writer should assume that the reader has enough of an education to recognize the source (for a further discussion of this point, see Liu, 2005; Sowden, 2005b). These writing practices fall within the general Chinese curriculum, which prizes the skill of memorization and has students frequently memorize whole texts (Carson, 1992). Even though the use of memorization in China has been shown to lead to deeper understandings (Marton, Dall’Alba, & Kun, 1996), there is a generally held belief in Western academia that this heavy emphasis on memorization leads Chinese students to plagiarize through the regurgitation, whether conscious or not, of memorized texts. With this type of cultural background, it can be very difficult for a Chinese student to understand how the notions of copyright and intellectual property underpin plagiarism in Western contexts (Sutherland-Smith, 2005) and why plagiarism is treated tantamount to a criminal act (Mallon, 1989).

In addition to the issues of patchwriting, authorial identity, and cultural differences, L2 reading ability is another variable that can complicate the plagiarism issue because L2
reading abilities that are insufficient for the reading task may also lead a student to plagiarize. Second language students without the linguistic proficiency or reading abilities to create a complete representation of a text and understand the main ideas read with bottom-up processes and may rely too much on writing coping strategies such as patchwriting and excessive quoting (Kirkland & Saunders, 1991). Even when a student has reading abilities equal to the reading task, the L2 reader may not read rhetorically—that is they may read an academic text as a narrative rather than recognizing the argument inherent in most academic texts. This can lead to a poor use of sources in the text the student is producing (Kantz, 1990).

Plagiarism is an important issue within the realm of this study because of its position between source texts and the acceptable reproduction and use of them. Therefore, it is a vital part of the backdrop that helps us better understand L2 writers composing from sources. This is particularly important when comparing the form of participants’ written texts with the source texts.

2.6 Conclusion

My review of the literature began with the issue of L2 proficiency in L2 writing. It appears from previous research that L2 writers are able to use their L1 in order to facilitate the use of their writing expertise within their L2 writing processes. Writers do this by using the L1 to perform some of the writing processes that are not directly involved in text production, such as planning organization and content and gauging the rhetorical situation. Thus, writing expertise rather than L2 proficiency appears to be the most critical component to L2 writing success.

However, reading seems to be a different case from writing and L2 proficiency is a more critical factor within successful L2 reading. This is because the complexity of the language in a reading text cannot be manipulated by the reader but must be comprehended
without simplification or L1 support. Thus, L2 proficiency plays a much larger role in determining the success with L2 reading.

Another critical factor for L2 reading and writing performance is understanding text structure. Intercultural rhetoric has shown that L2 writers will likely transfer their L1 understandings of text structure to writing in the L2 until they develop an explicit understanding of the differences between L1 and L2 text structure. Second language reading studies have also shown that understanding text structure is a critical component to L2 reading comprehension. It would seem logical that there is an intersection of L2 students’ understanding of text structure that they use to facilitate reading comprehension with the understanding they use to create appropriately organized written texts.

All of these variables described above seem to intersect when reading and writing are combined within the same task. When reading is combined with writing, it seems logical that the relationships may shift between L2 proficiency and reading and writing. If reading is an integral part of the writing task, such as in a writing-from-sources task, then L2 proficiency might play a larger role within the writing processes, especially if those processes are dependent on reading in order to obtain content for the writing. Also, L2 proficiency and knowledge of L2 text structure might affect a writer’s understanding of the task because writers need to be able to draw on background knowledge and interpret contextual cues in order to form an acceptable representation of the L2 writing task. Writers may not have the oral L2 proficiency to pick up important information about the writing task and they may not have the proper knowledge of text structure to guide their planning of text organization.

Through this literature review, I have attempted to show that most of what we know about reading and writing is generally compartmentalized within those two domains with little knowledge of the way the two skills complement and support each other. There is a significantly smaller body of research that has looked at the skills of reading and writing in relation to each other. And an even smaller body of research has looked at how students
coordinate reading and writing while engaged in writing-from-sources tasks. In other words, the more the skills of reading and writing overlap within a context, the less we seem to know about the interactions between the two skills. This research project, therefore, is an attempt to address this apparent gap in our understanding by contributing additional insights regarding how reading and writing are used within an academic writing-from-sources task.

As stated in Chapter 1, the research question that initially guided this study was: What is the nature of individual L2 students’ experiences when engaged in a writing-from-sources task within an intensive academic writing course? The focus of this question was at the crossroads of reading and writing within an academic argument essay assignment. The next chapter will explain the methodology used to collect the data and the analysis methods used to analyze that data.
3.1 – Introduction

Given the background to the study presented in the previous two chapters, the purpose of this chapter is to describe the research context, present the research design used to collect the data, and the procedures used to analyze the data.

This chapter begins with the rationale that underpinned my research approach and an overview of the context where I collected the data for this study. Next, it presents the three specific research questions the study aimed to answer. Then, it details the data collection and the various types and items of data collected. The final section describes the analysis procedures used to answer the research questions.

3.2 – Rationale for Research Approach

Parks (2005) has explained that “research paradigms and specific methodological tools may be best viewed as heuristics, the choice of which depends to a large degree on the research questions and ideological positioning of the researcher” (pp. 146-147). The purpose of this section is to clarify how my ideological perspective and research interests led to my choices in research design, underscored the data analysis, and influenced the conclusions. Needless to say, making this information explicit is critical for consumers of this research to determine its trustworthiness and transferability (Patton, 1990).

3.2.1 – Epistemological Perspective

Of all the philosophical options that could underpin my research, my viewpoint agrees most firmly with subtle realism (Hammersley, 2002). Subtle realism holds that there is a tangible reality that we can know fully. However, we do not have direct access to all
phenomena but view them through our cultural assumptions. Because cultural assumptions have the ability to distort or clarify our view of particular phenomena, researchers must be particularly vigilant about guarding against error. And the constant possibility of error means that we cannot make claims of which we are absolutely certain but can only offer knowledge of which we are reasonably sure. Furthermore, because all phenomena are accessible only through our cultural assumptions and the resulting knowledge is necessarily represented from some point of view, it is possible to have “multiple, non-contradictory and valid descriptions and explanations of the same phenomenon” (Hammersley, 2002, p. 74). Thus, different researchers with different backgrounds may come to different explanations of a particular phenomenon.

There are two critical differences between subtle realism and other perspectives used in qualitative research. First, it differs from naïve realism in that naïve realism believes we can make claims about which we are absolutely certain because reality is directly observable. However, in order to directly observe any reality outside of myself and come to some objective reality, I would need to separate myself from my own culture and experiences, a feat that is impossible (Maxwell, 2002).

Second, I cannot accept the position of constructivists that “see reality as a construction in the minds of individuals” and that “no amount of inquiry can produce convergence on [a single reality]” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 83). There are two issues with this position that I find untenable. One, because reality is an individual creation, there is no reality common among people, which leaves me with little motivation to conduct research if my work is not likely to contribute a concrete and long-term solution to real problems. Two, in this paradigm, validity is measured against the prevailing belief at any given time. This seems to encourage a centrist attitude where researchers are encouraged to bend results so that they are in line with the general trend of the times rather than stating results as they actually
see them. To me, this is a skewed sense of validity that seems more influenced by peer pressure than “doing the right thing.”

3.2.2 – Selection of Research Design

The initial goal for this research was to look at the reading and writing processes L2 students used as they worked on an academic writing-from-sources task. Most writing process research has been qualitative in nature. In fact, I am not aware of any writing process research that has been mainly quantitative. Within the qualitative research tradition, L2 writing researchers have used many different methodologies to collect primary data on the writing process including think-aloud protocols (Cumming, 1989; Raimes, 1985; Roca de Larios, Marin, & Murphy, 2001), stimulated recall (Bosher, 1998), participant observation (Zamel, 1983), and interviews (Spack, 1997; Zamel, 1982). Each method has particular strengths and weaknesses, but I was mainly interested in how L2 students worked in natural settings. I wanted to know how the participants engaged in the writing process “even as they [were] involved in the most mundane activities, for example, washing the dishes or getting ready for bed” (Zamel, 1982, p. 200). Interviews allowed me to collect data with these characteristics. Using any of the other previously mentioned qualitative methods would have required the participants to write in a laboratory setting, which would have effectively eliminated many of the contextual factors that influence the natural writing process. Thus, I chose to conduct research in the ethnographic tradition utilizing mainly interviews and observations.

3.3 – Outline of the Research Context

This study was conducted at the Auckland Institute of Studies, St. Helens (AIS). AIS is a small, private tertiary college that attracts mainly international students to its campus in Auckland, New Zealand. It offers a range of courses and degrees including English-as-a-second-language instruction and bachelor’s degrees in international business. One of the
requirements for completing a bachelor’s degree is to pass an academic writing course called Study Writing. All students are enrolled in this course during their first semester of study in the degree program. Students who fail the course are automatically reenrolled in it until they pass.

The main goal of Study Writing as stated on the course outline during the semester of this research was to “help students develop skills in academic reading and writing. In particular, the course [was] designed to equip students with the appropriate knowledge and skills required for the types of academic writing they [would] encounter in degree level courses.” One of the sub-goals for achieving this main goal was to teach students how to “summarize, paraphrase, and cite sources to create a valid and legitimate academic text.” Consequently, all of the assignments in the course required source use and referencing. The four main assignments were a critique, an argument essay, an informational report, and a survey research paper. In addition, students also wrote three timed writing-from-sources essays: a diagnostic test, a midterm test, and a final exam. These assignments were produced at the program level rather than by individual teachers.

The Study Writing class met three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) for two hours with a 10-minute break in the middle of each class. It covered 12 weeks of instruction with the final exam being given during an additional exam week at the end of the semester.

3.4 – Research Questions

The general goal of this research was to explore L2 students’ experiences as they combined the processes of reading and writing to accomplish an academic writing-from-sources task. Because I used an ethnographic approach, I began the research with one broad question to guide the data collection. That question was:
1) What is the nature of individual L2 students’ experiences when engaged in a writing-from-sources task within an intensive academic writing course?

The genesis of this question was a pilot study that I conducted in the Study Writing class during a previous semester. The scope of this report is not broad enough to include a description of the pilot study. However, the pilot study was similar in methodology and focus (for a report on the pilot study, see Wolfersberger, 2005). After collecting and analyzing some of the data, two additional questions emerged. Those two questions were:

2) What factors influenced the participants’ representations of the assignment task throughout the process of writing?

3) What factors contributed to a participant producing a final written product that the teacher or the institution considered plagiarized?

3.4.1 – Operationalization of Key Terms

3.4.1.1 – Research Question #1

Writing-from-sources task: A writing-from-sources task required the participants to read source texts and incorporate information from them into a piece of original writing.

Intensive academic writing course: The purpose of an intensive academic writing course was to build students’ academic writing skills through both instruction and practice so that the students could more successfully complete the written requirements of other academic courses.

3.4.1.2 – Research Question #2

Assignment task: This was an argumentative writing-from-sources task that was part of the Study Writing curriculum (see appendix A for the complete task as distributed to the participants). It was on the topic of abortion and asked students to argue whether abortion was a selfish choice or not. It required students to use and cite at least five sources and write a minimum of 1500 words.
Representation of the assignment task: The representation of the task was a participant’s cognitive understanding of the requisite content and formal schematic features of the final written product, features such as appropriate arguments, text organization, style, use of source texts, and number of paragraphs. A representation of the assignment task may have been manifest in the final written product; however, a representation of the assignment task was a cognitive manifestation of the requirements of the assignment task while the final written product was a physical manifestation, and these two were not necessarily isomorphic. This definition follows the work of Flower (1990) and allowed comparisons between the research projects.

Process of writing: The process of writing commenced at the beginning of the class when the assignment task was distributed and ended two and a half weeks later when the participants handed in their final draft.

3.4.1.3 – Research Question #3

Final written product: This is the final draft of the assignment task that each participant submitted to the teacher for evaluation.

Consider plagiarized: In order for the teacher or institution to consider a paper plagiarized, they need to take some action against the student as a result of the plagiarism. This action can be anything from reducing the student’s marks on the assignment to dismissing the student from the school. If no action was taken, then it is assumed that neither the teacher nor the institution considered a paper to be plagiarized.

3.5 – Participants

My goal was to collect a complete set of analyzable data from four students in the Study Writing class at AIS. In order to collect data that was somewhat representative of the range of cultures, educational backgrounds, and L1s found in the Study Writing class, I chose
potential participants by selecting every third name on the class list of one of the six streams of the Study Writing class. I chose eight names because the results of a pilot study showed that the attrition rate from initial selection to the completion of data collection was around 50%. Although I taught one stream of Study Writing, I selected as participants students enrolled in a stream taught by another teacher who had an undergraduate degree in history and English, several years experience teaching high school, and over 8 years teaching experience with EAP and academic writing in both EFL and ESL contexts. Using students from a stream other than mine helped create an open participant-researcher relationship where the participants felt comfortable sharing their reading and writing processes with someone who was not evaluating their academic performance.

During the second week of the semester, I approached the randomly selected students and asked them to participate in the study. I explained the purpose of the study and what would be required of them as participants. And in order to encourage students to participate in the study, I offered each student a personal analysis of their reading and writing skills, recommendations to help them improve those skills, and my services as a writing tutor during the following semester. Four students agreed to participate in the study.\textsuperscript{1}

All four participants were originally from China and had been in New Zealand from a few months to about three years. Two were male and two were female and their ages were between 19 and 26. All four participants were working towards a bachelor’s degree in international business. Two of the participants were in their first semester at AIS, one was in his third, and one was in her fourth. Further details about the participants are reported in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{1} Two additional students agreed to participate; however, their data is not presented here because of concerns about the length of this report. I chose which four students to include and which two to exclude based on the completeness of the data collected from each student.
3.6 – Procedures

This section provides details about the procedures I used to collect the data for this study. It discusses the timeline for data collection, the method for conducting classroom observations, and the process of interviewing the participants and transcribing the interviews.

3.6.1 – Data Collection

Data collection occurred over the three-week period required to complete a writing-from-sources argument essay. Over the course of the argument essay assignment, I conducted four interviews with each participant, collected various texts from the participants and teacher, and observed the class three times. (See Table 1 for a timeline of data collection.)

3.6.2 – Class Observations

The Study Writing class met eight times during the argument essay assignment. I observed all or part of three of these classes. The first observation was on the first day of the argument essay assignment when the assignment task sheet was distributed to the students. The second observation was a week later just before the first draft was due. And the third observation was a week after the second during the class when the teacher handed back the students’ first drafts with her comments written on them.

During the observations, I was a non-participant observer and tried to be as inconspicuous as possible by sitting in the back corner of the class. Throughout the observations, I typed on a small laptop computer notes of the activities and conversations happening during the class. Because I was typing, I was often able to record the actual words said by the teacher and other students. When the students were engaged in group discussions,

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2 Actual data collection spanned 12 weeks and five writing tasks: 1) a diagnostic test, 2) the writing-from-sources argument essay assignment, 3) a midterm test, 4) a writing-from-sources report assignment, and 5) a final exam. Due to length constraints, only the argument essay data is presented in this report. However, the analysis and results occasionally draws upon data collected from some of these other writing tasks.
Table 1 – Timeline of Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of Semester</th>
<th>Class Assignment Schedule</th>
<th>Research Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wed: Begin argument essay</td>
<td>- Conducted interview to collect background information on participants (Mon-Tue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Observed class on Wednesday when argumentative assignment was distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Observed class on Wednesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 1st process interview with participants (Wed-Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Collected copies of 1st draft from teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Observe class on Wednesday after teacher read 1st drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 2nd process interview with participants (Wed-Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mon: 1st draft of Argumentative Essay due</td>
<td>- 3rd process interview with participants (Mon-Tue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed: Response Paper #2 due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fri: 2nd draft of Argumentative Essay due (peer review)</td>
<td>- Collected final grades for argument essay from teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

my observations generally followed the teacher when she moved to a group of students that included one or more participants in the study. When the teacher was with a group that did not include any participants, I focused on the groups with participants. I also noted things such as the length of time for each class activity, students who worked in groups with the participants, students present in class, and the places in the classroom the participants and other students were sitting.

When the teacher was with a group of students that included a participant, I had to shift my attention away from the other participants to focus on the particular group the teacher
was with. The methodological reason for this was that I assumed the interactions with the teacher would be the most important for each participant. And the practical reason was that when the teacher was interacting with a group of students, the whole group became more animated making it the easiest group on which to eavesdrop. Nevertheless, while focusing on the group the teacher was with, I was occasionally able to note some of the interactions within other groups containing participants.

3.6.3 – Interviews

During the course of data collection, I individually interviewed each participant three or four times using semi-structured interviews. There were two main purposes of the first interview. First was to collect information on the participants’ L1 and L2 literacy backgrounds, specifically reading and writing experiences that may have affected how each participant conceptualized and approached the writing tasks that were a part of this research. And the second purpose was to develop between the individual participants and myself a relationship that allowed the participants to feel comfortable sharing with me information about their thoughts and feelings. In order to obtain information on the participants’ background in the first interview, I asked questions such as: a) How old are you?, b) How long have you lived in New Zealand?, and c) How many semesters have you been studying at AIS? And in order to obtain information on the participants’ reading and writing experiences, I asked questions such as: a) What kinds of writing did you do for high school in your native language?, b) What are your strengths as a reader in your native language for school?, c) How did you learn to write in English?, and d) What kinds of English reading did you do during high school? (See appendix B for the complete list of questions used in the first interview.) I also used this first interview to explain in a bit more detail what was required of the participants, particularly that I wanted them to save all writing process artifacts such as readings, notes, and drafts.
For the next three interviews, I met with the participants at key points within the writing process. The first process interview was about a week after receiving the assignment task and just before the participants began composing a first draft. The second process interview was after the participants had received feedback on their first draft from the teacher and before they completed their second draft. And the third process interview was just after they handed in their final draft of the essay. The purpose of these interviews was to elicit the participants’ recollections of their reading and writing processes as well as their thoughts and feelings as they worked on the assignment task. These interviews were semi-structured and used each participant’s reading and writing texts to stimulate recall of retrospective events.

During these interviews, I asked questions such as: a) After receiving the assignment in class, what is the first thing you did to work on it? Second? Third? Why did you do these things?, b) Why did you read this text? Did you learn anything from reading it? If yes, what?, c) Have you generated a plan for your paper yet? If yes, can you describe it to me?, d) When did you start your first draft? What did you do? Can you describe your writing session(s)?, and e) How well do you think you are doing with this assignment? (See appendix C for the complete list of questions used in the process interviews.)

All of the interviews were semi-structured. Even though I had prepared a list of questions that I planned to ask all participants, the interview was guided by these questions rather than strictly constrained to them. I was free to ask additional questions to probe about any facet of a participant’s response that seemed particularly relevant to the study. Although I asked most of the planned questions in each interview, occasionally I left out one or two because they were either irrelevant or had been answered through a participant’s previous response.

I personally transcribed all of the interviews within two days of completing each one and produced mainly word-for-word transcriptions. I eliminated most of the placeholders (um, ah, etc.) and did not transcribe phonological characteristics, such as voice intonation,
unless a participant gave a one or two word response in which most of the meaning was conveyed through intonation. Doing the transcription myself increased the likelihood that the transcriptions were accurate since I was present in the interviews and could remember the interactions with each participant. When participants spoke softly or in a way that was not recorded well on the tape, my memory of the conversation—its words, context, and body language—often helped determine what was said. When these occasions did arise, and there was any possibility that the words recorded in the transcript may be inaccurate, these sections were marked in brackets. When it was not possible to determine a participant’s words from the tape and my memory, I marked that place in the transcript with “xxx” in brackets to show that information was missing. These instances, however, were rare.

One potential weakness with interviews intervening in the reading and writing process was that the interviews themselves may have altered the participants’ natural processes by raising their metacognitive awareness above normal levels and resulting in processes and products that were not entirely representative of the participants’ natural efforts. To avoid this potential side effect on the data, I would have needed to conduct the interviews after each participant had completed the final draft of the assignment task. However, because the interviews were retrospective, time was of the essence: the more time between the original event and the interview, the more idealized and simplified the account would be (Bartlett, 1932). In order to obtain the type of data I wanted, I felt that the potential alterations that may have occurred through increased metacognitive awareness did not outweigh the need for obtaining more accurate information on the participants’ reading and writing processes.

3.7 – Materials

The materials collected as data for this study were multidimensional in order to provide a variety of perspectives and came from four general sources. Besides the class observation notes and interview transcripts mentioned previously, I also collected a variety of
textual data that fell into three general categories: class texts, participant texts, and exam
texts. The data I collected within each of these categories is described in detail below.

3.7.1 – Class Texts

Class texts were anything that was distributed to all participants by the teacher while
working on the argument essay assignment. In other words, these data were common to all
participants.

3.7.1.1 – Assignment Task Sheet

The assignment task sheet was distributed in class on the first day of the argument
essay assignment (see appendix A). The basic question was whether abortion was a selfish
choice or not. The assignment required students to write an argument essay with a minimum
of 1500 words and cite at least five different sources in the text of their essay. The assignment
task sheet also included the analytical marking scale the teacher used to mark the final drafts
of the assignment.

3.7.1.2 – Class Articles

The teacher distributed to the class two articles as part of the argument essay
assignment (see appendix E). These two articles were designed to provide students with
viewpoints that represented both sides of the issue raised in the assignment task sheet. One
article was written by Mother Teresa (1994, March) and argued obliquely that abortion is a
selfish choice. This article was a 1491-word except of a speech Mother Teresa gave in the
United States covering abortion and other topics. The other article was published in the
Revolutionary Worker, a propaganda journal written by a Marxist organization, and explicitly
stated that abortion is not a selfish choice. The text of this article was 1180 words long. Both
articles were taken from the book *Opposing Viewpoints on Abortion* (Roleff, 1997) out of the section entitled *Is Abortion Selfish?*.

A third article that the class used as part of the argument essay but was not distributed with the argument essay task was a 2812-word excerpt from a book entitled *Abortion: A Doctor’s Perspective, A Woman’s Dilemma* (Sloan, 1992). This pro-choice article was written by Don Sloan, an abortion doctor, and debunked many of the arguments made against abortion. The class used this article for the first assignment of the semester, which was to write a critique of the article explaining its strengths and weaknesses. However, the teacher included this article in the class discussions and activities throughout the argument essay task.

3.7.1.3 – Class Handouts

The teacher distributed several handouts to the class during the essay assignment. I gathered as many handouts as I could and included these as part of the data pool. There were four handouts collected as part of the data. First was an example 5-paragraph essay on zoos (see appendix F). The teacher analyzed this example with the students just prior to starting the argument essay assignment. Second was a list of questions about the purposes of an argument essay and student’s experiences with writing a sources-based argument essay (see appendix G). This handout was distributed along with the assignment task sheet. Third was the reading questions covering the class articles (see appendix H). The students discussed these questions in class at the end of the first week of the assignment. And fourth was a student’s first draft of the essay (see appendix I). The class day following the students’ submission of their first draft, the teacher had the class analyze the construction of a student’s first draft that the teacher felt was well assembled. Incidentally, the student whose draft the teacher distributed was one of the participants in this research.
3.7.2 – Participant Texts

Participant texts were data used or produced by single participant while working on the argument essay assignment. These data varied from participant to participant.

3.7.2.1 – Reading Texts

Reading texts were any texts a participant read with the intention of working on the assignment task. Because the assignment task required students to use at least five sources in their essays, the participants did some reading beyond the class articles. Although I could not collect all reading texts, simply because the participants did not supply them, I managed to collect some of the texts they read. One data source for this study was regular interviews and during each interview, I asked the participant if he or she had any reading texts so that I could make a copy of them. If the participant did not have any of them, I would ask him or her to bring the texts to the next interview. The reading texts ranged in origin from the Internet to Proquest (an electronic database of newspapers, magazines, and journals) to previous class articles and assignments. When a participant brought his or her reading texts to an interview, I made a photocopy of them and used the texts to ask questions about the participant’s reading and writing processes, thus stimulating their memory through seeing the texts with their markings and notations.

3.7.2.2 – Intermediate Drafts

Intermediate drafts were the first and second drafts for each assignment. The assignment task required every student to write two drafts before the final draft of the argument essay. The teacher collected the students’ first drafts and wrote comments on them. I made photocopies of the participants’ first drafts after the teacher had written her comments and before she handed them back to the students. The students used the second draft in class
for a peer review session. I collected copies of the second drafts during the interviews following the peer review session.

3.7.2.3 – Final Drafts

Final drafts were the final written products that the participants submitted on the assignment due date to turnitin.com. Turnitin.com is a website that scans student papers for plagiarism by comparing them with text on the Internet, in the Proquest database, and previously submitted student papers. The result of the comparison is encapsulated in a similarity index percentage, a number that represents the percentage of the total text in the student paper that is similar to other texts compared against the student paper (see appendix J for an example turnitin.com report).

I collected two copies of each participant’s final draft. I downloaded one copy from turnitin.com so that I had the exact electronic version that each participant submitted for evaluation. And I photocopied the printed final drafts that the teacher used to mark the assignment. Along with the printed final drafts, I again photocopied the participants’ first and second drafts because the students had to resubmit hard copies of their first and second drafts along with the final draft.

3.7.2.4 – Final Draft Grades

These were the marks given by the teacher to the final drafts of the participants’ assignments. The teacher marked the essays with an analytical scale that evaluated the essays on these points: drafting process, introduction, body/discussion, conclusion, referencing and bibliography, and grammar and spelling (see appendix A). Generally, the teacher wrote the marks on a marking sheet, which was a copy of the analytical scale distributed with the assignment task sheet; however, for students who received a zero for plagiarism, she did not
fill out a marking sheet but wrote the marks on the front page of the final draft. I collected copies of each participant’s marks when I made copies of the final drafts.

3.7.2.5 – Process Drawings

Process drawings were outlines of the contexts and processes of writing for each participant (Prior, 2004). At the beginning of the third process interview, which followed the completion of the final draft, the participants were instructed to recreate on paper their writing process from start to finish. I told them to make a sketch of everything they did beginning with receiving the assignment task and finishing with handing in the final draft. Each participant took as much time as needed to recall the events and jot them down. Typically, this took about ten minutes. Once a participant had finished, I asked questions about the process drawing in order to obtain information about his or her writing process.

The process drawings served three functions. First, it was a “warm-up” for the third process interview and allowed the participants time to reflect and remember what they did as they worked on their essays. Second, it helped me to review during the interview a participant’s whole writing process from start to finish. Although I had obtained an account of most of each participant’s writing process in the first and second process interviews, this created another account of the participant’s writing process, which allowed me to compare the two accounts and validate them during the data analysis. Third, the process drawings helped me create a time-ordered display (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of the participants’ reading and writing processes, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.7.3 – Exam Texts

Exam texts were data used or created while the participants worked on the diagnostic test, the midterm test, and the final exam.
3.7.3.1 – Diagnostic Test

The diagnostic test was a 2-hour writing-from-sources argument essay. On the first day of class, the participants received four articles and instructions for writing the diagnostic test; however, they were not given the exact essay question. The articles were a basic introduction to the topic of abortion, which was used during the first half of the semester. Students took these articles home, read and studied them, and then brought them to the diagnostic test on the second day of class. The task for the diagnostic test read:

Some people believe that women should be guaranteed the right to make choices that affect her body including having an abortion. Other people believe that abortion is an appalling practice because it constitutes the murder of an innocent human life. What do you believe about abortion? Write an essay that argues for your position on abortion. Cite the information in the articles provided to support your opinions and ideas. Include a reference list at the end of your essay.

The participants were also required to write an 800-word essay that cited at least three of the articles given to them. After the test, I collected copies of the participants’ essays from the teacher.

3.7.3.2 – Midterm Test and Final Exam

The midterm test and final exam were similar to the diagnostic test. They were 3-hour writing-from-readings argument essays. The midterm test was on the topic of abortion and the final exam was on the topic covered during the second half of the semester. I collected copies of these essays after the participants had completed them.

3.8 – Data Analysis

The data analysis took place in two stages. The purpose of the first stage was to create case studies that would answer the first research question: 1) What is the nature of individual
L2 students’ experiences when engaged in a writing-from-sources task within an intensive academic writing course? While creating the case studies, some aspects of the participants’ experiences seemed to be particularly salient and worthy of further investigation. This led to the second data analysis stage and the development of research questions two and three, which asked: 2) What factors influenced the participants’ representations of the assignment task throughout the process of writing? and 3) What factors contributed to a participant producing a final written product that the teacher or the institution considered plagiarized?

The analysis processes used to answer each of the research questions are described in the following sections. It is important to note that while I have divided the analysis description into the various processes used for each research question, the processes were recursive and mutually informative across research questions. In other words, to a certain extent, many of the analysis processes described below overlapped and interleaved with one another.

3.8.1 – Creating the Case Studies

The written case studies presented in the next chapter are divided into two sections. The first section draws largely upon the background interview and describes the participant’s background experiences in reading and writing. The second section uses the class texts, participant texts, observations, and process interviews and is a chronological narrative of the participant’s experiences while writing the argument essay. The analysis procedures I used to create these two sections of each case study are described below.

3.8.1.1 – Categorizing the Participants’ Background Experiences

In order to write descriptions of the participants’ backgrounds, I drew upon the data from the first interview with each participant. I designed the first interview to elicit information regarding the participants’ previous experiences with reading and writing in both
Chinese and English, their perceived strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing, and other pertinent personal information such as age and length of time in New Zealand.

I began the analysis by sorting the first interview comments of each participant into eleven categories. The categories were 1) background information, 2) Chinese reading experiences, 3) Chinese writing experiences, 4) strengths and weaknesses of reading in Chinese, 5) strengths and weaknesses of writing in Chinese, 6) English reading experiences in China, 7) English writing experiences in China, 8) English reading experiences in New Zealand, 9) English writing experiences in New Zealand, 10) strengths and weaknesses of reading in English, and 11) strengths and weaknesses of writing in English. The purpose of sorting the comments into these categories was to group the data in a way that would facilitate my writing a description of each participant’s background experiences: I was not aiming to develop a complex coding system with strict categorical definitions.

After sorting the data into these categories, I completed the following steps one participant at a time. First, I read through one participant’s data numerous times in order to come to a clearer understanding of the nature of that participant’s experiences. At that point, I wrote a description of the participant’s background experiences integrating, to the highest extent possible, the participant’s own comments into the description.

Using the participant’s comments had three purposes. First, it helped me write the background from the participant’s perspective, and providing such an emic perspective is one of the strengths of ethnographic data. Second, it ensured that I was including all of the key data in my description and had not omitted any critical pieces of information. And third, integrating the participant’s own voice into the background description allows the consumer of the research to make a better determination about the validity of the account.
3.8.1.2 – Constructing an Event Listing

The main component of each case study is a narrative that describes each participant’s experiences over the two and a half weeks of writing the argument essay. My goal while creating the narrative was to better understand the relationships between the events that occurred. It is a logical assumption that events are connected in some way whether that connection is close or distant, and it is also a logical assumption that preceding events can have an effect on subsequent events. In order to achieve this goal, I first had to create a timeline for each participant of all the events that occurred while working on the argument essay. This timeline is called an event listing (Miles & Huberman, 1994, see appendix K for an example event listing).

The first few steps for creating the event listing occurred during the process interviews. One of my goals while conducting the three process interviews was to understand the order of events as they transpired so that I could retrace the participants’ steps as they worked on the argument essay assignment. Therefore, I asked time-order questions such as “What is the first thing you did to work on this assignment?,” “What is the next thing you did after that?,” and “Was event x before or after event y?” At the beginning of the third process interview, I also had the participants create a process drawing that chronologically described their whole writing process over the two and a half weeks of the assignment.

After completing the data collection, the next step was to begin assembling a listing of events. I used each participant’s process drawing as the initial outline of events. I simply used the events in the process drawing and the order in which they occurred as the first draft of the event listing.

Then, I identified all of the major writing process events in the interview data. These events were relatively easy to identify because of the time-order questions I asked in the process interviews, which generally contained time words such as “then,” “next,” or “after that.” I read through the interview transcripts in the order in which I collected them because,
in general, events discussed in the second process interview occurred after events discussed in the first interview. As I worked through the interviews, I did one of three things with the events that I identified: 1) confirmed that an event already on the event listing actually occurred and was in the correct chronological position, 2) added the event to the event listing because it was absent, or 3) used the event to cast doubt on the existence of or chronological placement of an event previously recorded on the event listing.

The first possible action I took was supporting the existence and chronological placement of a previously recorded event. When I encountered an event in the interview transcriptions that had already been recorded in the event listing, this added support to the reliability and accuracy of the existence of the event during the writing process. However, there was one caveat to this logic. Because the participants created the process drawings immediately prior to the start of the third process interview, which was after handing in the final draft, and because I used the process drawing in that interview to stimulate their recall of their whole writing process, the events mentioned in the third process interview could not support events listed on the process drawings because the participants were looking at the drawings as they talked.

The second possible action I took—adding the event to the chronology—was a result of the event being left out of the process drawing. The process drawing was only a starting point for creating the chronology and it generally contained, from the participant's viewpoint, the most important or salient events of the writing process, but it did not contain many of the events. Therefore, there were numerous events that fell into this category and I added them to the chronology.

The third action I took—casting doubt on an event in the chronology—was the result of information from the interviews that conflicted with events within the developing chronology. For example, the first process interview would occasionally reverse the order of two events in the process drawing. Because the process drawing was created a week and a
half after the first process interview and because time tends to blur people’s memory (Bartlett, 1932), I assumed that the interview data was more accurate than the process drawing and followed the interview data’s order of events.

Even though the process drawings and interviews were the primary data sources for creating an event listing, I also used the texts and observations to confirm, add to, or cast doubt upon the information in the event listing by comparing the information in the texts and observations with the event listing. Here are two actual examples from creating an event listing to demonstrate how this worked. First, when an event listing showed that a participant had read the class articles two times before the class discussion of the articles, and the observation showed that that participant actively shared insights about the articles during the class, then the observation supported the existence and chronology of that event in the event listing. And second, when the event listing showed that a participant used new source texts within the second draft of his or her essay, but the textual analysis (which will be described later) of the participant’s second draft did not reveal any new source use, then the text data was in conflict with the event listing. In this case, because of the doubt cast on the source-use event, it was removed from the event listing.

In order to insure the validity of the event listing, I included next to any event on the listing the reference to the data source. If I added an event based on a comment from an interview, then I included the reference to the interview comment next to the event on the list. If there was corroborating data regarding the existence or placement of an event, then the reference to that corroborating data was added next to the corresponding event on the listing. This allowed me to constantly refer back to the data to confirm or refute potential conflicts and ensured that each piece of the event listing was grounded in the data.

The result of this analysis was a chronological event listing for each participant’s writing process for the argument essay task. (See appendix K for an example event listing.) After completing an event listing for a participant, I followed a procedure for composing the
case study narrative similar to the one described in the preceding section for writing a description of the participant’s background experiences. I first read through the event listing numerous times in order to immerse myself in the story. Then, I used the event listing to compose the case study narrative. While composing, I frequently consulted the data sources in order to integrate as much as possible the participant’s voice and perspective into the narrative. My purposes for doing this were the same three purposes mentioned in the last paragraph of the previous section for writing about the participants’ background experiences: to provide an emic perspective, to ensure I included all key data, and to allow the reader to assess the validity of the account.

3.8.2 – Task Representation Analysis

The task representation analysis involved several pieces of data for each participant: specifically the interviews; the first, second, and final essay drafts; and the teacher’s written comments on the participants’ first drafts. It also involved several different analyses and comparison across analyses from these data. In order to describe these processes, the following sections will first describe the compartmentalized analysis procedures used for each piece of data. Then, it will describe how these separate analyses were combined to create the various sections of the task representation chapter.

3.8.2.1 – Coding the Interviews

The purpose for coding the interviews was to identify the various elements of each participant’s task representation. I coded the interviews on different occasions using two separate coding systems. I borrowed the first coding system from Flower et al. (1990), who conducted a study on L1 students’ representations of a writing-from-readings task. After coding the participants’ interviews using Flower et al.’s coding system and making two separate attempts to use this coding system to make sense of my data, I abandoned it
altogether. I mention this here only because of the extensive attempts I made to apply the coding system and task representation definitions to my data. Although I do not report any of the results of these attempts in any of the following chapters, my efforts to use the system may have affected the way I eventually coded, analyzed, and interpreted the data.

The second coding system I used was based on schema theory, and I developed this coding system from the ground up so that it suited my data. In order to develop this coding system, I went through four stages. First, I did an initial coding of a small subset of the interviews to develop categories. Second, I wrote definitions for these categories. Third, I used the coding system to code all of the interviews. And fourth, I performed a delayed recoding of the interviews in order to verify the accuracy of the initial coding.

The first step was to develop coding categories. I began by applying to four participant interviews two simple codes, formal schemata and content schemata. Formal schemata are mental structures that contain a person’s understanding of the organization of information within a text. Content schemata are mental structures that store background information on the topic of a text. These two codes represented the two broad areas of schema theory applicable to this writing-from-sources task. As I coded, however, I created subdivisions within these categories as well as separate major categories that seemed to naturally emerge from the interview comments. These processes continued until I found that I was no longer revising the categories. In order to confirm that I had indeed settled on a coding scheme, I recoded the four interviews again using all the coding categories to ensure that the coding categories were suitable. Then, before coding the remainder of the interviews, I wrote definitions for each category. This process resulted in the coding categories and definitions displayed in Table 2.

The third step was to apply the complete coding scheme to the remainder of the process interviews. Because the overall purpose of my coding was to organize the interview
Table 2 – Task Representation Coding Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective response</td>
<td>An emotive reaction to the assignment task.</td>
<td>- At first I want to write about it's selfish, but I found it's just like repeating of my first essay, it's really boring, so I want to write something different.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Just the Internet I got some topic, but actually it is not my interesting topic. I think abortion is not very, to me is not very interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content schemata - amount of information needed</td>
<td>Describes an impressionistic quantity of information needed to write the essay.</td>
<td>- I think if I write abortion is a selfish choice, I have not much more the information to support this topic. So, now maybe I change my mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- But sometimes the article the teacher give us is enough. We don't need extra material. If you have a good knowledge about, not abortion, about other topic, I think not need to any things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content schemata - information to be included in the essay</td>
<td>Known information that a participant indicated he or she would add to the essay.</td>
<td>- M: Is any of that information from the pamphlet here in your final draft?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L: Yeah, like the, because also my landlord take &quot;the love needed to pass,” so I write this. And after this I say this destroy, &quot;the human history was stopped by abortion,&quot; like this, they give me idea like this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Mother Teresa use the &quot;Break the peace, abortion lead to violence,&quot; like this, I can write in my article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content schemata - known or unknown information on the</td>
<td>Any comment that revealed how much a participant did or did not think about both sides of them, I also got different opinion of both side, and I thinking about which side I</td>
<td>- Because at the beginning I had no ideas about it, and I think about both sides of them, I also got different opinion of both side, and I thinking about which side I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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| Information on the topic | Know about abortion and selfishness. | Should write,  
- I can't distinguish selfish or not selfish, and after I read the Mother Teresa, I can know which means selfish or not selfish. |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Content schemata - quality of information | A comment regarding the suitability of information to the participant’s essay. | - I try to find some quotation that I can use in my assignment, but I didn't find it. It's a barely suitable for my assignment.  
- First, it can be a good support idea, a good example, and I can't find others better than this one, so I choose this. |
| Content schemata - source of information | Sources from which participants obtained information to include in their essays. | - It's on the Internet, we use the Proquest.  
- I just copy the [class] article. |
| Formal schemata - assignment task requirements | Parameters of the assignment task that made the assignment unique and distinguished it from other writing tasks, parameters such as the word length requirement, number of required sources, and time frame for the drafting process. | - I just read the [assignment task sheet]. I tried to find out the topic of the essay, it's about abortion and it's let us to write about why you think it's selfish chance or not selfish chance by the mom. And my opinion is not selfish chance.  
- We can't copy it above 10%. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal schemata - characteristics of the text</th>
<th>Characteristics that dealt with linguistic and stylistic aspects of the text such as level of formality, similarity between a source text and a participant’s essay, and grammatical accuracy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- It's not clear and it's not related to the thesis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Because I must change the words, use my own words to write this article, so I must find many example can combine it and change in my own words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal schemata - text structure</td>
<td>An overall plan of how to organize the content within the essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maybe like the 5 paragraphs. The first one introduction, and body, and conclusion, so I think this is helpful, because all the essay is like this: introduction, body, and conclusion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I read [my first draft]. But it's confused. Sometimes I read it, it's like a mess. And sometimes, but I don't know how to change it because lots of ideas bring in my brain so can make it difficult to organize, put them organize. So, sometimes I repeat something…. Yeah, I don't know how to put them because, like this…I don't know this example belong to which topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal schemata - textual elements</td>
<td>The components of the essay that defined its shape and purpose, components such as introduction, thesis statement, and supporting arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I do the reference list because in my first draft I do not got reference.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- So I tell her &quot;this is my main idea.&quot; So she said &quot;yes, that is your main point sentence so be sure to use some examples to support your main point sentence.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Miscellaneous                  | A comment that does not fall within any other category but seems relevant to a participant’s task representation. | - Yeah, but I don't think Louise's questions is difficult.  
- M: Any other reasons why you should get a B?  
- A: I take lots of time for my assignment, yeah. |
| Source of task representation  | A comment where a participant explicitly reveals where an aspect of his or her task representation originated. | - [The teacher], she is telling us to write one first…. It's just like the simple sentence, and show different points.  
- When I study in the EAP II course, the teacher said three body paragraph is the best. |
| Utility                        | Shows how applicable a participant feels the assignment task or Study Writing course is to other contexts. | - I think this is helpful, because all the essay is like this: introduction, body, and conclusion.  
- The [registration] official told me its helpful other courses assignment. I don't think so. Maybe it's helpful, just maybe. |

Data into categories that I could then separately analyze, I occasionally applied more than one code to a comment that contained information relevant to more than one category. This ensured that all pieces of information pertinent to a particular category were included within that category.

The final step was to perform a delayed second coding of a subset of the interviews. The purpose of doing a delayed recoding was simply to verify that the interview comments included within each category did indeed belong to that category. The purpose was not to establish the dependability of the coding scheme because, as Brice (2005) has noted,
The interrater rater reliability coding process does not and cannot work to establish the reliability of a coding instrument or a researcher’s application of that coding instrument, much less to demonstrate the dependability of their overall analysis in the research report in multi-method research that employs extensive interviewing and observation of participants (p.167).

Brice goes on to suggest that “researchers’ dependability in analyzing data be assessed—by editors, reviewers, publishers, and readers—based on the extent to which they ground their findings in data in their report” (p. 173), which I have endeavored to do in the following chapters. Two weeks after the initial coding, I performed the delayed recoding over a 10% subset of the interview data, which resulted in 82% of the comments receiving the same code across both instances. Given that the coding was done across a high number of categories, 16, I considered this to be an acceptable indication that my coding had adequately represented the data.

3.8.2.2 – Source Use Analysis

The purposes of the source use analysis of the drafts were to identify the source of the information used in the essay and determine how closely the language used in the essay paralleled the sources. I first searched the literature on intertextuality and writing to find an analysis technique that could help me accomplish these purposes; however, the sources I found either did not describe the analysis techniques they used in a manner that would allow me to replicate them or contained analysis techniques that did not suit my purposes and data. I was, therefore, left to develop my own system.

I began to develop a coding system by reading and rereading multiple times the source texts provided by one participant so that I was thoroughly familiar with the content and language of each text. Then, I began reading that participant’s argument essay and labeled the source of ideas with footnotes and color-coded the text according to how closely the language
paralleled the sources. I began with just three codes labeled “original text,” “copied text,” and “paraphrased text,” and I coded with the purpose of developing a coding scheme that would label the sources of the text and ideas used in the participant’s essay. As I continued to read across essay drafts and across participants, I expanded the codes and developed definitions for the coding scheme so that it described the data.

The final source-use coding scheme contained six color codes (red, blue, green, brown, black, and violet) and one text style code (underlining) (See Table 3). Red text, or “copied text,” was copied exactly from a source but not quoted. Although red text could be identified as inappropriate textual borrowing, it did not discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable use of sources because the purpose of the coding scheme was to identify how participants used sources in their writing rather than judge the appropriateness of that use. Blue text, or “paraphrased text,” expressed the same ideas as a source passage in about the same number of words and represented a participant’s attempt to linguistically transform a specific source passage. Green text, or “summarized text,” expressed a main idea of a whole source or the gist of a paragraph or section from a source in at least 75% fewer words than the source passage. Green text provided insight into a participant’s overall understanding of the source passages he or she used. Brown text, or “quoted text,” was copied exactly from a source and enclosed in quotation marks. Black text, or “original text,” had no identifiable source and did not fall into any of the preceding categories. Black text suggested several possibilities about the sources behind it: a) it was such a complex synthesis of sources that no particular passage was identifiable as the source; b) it contained words and ideas derived from unidentifiable sources, c) it was functional text such as citations, references, and linking words; and d) it represented the participant’s original thinking and language use. Violet text had the same definition as black text except that violet was only used to code participants’ second drafts. This allowed me to see how much a second draft was changed from the first draft because I did not recode unchanged text in the second draft. Underlined text was taken
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red (copied text)</td>
<td>Text that is taken exactly from a source passage but not enclosed in quotation marks.</td>
<td>Red text shows places where the participant used another author’s words and the ideas they express without acknowledging the source. Although some instances of red text could be identified as plagiarism, red text does not discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable uses of sources. Rather, red text simply shows how closely the sources were followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue (paraphrased text)</td>
<td>This text expresses the same idea as the source passage using a similar number of, but different, words.</td>
<td>Blue text represents a participant’s attempt to linguistically transform specific source passages. The quality and extent of this transformation provides insight into how much the participant understood specific source passages and the extent of his or her language ability to express the ideas understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green (summarized text)</td>
<td>This text expresses the main idea of a section from a source or the gist of the whole source in at least 75% fewer words than the source passage.</td>
<td>Green text represents a participant’s attempt to express the gist of larger source passages. It provides insight into the participant’s global understanding of the source passages he or she used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown (quoted text)</td>
<td>This text is properly quoted from a source passage. It is taken exactly from a source passage and is enclosed in quotation marks.</td>
<td>Brown text shows places where the participant used another author’s words and the ideas they express while acknowledging that they came from another source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (original text)</td>
<td>Participant’s words and ideas or text with an unidentifiable source.</td>
<td>1) It could represent completely synthesized ideas and language of source passages, oral texts, and oral interactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
texts, and oral interactions.
2) It could represent words and ideas derived from an unidentifiable source.
2) It could represent the original ideas of the participant.
3) It could represent the amount of functional language used to create a text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violet</th>
<th>Violet text uses the same definition as black text with the additional stipulation that it represents text in the second draft that was not present in the first draft. Violet text is only used in the analysis of the second drafts.</th>
<th>Violet text shows what text was changed from the first draft yet had no identifiable source or was the participant’s own words and ideas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Underlined Text | This is text that was copied from a student paper during a previous semester. This text is identified by the database turnitin.com, which stores all previously submitted student papers and compares new papers against text in previously submitted papers in order to identify text that is taken from previously written papers. | Underlined text shows how a participant used his previously submitted paper as a source for writing. |

from a previously written paper and showed how a participant used a previously submitted paper as a source for writing. (See appendix L for the complete coding scheme.)

Once I had finished developing the coding scheme, I coded all the essay drafts across all participants. Then, in order to measure the reliability of my coding, I recoded 8% of the total coded essays six weeks after finishing the first coding. This amount of time ensured that my second coding was not a memory recall of the first. For the second coding, I began with a clean copy of the sample to be recoded with none of the color codes or footnote markings
from the first coding to segment the text: the second coding was in every possible way a fresh start. After recoding the whole sample, I counted the number of words that were coded the same across both coding sessions (1056) and divided that by the total number of words in the sample (1160). This calculation showed 91% agreement across the two coding sessions.

The final phase of this analysis was to tabulate the number of words coded in each category for each essay. This calculation created a picture of the origin of the text and ideas within each essay and allowed me to compare the change in source use across essay drafts and test compositions.

3.8.2.3 – Generic Structure Analysis

The purpose of the genre analysis was to measure how closely each participant’s essays matched a format for the English argument essay, which has been found in other similar writing contexts. The essay features were taken from a genre analysis study that identified the obligatory and optional structural units within the standard academic argument essay (Hyland, 1990). Because the results of Hyland’s study had been confirmed by a subsequent study (Lock & Lockhart, 1998) and because the class observations and participant interviews confirmed that the Study Writing teacher was explicitly teaching many of the structural units uncovered in Hyland’s study (e.g. thesis statement and topic sentences), I felt it was an appropriate generic description to apply to my data. The structural units identified in Hyland’s study and used in the generic structural analysis of this study are displayed in Table 4. The moves associated with each stage are listed in the order in which they appear in the argument essays Hyland investigated. Moves in brackets are optional.

In order to code an essay, I first labeled the stage of each paragraph as thesis, argument, or conclusion. Next, I identified which moves associated with the stage of each paragraph were present and which moves were missing. While doing this, I assigned one of three labels to the possible moves: present, none, or unclear. Present meant that the move
Table 4 – Structural Elements of the Argumentative Essay (Hyland, 1990, p. 69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>MOVE*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thesis Stage – Introduces the proposition to be argued</td>
<td>(Gambit) – Attention grabber; controversial statement or dramatic illustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Information) – Background material for topic contextualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Evaluation) – Positive gloss; brief support of proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Argument Stage – Discusses grounds for thesis</td>
<td>Marker – Signals the introduction of a claim and relates it to the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Restatement) – Rephrasing or repetition of proposition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conclusion – Synthesizes</td>
<td>(Marker) – Signals conclusion boundary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consolidation – Presents the significance of the 
argument stage to the proposition

(Affirmation) – Restates proposition

(Close) – Widens context or perspective of 
proposition

* Moves in parentheses are optional

was easily identifiable within the text. None meant that the move was missing from the text. And unclear meant that the move may have been present but the author’s intentions were
difficult to identify. I then produced a structural chart that listed the stage for each paragraph
and all the possible moves within it with their label.

In order to compare one essay with another, I did not compile any numerical data but
used the structural charts to identify which moves were present in one essay and absent in
another. This allowed me to note changes from draft to draft and from test to test.

3.8.2.4 – Formal Schematic Task Representation Analysis

In order to understand the formal schematic aspects of the participants’ task
representations, I made a table for each of the formal schematic coding categories from the
interview coding and placed the interview comments with that code in a column that
corresponded with the participant that made the comment. I then separated comments that
were made prior to and after the first draft so that the table contained only those comments
that related to the participants’ initial task representations. Next, I checked the source use
analysis and generic structure analysis of the first draft to see if there were aspects of a
participant’s task representation that appeared in the first draft but were not mentioned in the
interviews. Any that I found, I added to the table. The resulting table contained all of the data
that revealed the aspects of each participant’s task representation within each of the formal schematic interview coding categories.

3.8.2.5 – Content Schematic Task Representation Analysis

I used the same process for creating tables that I described in the previous section in order to create tables that displayed each participant’s content schematic task representation. In addition, in order to better understand what was occurring with the participants’ content schemata, I identified within each participant comments that could explain why he or she had difficulty understanding the topic and creating a coherent argument. I first identified these comments for each participant separately and then compared across participants to see if any common themes emerged.

3.8.2.6 – Identifying the Factors That Influenced the Initial Task Representations

Identifying the factors that influenced the participants’ initial task representations involved the interview code “source of task representation.” I applied this code to interview comments where the participants explicitly stated the origin of a particular aspect of their task representations. For example, one participant made the comment, “[The teacher], she is telling us to write one first…. It’s just like the simple sentence, and show different points.” In this comment, the participant is referring to an in-class exercise where the teacher had the participants write a simple outline of their plans for the first draft of the essay. The teacher is the impetus that caused this participant to write an outline, thus making the teacher one factor that influenced this participant’s representation of the task. Also, another participant commented, “When I study in the EAP II course, the teacher said three body paragraph is the best.” This participant had previously discussed in the interview his plan to use three paragraphs in the body of his essay and then in this comment revealed that the origin of this plan was his teacher in the EAP II course he had taken the previous semester. Therefore, for
each participant, I used the interview comments coded “source of task representation” to create a list of the possible factors that influenced each participant’s initial task representation.

3.8.2.7 – Identifying the Changes in Task Representations

The first step for identifying the changes in participants’ task representations was creating tables that displayed the various aspects of each participant’s task representation after writing the first draft. To do this, I followed the same process I used to identify participants’ initial task representations and described in the previous section “Formal Schematic Task Representation Analysis.” I then compared these final task representation tables with the initial task representation tables to identify points of difference, and I considered these differences to represent changes in a participant’s task representation. The final step in this process was to identify the factors that could have influenced the participants’ changes in task representation. I did this by using the relevant interview comments coded “source of task representation” and repeating the process described in the previous section.

3.8.3 – Plagiarism Analysis

The third research question asked: What factors contribute to a participant producing a final written product that the teacher or the institution considered plagiarized? I need to state here that the analysis processes that I used to derive the results for this question are difficult to fully describe because they were many, varied, and extended over time. Nevertheless, I will endeavor to make as explicit as possible the analysis processes I used.

In order to uncover some of the factors that contributed to two of the participants receiving zeros for plagiarism on the essay assignment, I primarily used the interview data and the source use analysis of the participants’ essay drafts. Because I felt that the two participants represented different and unique cases of plagiarism, I considered each participant separately although the analysis processes were the same for both participants.
3.8.3.1 – Analyzing the Interviews

I began the interview analysis without a predetermined set of coding categories. As I began reading the interviews, my main purpose was to look for clues that would help me understand why Lin, one of the two participants who received a zero on the argument essay assignment for plagiarism, plagiarized her essay. My focus on and understanding of the data became more refined after passing through the data numerous times and discussing selected portions of the interviews with colleagues, twice with large groups in formal research sessions and numerous times in informal sessions with individuals. At this point, I was able to sit down and begin working out a coding scheme that I felt could help me mine the information that was within the interviews. To begin, I did an open coding in the tradition of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This involved coding small sections of the interviews using brief labels that described what was occurring in a particular section. Sometimes the labels were words or phrases taken directly from the interview in order to be true to the original meaning in the data. This process resulted in about 100 different codes that I then tried to form into groups representing similar characteristics. I created major code categories by attaching a superordinate label to each grouping. Subcategories were created by dividing the group of codes under a major label into like groupings and again attaching a label to the group. This process resulted in most of the codes falling into a major category; however, there were four outlying codes that did not fall under any particular label and did not group with the other outliers.

At this point, I used this new coding scheme to recode the interview transcripts. Yet on this attempt to code, I found that some data did not fall into any of my existing categories. I believe the main reason for this was that the process of coding, categorizing, labeling, and recoding refined and focused my view of the data causing me to see things that were important but that I had not previously noticed. Not only did I create new open codes to label
these data, but I also began annotating the data. I wrote memos that recorded the insights that occurred to me as I worked on specific pieces of data. These memos preserved and documented my developing insights on the data and helped me as I continuously repeated the process of revising the codes and then recoding the data two more times. This process of coding, categorizing, labeling, and recoding was a recursive process. Each step was informative to the others and the process cycled numerous times. After coding, recoding, discussing with colleagues the interview data repeatedly and writing and rewriting the analysis results numerous times, I had immersed myself in the data to the point of saturation, a point where additional analysis did not bring new insights.

Through repeatedly coding, discussing, and writing, I was able to identify two major factors that led to a plagiaristic outcome: textual features in the final drafts and particular aspects of the assignment task. I defined textual features in the final draft as anything directly observable in the final draft—such as copied text, citation practices, and organization—which contributed to the teacher’s determination that the paper was plagiarized. I defined aspects of the assignment task as anything directly related to accomplishing argument essay assignment that shaped the text of the final draft, for example the class plagiarism policy, the minimum word requirement for the assignment, and the need to consult source texts. Although there were also numerous other issues surrounding the plagiarism, these were the two major issues that answered the third research question. Therefore, I identified comments in the interview data that related to these two factors and organized the sections of the plagiarism results chapter around them.

3.8.3.2 – Applying the Source Use Analysis

The source use analysis was particularly helpful for creating tables that described from draft to draft the variations in the manner in which the participants used source texts within their argument essay. Because the simplest form of plagiarism involves borrowing text from a
source and inserting it, with or without revision, into one’s own paper, the source use analysis revealed how extensively the participants were borrowing from any particular source text. It also showed how the participants attempted to revise the borrowed text from draft to draft.

In conjunction with the source use analysis, I also used the similarity report generated by the website turnitin.com. As mentioned previously, the participants submitted their final drafts to the website turnitin.com, which scans papers for text possibly taken from the Internet, other student papers, and other sources. Essay text that is significantly similar to text from other sources in the website’s database is color-coded and the whole essay is given a similarity index, which provides a percentage of the essay’s total text that was similar to sources in the database (see appendix J for an example turnitin.com report).

3.9 – Issues Regarding Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) ask, “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (p. 290). The answer to this question leads to the conventional criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, all of which are traditionally used within the quantitative research paradigm. The qualitative research paradigm uses similar criteria but with different labels, which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability respectively. These criteria fall under the umbrella term trustworthiness and work to persuade the consumers of the research that the research is worthy of confidence.

There are numerous possible means Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative research, several of which are applicable to this research project, particularly: credibility of the researcher, prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, and thick description.
3.9.1 – Credibility of the Researcher

“Because the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry, a qualitative report must include information about the researcher” (Patton, 1990, p. 472). Although there is not a definitive set of information that I should provide about myself, some examples are my experience and training as a researcher, my personal connection to the participants involved, and any sources of funding for the research. In this section, I will, therefore, endeavor to “report any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation—either negatively or positively—in the minds of users of the findings” (p. 472). I will discuss my experience as a researcher and my roles and relationships on the research site that could have affected the research.

My experience as a researcher began with the project I conducted for my MA TESOL degree. It involved collecting and analyzing think-aloud protocols from L2 writers in order to compare participants’ L1 and L2 writing processes (Wolfersberger, 2001). This involved the transcription and coding of data, processes similar to those of the research reported in this document. Subsequently, I worked as part of a team on a quantitative project involving survey data about respondents’ use of language tests and a qualitative project that used classroom video taping to examine writing teacher’s instruction of metacognitive strategies. My most relevant research experience for the current project was the pilot study I conducted prior to the main study. The pilot study methodology was similar to the main study and involved interviews, which gave me experience with interviewing participants in a manner that did not lead them to responses or put words into their mouths but allowed each participant to provide his or her own perspective. The pilot study also gave me the opportunity to have a trial run at analyzing the types of data I collected for the main study, and this analysis resulted in a peer reviewed journal article (Wolfersberger, 2005).

There were several roles that I had on the research site at AIS that could have affected the research although I made an effort to control for any adverse effects. The participants
came from one stream of the Study Writing class at AIS. There were six streams of the same
class running concurrently and I taught one of the other streams. I was also the coordinator for
the Study Writing classes, which entailed selecting course readings, finalizing course
assignments, directing the marking of the midterm and final exams, and granting exceptions
to class policy. The course readings, assignments, and exams were all finalized before the
semester began and were not altered once the semester started.

The midterm and final exams were both 3-hour timed essay tests. To mark them, all of
the Study Writing teachers worked together and followed established procedures for assessing
writing. Before marking, all teachers met together to calibrate scoring procedures. Then, each
test was marked by two teachers. If the two scores showed a significant discrepancy, a third
teacher marked the test. For the purposes of this research, I organized the marking so that I
did not mark the research participants’ tests and I informed the participants of this before they
agreed to take part in the research. Thus, I removed myself from contributing to the
participants test marks and final course grades.

The Study Writing class had a ‘no late’ papers policy, which stated late papers
received no credit. Occasionally, a student would turn in a paper late and want an exception to
the policy, in which case, I was the teacher to whom these students came to discuss their
situation. When such a case did arise, I always discussed the situation with the student’s
teacher so that I never made an exception alone. Although this type of situation never arose
with any of the research participants, if one of the research participants had asked for an
exception to the policy, I would have excused myself from any part of that decision in order
to avoid a conflict of interest. I also informed the participants of this before they agreed to
take part in the research.

The previous information on my role at AIS is significant because the research
participants could have viewed my position as a position of power or influence over their
standing in the course. While I took precautions to remove myself from any influence over the
participants’ marks or results in the course, as I have explained above, they may have carried the perception that I did have an influence, which could have had an affect, whether positive or negative, on their class performance and the research data.

3.9.2 – Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement is investing enough time at a particular site in order to learn its culture and ensure the research has a broad enough view of the landscape. This helps guarantee that the researcher has a clear understanding of the context in which the phenomenon under investigation is embedded, which then increases the probability that the researcher will produce a sound analysis. I will, therefore, describe my interactions and involvement at AIS before collecting the data for this research project so that the reader may assess my understanding of the research context.

More than a year before collecting the data for the main study, I began work at AIS teaching the Study Writing class. From my first semester of teaching, I was the coordinator of the class, which meant that I taught one stream of the class, created the writing assignments and tests used in all classes, and coordinated with the other teachers to ensure we maintained a standard and consistency of instruction across streams. During my first semester at AIS, there was only one stream of Study Writing and I team taught it with the teacher from whose class I selected the participants for this study. Working closely together during this one semester allowed me to become familiar with her style and patterns of teaching.

Because AIS was changing the purposes for the Study Writing class and requiring all new students to take it in their first semester, as the coordinator, I was heavily involved with modifying and developing the course to meet its new purposes. These purposes were to build the students’ academic writing skills and give the students some more time and experience at AIS before diving into more heavy subject-matter classes. This process gave me an intimate understanding of the objectives of the course and the assignments that were designed to meet
those objectives. As a teacher of the course, I gained a perspective on the demands the assignments made on the students, the various ways in which students worked through the assignments, and the manner in which the assignments helped the students meet the course objectives. I gained further insights on these issues as I fulfilled my duties as the coordinator and discussed them with the other four teachers. (During the subsequent two semesters, more streams were added and three new teachers were hired.) By the time I collected the data for the main study, I had three semesters of experience with coordinating and teaching the class, and my total experience teaching Study Writing at AIS spanned five and a half semesters.

3.9.3 – Triangulation

Triangulation is obtaining multiple viewpoints on the phenomenon being studied in order to ensure the accuracy and truthfulness of the data and increase the chances that the researcher has arrived at a more correct understanding and explanation of the participants’ behavior (Hammersley, 2002). For this study, I used two forms of triangulation, method and source, which I describe below.

Method triangulation is using different methods to collect data from various sources in order to compare and cross-check “the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means” (Patton, 1990, p. 467). I used three different methods of data collection in this study: participant interviews, draft and reading text collection, and classroom observations. One of the purposes for this triangulation of methods was to verify the truthfulness of the interviews. The interviews provided access to events and processes that I could not personally observe. However, the interview data was subject to participant error from sources such as a memory lapse, inaccurate recall, withholding the truth, and possibly intentionally altering the truth. The essay drafts and classroom observations, however, were less prone to these types of error. The drafts were concrete representations of each participant’s writing process and because I collected copies of them from the teacher, the
participants could not have manipulated them to match the information they gave me in the
interviews. Therefore, I was able to use the drafts to either corroborate or cast doubt on
information provided in the interviews. The observations too were not prone to participant
error in the same way the interviews were although the observations were subject to
researcher error such as inaccurate recording or misunderstanding. Because these were
possible researcher errors and not overlapping participant errors, I was able to use the
observations to either verify or cast doubt on information the participants provided in the
interviews.

There are three possible forms of source triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and
my research utilized all three forms of triangulation. One is obtaining multiple copies of one
type of source (e.g. interviewing several people about a particular phenomenon in order to
gain a complete perspective on it). I interviewed four participants engaged in the same
writing-from-readings task in order to obtain multiple perspectives on the writing-from-
readings process and context.

Another form of source triangulation is finding different sources of the same
information (e.g. comparing an interviewee’s account of an event against an official report). I
did this by collecting interviews from the participants, essay drafts from the participants, and
classroom observations. As described above, I was able to compare all three data sources
against each other to either verify or cast doubt on specific pieces of data.

A third form of source triangulation is collecting the same data from the same source
but at different points in time, a sort of temporal triangulation (e.g. interviewing someone at
two different points in time about the same event). I also used this form of triangulation in my
study. During the first process interview, participants discussed their writing processes from
the beginning of the assignment up to the point of the interview. During the second process
interview, the participants described what occurred with their reading and writing between the
first and second process interviews. Thus, the first and second process interviews covered
roughly the first two weeks of the two-and-a-half week time span of the essay assignment. At
the beginning of the third process interview after the participants had handed in their final
drafts, they created a process drawing that outlined their reading and writing over the whole
period of the essay and I then interviewed them about their drawing. Thus, I obtained two
accounts of the first two weeks of the assignment: one during the first and second process
interviews and a second account when the participants explained their process drawings to
me. These two accounts helped verify the consistency of information provided in the process
interviews.

3.9.4 – Peer Debriefing

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define peer debriefing as “a process of exposing oneself to a
disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring
aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind”
(p. 308). During a peer debriefing:

All questions are in order…whether they pertain to substantive, methodological, legal,
ethical, or any other relevant matters. The task of the debriefer is to be sure that the
investigator is as fully aware of his or her posture and process as possible

(remembering that while it is not possible to divest oneself of values, it is at least
possible to be aware of the role they play). (p. 308)

One stipulation is that the debriefer can be neither junior nor senior to the researcher. This
would create an unbalanced relationship resulting in unqualified acceptance or rejection of
input and suggestions. Thus, in my case of conducting doctoral research, although my
supervisor has made suggestions about my research, he cannot fulfill the role of peer
debriefer.

Over the course of this research project, I have participated in several peer debriefing
sessions with various groups of peers. The most frequent and significant opportunity has been
with the research seminar for doctoral students in the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics at the University of Auckland. This is a roughly bi-weekly meeting at which doctoral students share aspects of their research in order to get feedback on and gain insights into the direction of their various research projects. One doctoral student is always invited to share his or her research and solicit the feedback of the group over each hour-long session.

I presented my research to this group at numerous points over the course of my project. Before conducting a pilot study, I discussed with this group my research questions and methodology, which directed me to further clarify my research questions and adjust the methodology needed to answer them. After collecting data from my pilot study, I presented some of the data and preliminary findings and the feedback led to revisions in the types of data I would collect for the main study. At one point towards the end of the data collection for my main study, I presented some of the data I had collected and solicited from the group impressions about the possible meanings in the data and how they felt the data answered some of my research questions. This session helped broaden my perspective on the data and prevented me from too quickly narrowing my analytical focus on my emerging understandings. After completing the data collection and writing some preliminary results, I had three different opportunities to have the group read those results and respond to them. They provided me with helpful feedback such as possible dangers to validity, possible erroneous assumptions, and places in the text where more data was required to support my conclusions.

In addition to these research seminars, I had two opportunities to present my research: one at a large professional conference and another among a group of peers at another university. The people from these two groups came from backgrounds and contexts that were different from the one in which I collected my data and, therefore, they had different views about the conclusions I was drawing from the data. Listening to their various viewpoints and
weighing them against the data helped me to further evaluate my own position and understandings and ensure that I was making a sound analysis of the data.

### 3.9.5 – Thick Description

Geertz (1973) characterizes ethnography as the work of peeling back the layers of inference and implication in the words and actions of other people in order to make sense of and understand them. And this requires using “thick description,” which goes beyond conveying in the data recording and reporting the simple content of words and surface meanings of actions to provide a deeper understanding. It means providing enough description so that the researcher’s data collection and interpretation processes are transparent and each consumer of the research can judge the validity of the claims. Thick description is becoming an ever increasingly important aspect of determining the validity of qualitative research as researchers strive to expand old research paradigms and develop new research methods in order to find suitable research methodologies to answer the desired research questions (Holliday, 2004). I have endeavored to infuse into this report the necessary thick description so that the reader can better determine on his or her own terms the validity of the claims and conclusions I make. This seems to be, for the consumers of qualitative research, the most important test of validity and trustworthiness (Hammersley, 1998).
CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES

4.1 – Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to present, in the form of case studies, the results pertinent to answering the first research question: What is the nature of individual L2 students’ experiences when engaged in a writing-from-sources task within an intensive academic writing course? The chapter, therefore, provides a context-rich account of each participant’s experience with the argument essay assignment within the Study Writing course.

The secondary purpose of this chapter is to provide a descriptive account of each of the four participants and their experiences in order to provide a basis for the analysis, explanations, and conclusions in the following chapters. Hammersley (1998) explained the importance of description in qualitative research:

Descriptions are one of the most important sorts of argument to be found in ethnographic (and other kinds) of research reports, since explanations depend on them, and so do theories and evaluations. We cannot explain, generalize, theorize about, or evaluate something without describing it, or at least assuming some description of it.

(p. 47)

Therefore, this chapter provides the necessary preliminary “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) that will help the reader to better judge the validity and transferability of the analyses, claims, and conclusions presented in the following chapters.

The chapter begins with a brief rationale for presenting the data in case studies and the analytical framework that underlies their presentation. The next section explains key events, such as classroom activities and assignment due dates, that were common to all four cases. The subsequent section presents the stories of each of the four cases. And the final section makes some general summary comments about the nature of the participants’ experiences.
4.2 – Rationale for Using Case Studies

There is no question about the key role case studies have played in developing our knowledge in the field of second language acquisition, especially when one considers the impact of case studies such as those of Uguisu (Hakuta, 1976), Alberto (Schumann, 1978), and Wes (Schmidt, 1983). The field of second language writing has also been heavily influenced by case studies. John’s (1991) case study of Luc highlighted some of the problems with gate-keeping exams, and Spack’s (1997) case study of Yuko exemplified some of the challenges for L2 students when acquiring academic literacy. Case studies such as these are important because they investigate processes and strategies people use within specific contexts that cannot be sufficiently researched by other more common and traditional methods (van Lier, 2005).

Case studies are an appropriate way to present the data from this research because, in the tradition of constructivist-qualitative research, case studies attempt to make sense of a situation without imposing a pre-existing set of understandings or theories (Shkedi, 2005). This approach allows the data to speak for themselves, to say what is intrinsically important in them, before moving into analyses and discussions to extract findings for the more specific research questions. Therefore, this chapter presents four case studies, one for each of the participants involved in this research.

4.3 – Analytical Framework Underlying the Presentation of the Cases

Although this chapter will only present the case study data without any in-depth analysis, the analysis processes that were used to examine and discuss the cases in later chapters also played a role in directing how the cases are presented in this chapter. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly outline the analysis methods here.
This chapter will present a chronological narrative for each of the four cases that will highlight distinct features and characteristics of each case and form links between the events. A chronology has some advantages over other case reporting methods, one of which is highlighting possible causal sequences if we assume that the cause of an event occurs before the event itself (Yin, 2003). And a narrative provides a richly textured representation of the complex process of experiences for each participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Putting these two together into a chronological narrative allows each case to “develop a plotline, follow a series of events over time and forge links between these events, and make a point that will connect with the consumers of research” (Casanave, 2005, p. 29). Therefore, a chronological narrative will help create a thick description of the contexts within which each participant operated and the concatenation of factors and people within the social and intellectual milieu that lead to each outcome.

Underlying the chronological narratives presented for each case is the narrative analysis method (Becker, 2000). The goal of this analysis method is to show why a particular outcome occurred. “We do not search for causes so much as look for stories that explain what it is and how it got that way” (p.229). Unlike other research analysis methods that assume independent variables interact simultaneously, a narrative analysis assumes that independent variables have different impacts at various points within a process. By telling the story of the case, we can see the many points at which variables may enter the story, make an impact, and exit the story.

The following stories are an interpretation of the facts as I see them, yet I have tried to embed directly in the narrative data, such as interview comments, to allow the reader to make a more informed decision about the objectivity and potential transferability of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
4.4 – Events Common to All Cases

Because all four participants were students in the same Study Writing class, they participated in many of the same classroom events. Rather than repeat each of these events in the narrative of each participant’s case, this section will describe the event details that pertain to all four participants. Then, the case narratives will explain important details of these events that are specific to each participant. Because the case narratives will not reiterate all of the details of these common events, the section headings for the events common to all cases will be consistently applied at the appropriate places within each case, thus helping the reader recognize when to refer back to the data in this section.

As an overview to the event descriptions, Table 5 lists the events on the day in which they occurred in the order that they occurred. The following sections describe each of these events.

Table 5 – Outline of Events Common to All Participants During the Argument Essay Task

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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Received assignment in class</td>
<td>- Discussed class articles in class</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Handed in first draft during class</td>
<td>- Analyzed classmate’s first draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
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<td>- Received first draft back from teacher</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Handed in final draft</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.4.1 – Receiving the Assignment

The participants all received the argument essay with the rest of the class on a Wednesday. Before the assignment was distributed in class, the students participated in several activities that were designed to get them thinking about the essay topic and help them understand how to support an argument. Without telling the students the essay topic, the teacher had written three opinions on the board from which students were to select: 1) abortion is a selfish choice, 2) abortion is not a selfish choice, and 3) abortion can be a selfish choice but sometimes it is absolutely necessary. Most students in the class chose the third opinion. They then gathered in groups of three or four students who had all chosen the same opinion and wrote a paragraph to support their belief.

As the teacher circulated and read each group’s paragraph, it became apparent that although most students had chosen the opinion that abortion can be selfish but is sometimes necessary, the paragraphs the students were writing argued that abortion is not a selfish choice. She explained to several students this problem with the structure of the argument they were writing and then engaged the whole class in an analysis of one group’s paragraph. The group had written a topic sentence that supported opinion #3, but after analyzing the support in the paragraph, the class realized that the paragraph only provided support for opinion #2. The teacher pointed out that in order to argue for opinion #3, the paragraph must show why abortion is generally selfish and why there are occasionally exceptions to the rule. As the class discussed this issue, the teacher suggested that many students’ opinions would probably be better expressed by opinion #2—abortion is not a selfish choice. Throughout this activity, the teacher emphasized that the evidence in an essay must support the whole claim made in the thesis.

The next class activity before passing out the task sheet for the argument essay assignment was to analyze a 5-paragraph essay for its structure. Two class days prior to this class, the teacher had distributed an example 5-paragraph essay for the students to read and
study (see appendix F). Now as a whole class, the teacher reviewed within this example the requisite components and features of the 5-paragraph essay: the introduction should include a thesis statement and the supporting arguments that will be used; the thesis statement controls the direction of the essay; the body paragraphs each have a topic sentence and supporting ideas; the conclusion is the final paragraph.

After reviewing the 5-paragraph essay, the teacher handed out the assignment task sheet (see appendix A) and two articles—one written by Mother Teresa and the other by the Revolutionary Worker—that expressed opposing viewpoints on the issue given by the assignment task (see appendix E), had the students decide in their groups what they were supposed to do for the assignment, and then instructed students to highlight on the assignment task sheet the question they were to answer in the essay. At this point, the class took a 10-minute break.

After the break, the teacher responded to a student’s statement that you must argue both sides of the question otherwise you are only giving your opinion. After soliciting various opinions from students on the issue, the teacher clarified her position. She said, “I think you can argue one side, but your arguments must recognize that other people might disagree,” and then had the students look at the 5-paragraph essay example in which the arguments for the opposite side were refuted. In doing this, the teacher communicated that an argument essay does not provide supporting arguments for both sides of the debate. Rather, it supports one side by providing supporting evidence for one side and sometimes includes arguments against the support for the other side.

Before class ended, the teacher quickly led the students through a series of questions designed to get them to think about the purpose of an argument essay and the challenges of writing a “researched based essay.” One question focused on the differences between the 5-paragraph essay the students previously analyzed and the “research-based argumentative essay” they were to write for this assignment. Another question asked whether students felt it
is hard to know how to convince the reader of a point of view. A third question asked if students were unsure about how to include the ideas from the readings, whether to quote, summarize, or paraphrase.

The teacher finished the class by quickly discussing the main points of a chapter in the class textbook on critical reading skills and then suggesting to the students that they use these techniques as they read the two articles distributed with the assignment.

4.4.2 – Discussing the Class Articles

A week after distributing the argument essay assignment, the teacher began the class by reviewing from the textbook the first steps in the process of writing an argument essay. She wrote on the board: 1) understand the question, 2) summarize and critique the readings, 3) write a thesis statement, and 4) organize the main ideas around the thesis statement. She explained that they had spent time during the previous classes building an understanding of the essay assignment and its requirements. She quickly reviewed some things they had discussed: they were to write an argumentative rather than an informative essay; the additional sources they needed to find for the essay should include library resources from Proquest (a database of newspapers, magazines, and professional journals). Therefore, during this class, the students would work on critiquing the class articles and organizing their ideas around a thesis statement.

The teacher’s goal for the next activity was to increase the students’ critical understanding of the class articles. The teacher had the students get out the articles that had been distributed with the assignment and sit in groups of two to four students. Then after she distributed a worksheet with reading questions, the students worked in their groups answering the questions on the worksheet. The first part of the handout asked four questions about the audience, purpose, and argumentative support within the Revolutionary Worker article (see appendix H for the complete handout) and the teacher circulated to each group to stimulate
their thinking by providing ideas that they may not have thought of. After about twelve minutes, the teacher brought the class back together and had students offer answers to the questions.

The class then moved to part two of the handout and discussed the questions in small groups. The questions had students compare and contrast the two class articles as well as a third article written by Don Sloan, which was used for the first assignment of the semester and was also on the topic of abortion. The worksheet asked questions such as:

a. Abortion is not murder because the fetus is not human. (Revolutionary Worker: 1995). What does Sloan have to say about this issue?

b. The Revolutionary Worker asserts that the issue of control is at the heart of why the state sometimes denies women their right to choose whether they have an abortion or not. Does Sloan think that control is an issue in the abortion debate?

c. Mother Teresa believes that it is selfish to have an abortion. Why?

d. What kind of response would the Revolutionary Worker have to Mother Teresa's argument?

(see Appendix H for the complete handout)

The students discussed these questions for about another twelve minutes while the teacher again circulated to all of the groups and stimulated students’ thinking.

The teacher concluded this activity by saying, “Writing a research based essay is probably one of the most challenging things you must do. I am suggesting how you must think in order to write an essay…. The important thing here is that you are thinking in this way before you start to write your argument essay.”
4.4.3 – Handing in the First Draft

A week and a half after first receiving the essay assignment in class, the participants all handed in their first draft to the teacher during class. Over the next two days, the teacher read all of the first drafts and wrote comments on them.

4.4.4 – Analyzing a Classmate’s First Draft and Getting the First Draft Back

In class on Wednesday of week three, the teacher decided to copy and distribute to the whole class a student’s first draft for analysis and discussion. The draft happened to belong to Jenny, one of the participants in this study. The teacher began by having the students skim through the essay and find “the main ideas of the argument.” After working as a whole class to identify the four main arguments in the body of the essay, the teacher wrote them on the board along with the essay’s thesis statement:

Thesis statement is “Abortion is not a selfish choice for the mother.” 1) Fetus is not human, 2) Reduce the number of abortions by educating and contraception, 3) It’s a woman’s right, and 4) Abortion does not lead to violence.

The teacher asked the class, “Do the arguments support the thesis statement?” The class then spent twelve minutes debating whether each argument was salient in the text and provided logical support for the thesis statement. The class came to the general conclusion that each claim, as it stood, did not support the thesis, but could if the connections between each claim and the thesis were made more explicit. The teacher concluded this activity by making her instructional point explicit: “The point I’m trying to make is your arguments must support your thesis and your arguments must be in the topic sentence in each paragraph.” The teacher then emphasized this point by writing it on the board.

Shifting the instruction, the teacher then wrote a thesis and four supporting claims from a different student’s first draft on the board. She wrote:
Thesis statement is “Abortion is not selfish when the family has no money the mother is too young.” 1) The family’s environment is too bad, 2) A fetus is not a child, and 3) Mothers have their own right.

She then put the students into small groups to discuss three questions: 1) whether the thesis was effective, 2) whether the claims supported the thesis, and 3) whether the claims were presented in a logical order. The students discussed these questions for six minutes while the teacher worked with only one group that included a participant in this study, Andy. During the next seven minutes, the teacher led the students in a whole-class discussion to answer the questions they had just discussed in small groups. Students expressed the full range of possible answers to whether the thesis was effective. The teacher helped guide the students’ thinking to show that the claims were not supporting the thesis. Then, for the next five minutes, the students further discussed in groups their ideas about the issues the class had just discussed.

The next six minutes of the class was again a teacher-fronted whole-class discussion. The teacher, however, shifted the discussion to the source texts the students could cite to support the claims presented on the board from the previous discussion. Students readily gave answers about which class articles they could cite to support the various claims. The teacher pointed out that not all claims could be supported by the class articles, but students would need to find their own articles to cite to support some of the claims. She also indicated that not all claims made in the essay would need a citation. At the end of this discussion, the class took a ten-minute break.

During the second half of this class, the teacher passed back the students’ first drafts and conducted an activity with the class that was designed to reinforce the first-hour’s instruction. The teacher asked the students to highlight on their first draft the thesis statement and topic sentences of each body paragraph.
The whole emphasis of this class was on the textual elements of an argument essay and organization of those elements within an essay. The teacher wanted the students to see that the thesis statement needed to be in the introduction; each body paragraph required a topic sentence, which must be the first sentence in each body paragraph, and that topic sentence must clearly relate to and support the thesis; and it was essential that the students cite source texts to support the claims.

4.4.5 – Participating in a Peer Review Session

Two days after receiving their first draft back from the teacher, the students brought a second draft to class and participated in a peer review session. Before the peer review, the teacher gave some instruction on how students could self-correct the grammar in their essays. The students then took some time to correct their grammar while the teacher circulated and helped students locate grammatical errors in their writing.

At the start of the peer review, students exchanged essays with a partner of their own choosing and then answered about their partner’s essay a series of questions on a handout. The handout contained 13 different questions and asked the student to do such things as identify the topic and purpose of the essay from the introduction, name the supporting arguments in the body, and count the number of citations used in the essay. At the end of the activity, the students gave the essays back to their partners and discussed with their partners their revision ideas for writing the final draft.

4.4.6 – Handing in the Final Draft

After two and a half weeks and writing three drafts, the students handed in their final drafts. Before class, students submitted their final drafts to the website turnitin.com, which scans student papers for potentially copied text, and brought their first and second draft to class on the due date. After class, the teacher downloaded the participants’ final drafts from
the website turnitin.com and used the resources on the website to check the participants’ essays for plagiarism.

4.5 – Introduction to the Cases

The presentation of each case will follow the same general outline. First, I will give general background information on the participant’s Chinese (L1) and English (L2) reading and writing experiences in both China and New Zealand. Next, I will give an outline of the participant’s reading and writing processes over the two-and-a-half weeks of the argument essay assignment. Then, I will describe both qualitatively and quantitatively the participant’s final draft of the essay in order to make the direction of the participant’s reading and writing processes more apparent at the outset. Finally, I will present a chronological narrative of the participant’s reading and writing processes.

The participants’ cases will be presented in this order: Lin, Jason, Andy, and Jenny. Lin and Jason’s cases are presented first because they did not pass the argument essay assignment while the last two participants, Andy and Jenny, passed the assignment. This order provides a bit of contrast between the cases but also helps highlight some of the cases’ similarities despite the teacher’s marks assigned to the final drafts.

4.6 – Lin

4.6.1 – Lin’s Background

Lin was a 26-year old female from Shanghai, China who had been living in New Zealand for four years. Her purpose for being in New Zealand was to complete a bachelor’s degree in business. After studying English for a year and then finishing a certificate program in business administration and computing, Lin completed one semester of a bachelor of business program at another local school before transferring to AIS St. Helens, where she
could complete her degree more quickly. After studying she planned to go back to China and find a job in marketing or as an office lady.

4.6.1.1 – Reading and Writing in Chinese

In China, Lin described writing essays at school that were “nearly…800 words” long on topics that were “very similar to the IELTS test,” topics such as “our family” and “my parents.” While at primary and intermediate school, Lin wrote these essays “often,” which was “nearly one week for one essay.” However, in high school, the frequency of her writing apparently decreased. Her Chinese language arts class would read 1000-word articles and use “one week time to talk about this article,” and during the week, she would write “what is main idea for the article.”

Lin believed that sometimes she was good at writing in Chinese. If she “like[d] this topic,” she would “write better.” When she had to write about the articles she was reading in Chinese class, the writing required her to identify the main idea. “Sometimes,” her teacher would ask her to “read a book” and write “a critique of the book,” but she did “not usually” do this type of “reading for the writing.”

Lin felt she was a “good reader” in Chinese because she liked to read “many, many kind of book,” books such as “humor,” “action,” and “history.” Because she enjoyed reading, she would read books often and quickly, “nearly one week for one new book.” She attributed her interest in reading to her father who “like[d] to buy books.” He taught Lin to read the newspaper when she was “nearly five or four years” old.

4.6.1.2 – Reading and Writing in English

Lin’s English training in China was lengthy yet limited. She studied English for 10 years beginning in primary school, but it was only “a little bit.” In class, the teachers and students would only “speak in Chinese not in English,” which in Lin’s opinion, reduced the
effectiveness of the instruction. Her English study at school “focus[ed] on the grammar…and words” requiring her to “understand many words and remember it.” And although Lin’s English classes also read articles, they were “a lot shorter than the Chinese” articles and “very simple.”

At the time of this study, Lin had been living in New Zealand for four years during which time she had studied English for a year and earned a pre-degree certificate. However, her English reading habits were different from her Chinese reading habits. While in New Zealand, Lin did “not really read the many papers or many book” in English; however, she “very like the English book Pride and Prejudice” and could “read this book in English.” And despite her academic effort while in New Zealand, the most complex paper she wrote before coming to AIS was a group report for a business communication class during the previous semester at her former school. However, Lin had enough practical academic writing experience to know that IELTS writing is “not similar” to the types of writing she was required to do in her classes. For the business communication class she took before transferring to AIS, Lin wrote a report, which was a group project that required the students to “discuss and interview” in order to successfully complete the assignment. She recognized that this type of writing was very different from what she had learned to do in order to pass the IELTS test. A year prior to this study, Lin took the IELTS test and received a 6.0 score with sub-scores of 6.0 in writing and 5.5 in reading.

Lin believed that her reading skills in English were “better than [her] writing” skills, despite her IELTS score showing the opposite, and she cited her ability to “remember many words” as her biggest strength in reading. In her English writing, Lin said that “grammar is not difficult” for her, but that vocabulary and spelling inhibit the clarity of her writing. She said, “sometimes I want to explain my opinion, but I can’t use the words; so the reader…can’t understand me.”
4.6.2 – Overview of Lin’s Essay Assignment

This section gives a brief overview of Lin’s writing processes over the course of the argument essay assignment and a description of the final draft of Lin’s essay.

4.6.2.1 – Overview of Lin’s Writing Process

Table 6 outlines the major incidents from the event listing used to recreate Lin’s writing process for the argument essay. The events are listed on the day in which they occurred in the order that they occurred. Some events are listed over multiple days because the specific date of the event was not present in the data. These events are, however, listed in the order in which they most likely occurred over the time frame in which they are listed. Events in bold are unique to Lin’s case while unbolded events are common to all participants in this study and have been described previously.

4.6.2.2 – Description of Lin’s Final Draft

Lin’s final draft consisted of 6 paragraphs and 1173 words, 39% of which were copied from Lin’s source texts according to the textual analysis. Table 7 provides a quantitative description of Lin’s final draft. (See chapter 3 for the definitions used to determine the number of copied words, paraphrased words, summarized words, quoted words, and original words, or alternatively, see appendix L.)

Lin’s final draft contained most of the critical elements of the argument essay genre, elements such as a thesis statement, topic sentences, and an affirmation of the thesis in the conclusion (see Hyland, 1990). However, the biggest inhibitor to the communicative success of her essay was a lack of coherence caused by Lin’s patchwriting from her sources. The introduction and first body paragraph contained extensive amounts of borrowed text and ideas. The second body paragraph and the first third of the third body paragraph contained comparatively less borrowed text and ideas. However, the final two-thirds of the third body
Table 6 – Outline of the Major Events in Lin’s Writing Process

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<td></td>
<td>- Received assignment in class</td>
<td>- Searched for information to support selfish side of argument</td>
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<td>- Read the class articles</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
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<td>- Discussed class articles in class</td>
<td>- Reread diagnostic test articles</td>
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<td>- Decided to argue for not selfish</td>
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<td>- Wrote an outline of main points</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Handed in first draft during class</td>
<td>- Read books on abortion in library</td>
<td>- Peer review in class</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Searched Internet for extra sources</td>
<td>- Wrote second draft</td>
<td>- Wrote final draft</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Discussed abortion with landlord</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Analyzed classmate’s first draft and received her own first draft back from teacher during class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Made changes to her first draft</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Asked classmate to print her second draft</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Read a church pamphlet on abortion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Handed in final draft</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

paragraph, the longest paragraph in the essay, was almost entirely copied from an Internet website. In stark contrast, the fourth body paragraph was almost entirely Lin’s “own” work. The conclusion was short, and because it was mostly a recapitulation of the previous arguments, it fell back into borrowed text and ideas before reasserting the essay’s thesis.
Table 7 – Quantitative Description of Lin’s Final Draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of words</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of paragraphs</td>
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<td>Percentage of copied text according to the website turnitin.com</td>
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<td>Actual number of copied words (percent of total)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of paraphrased words (percent of total)</td>
<td>200 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of summarized words (percent of total)</td>
<td>27 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of quoted words (percent of total)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of original words with no identifiable source (percent of total)</td>
<td>494 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of in-text citations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of references in reference list</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks / Grade</td>
<td>0% / D-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.3 – The Story of Lin’s Essay Assignment

4.6.3.1 – Prelude

Lin’s story actually begins at the start of the semester even though the argument essay assignment was not distributed until three weeks into the semester. At the beginning of the semester, the teacher told the students that they would be submitting the final drafts of all assignments to the website turnitin.com, a website that scans papers for copied text by comparing submitted papers with live and archived Internet pages; the Proquest database of journals, magazines, and newspapers; and all previously submitted student papers. She also informed the students that any essay that the website identified as having more than 10% copied text would be considered plagiarized and, consequently, that paper would fail the assignment with a 0%. Prior to the argument essay assignment, the class completed another writing-from-readings assignment and submitted the final draft to turnitin.com; however, Lin
did not get the class password to access the website and, consequently, handed in a paper copy of her first assignment rather than using the website. Therefore, the argument essay was Lin’s first experience with turnitin.com.

4.6.3.2 – Receiving the Assignment (Common Event)

The beginning stages of this assignment do not reveal anything particularly unusual about the way Lin approached the argument essay assignment. She received the argument essay assignment in class along with all the other students. During this class, she actively participated in both group and whole-class activities. Along with two other classmates, she debated the selfish/not-selfish issue with Jason, who the teacher believed had found some solid arguments that were different from the rest of the class. And when the teacher asked the class to identify the critical elements from the example 5-paragraph essay, Lin participated by identifying its thesis statement.

4.6.3.3 – Reading Source Texts

In the beginning, Lin had trouble deciding whether to argue that abortion was a selfish choice or not a selfish choice. At first she could not “distinguish selfish or not selfish,” but after reading the two articles distributed with the assignment, she had a clear idea of the meaning of the word *selfish* and planned to argue that abortion is a selfish choice. Part of the reason for this early decision may have been that Lin felt the article that argued for abortion as a selfish choice used “very simple” words and was “easy to understand” while the other article was “hard to understand.”

The assignment required Lin to use five different sources in her essay, so next she searched the Internet to find information to support her position. She “tried like Google, Yahoo!, many search engine” but failed to find the information she wanted. After this unfruitful search, Lin began to believe that arguing that abortion is a selfish choice would be
too difficult because she could not “find too much support to write 1200 words.” And this concerned Lin because she had to “change the words, use [her] own words to write this article.” So, Lin felt the need to “find many example” that she could “combine…and change in [her] own words.”

4.6.3.4 – Discussing the Class Articles (Common Event)

Two days prior to her writing the first draft, the teacher used the class time to strengthen the students’ critical understanding of the articles distributed in class. Once the teacher had distributed the handout, given instructions and divided the students into groups, the teacher sat down with Lin’s group to discuss the first few questions on the handout about the audience and purpose of the Revolutionary Worker article. At first, Lin was the only group member answering the teacher’s questions. It seemed, during the class observation, that Lin had developed the clearest understanding of the articles among the group of students with whom she was sitting and thus she felt the most confident to engage with the teacher in conversation about the articles. Lin remained highly engaged throughout this interaction with the teacher, and the group continued their lively discussion—switching from English to Chinese—about the class articles even after the teacher moved on to another group. This class helped Lin develop a deeper understanding of the class articles and the issues of abortion, and during this class, Lin changed her mind and decided to argue that abortion is not selfish.

4.6.3.5 – Writing a First Draft

At the end of this class, Lin wrote an outline of her ideas. The outline consisted of a “thesis statement” and then the “main point[s]” for her essay. She described her process for creating the outline thus:

I just copy the article like the abortion is a common and significant part of women control their life, and abortion is not murder because it is not a child, and Mother
Teresa say abortion is broken the peace, but I think absolutely not. And to women abortion is their choice, like this. I just write one-by-one.

The three main points that Lin used in her outline were from the class articles. The first two are from the Revolutionary Worker article and the third is from the Mother Teresa article.

After creating this outline, Lin reread the diagnostic test articles on abortion distributed at the beginning of the semester because she could not “find many academic article on the Internet” and she felt the articles were “good ones” that would help her “find some idea.” When I asked her if she used any of those ideas in her draft, she said:

I’m not sure because I just read it and after read just write something…. Because after I read, some words I can remember, and when I write it some word can drop into my mind and I use it just like this.

In fact, Lin’s first draft did contain words and ideas from one of these diagnostic test articles. Twenty-five percent of the text and ideas in the second paragraph of her first draft were from this article and the third paragraph also contained an idea paraphrased from this article.

Lin constructed a first draft based on her outline, but she was not pleased with her first draft. She had not found “many case to support [her] idea,” and it was just a “short one, nearly 600 words” because she did “not have enough time.” However, she did seem pleased that she had “completed the 5 paragraph: introduction, body, and conclusion.”

On Monday, Lin handed in her first draft to the teacher during class.

4.6.3.6 – Working on a Second Draft

In the two days between handing in her first draft and receiving it back with the teacher’s comments, Lin was busy working on her second draft. Lin spent two hours each day searching the Internet for additional information and sources but could not “find the—like Dr. Don or Mother Teresa—like this article.” Most of the information was “short and very simple,” like comments and anecdotes posted on web bulletin boards, and “not interesting.”
Lin did, however, find two articles that she borrowed text and ideas from in her second draft, and Lin extensively copied from one of these articles directly into her essay. In fact, she copied two paragraphs that comprised exactly one-third of the words in her second draft.

One evening after reading on the Internet, she spent “nearly one and a half hour” debating the essay topic with her landlord in order to obtain more information and hone her argument. The landlord did not “agree with [Lin’s] opinion” and offered several “very sad” stories to justify her (the landlord’s) viewpoint. Although Lin took the position that abortion is not a selfish choice in the debate with the landlord and in her essay, Lin could not “say abortion selfish or not selfish because they have two sides.” However, the teacher had explained that “if [students] talk two side, sometimes our point, our opinion [is] not clearly” conveyed to the reader. Lin used some of the ideas and stories that her landlord told to add to her argument in the second draft. She added these to her draft immediately after talking with her landlord because Lin wanted to “remember her story” and was afraid she would “forget.” Lin’s second draft was exactly twice as long as her first draft, and Lin felt good that her essay was “nearly now the 1200 words.”

4.6.3.7 – Analyzing a Classmate’s First Draft (Common Event)

On Wednesday during the next class, Lin analyzed another student’s first draft. She thought the purpose of this activity was to help the students “know which way we can get the high mark” on the essay. But Lin felt like she did “not really” learn anything from this activity because she was “not sure if [her classmate’s essay was] better or not better” than her own. This confusion may have partially come from the teacher’s written comments on the draft. One of these comments was that the topic sentences should come first in each body paragraph, but Lin did not understand “why the topic sentence must in the first sentence.” She felt this comment was overly controlling of “the shape or the type” of essay and she did not “agree that the statement must on the first sentence” because an author “can give the many
many style” to an essay. Furthermore, she wanted her essay to stand out from her classmate’s essays because “all the style” of their essays was “the same,” which she thought made her essay “not interesting.” An additional source of Lin’s confusion on this issue may have been connected to her views of politics and freedom in New Zealand. She commented:

In China, our teacher…limited our mind. I think here [in New Zealand] maybe the people is freedom, is very freely. So, I think we can write the article with more freely, more freedom, not also the shape is limited like this; you must write the first sentence in you topic sentence. I don’t agree with like this.

After analyzing the classmate’s first draft, Lin received her first draft back from the teacher and then asked Jack, one of her classmates who was also Chinese, to print her second draft and bring it to class on Friday for the peer review session because she did not have a printer.

After class, Lin spent time making changes to the draft based on the teacher’s comments and feedback. Because the teacher had commented that the topic sentences should be the first sentence in the body paragraphs, Lin made sure she “put a topic sentence for the first sentence before beginning the paragraph.” She also worked on paraphrasing the major section of her essay that she copied from the Internet because she was aware that she had “copied the Internet” and that “we can’t copy.” She “want[ed] to know about these things” in the text she copied, so her goal was to “rewrite it and try to understand” although her rewriting generally consisted of rearranging sentences and substituting synonyms.

Later that day, Lin tried to gather more information because her essay was “not nearly 1500 [words], so [she] need[ed] to find another reference” for her essay. She thought she could go to “the Internet or to the library to find some books [she] need[ed] to write in the article (her essay).” And her goal was to “add near 200 or 300 words” in order to “get enough” for her essay. She visited the school library and spent 30 minutes looking up books on abortion. However, the books “just talk[ed] in abortion but not give some opinion about
abortion is selfish or not selfish.” So, she went home. Sometime after arriving at home, a “church man” knocked on the door and gave Lin a 20-page pamphlet on abortion written in Chinese. She “read it” and thought it was “so very interesting” even though “they [did not] agree with abortion.”

4.6.3.8 – Participating in a Peer Review Session (Common Event)

At the next class on Friday, Jack brought Lin’s printed draft to class along with his own second draft for the peer review. In a stroke of fate, Lin was assigned to work with Jack for the peer review session. Lin and Jack traded papers and Lin began to read Jack’s essay. While reading, Lin began to notice something very familiar about Jack’s essay. She explained:

My lecturer ask me to swap our assignment, so I swapped and I saw his essay. So I think his opinion is the same as me, but the order is just changed. So I say I am very angry with this and ask why your opinion the same as me. And…he just explain I just used the, maybe our mind is the same. But sometimes I think my opinion is difficult, and difficult I think is too, how to say, why it happen the same opinion? We think the same opinion, so I’m very angry with this. And after I read his essay I see he used some sentence or some idea also the same as me, so I very angry with this.

In fact, Lin was so angry and convinced that Jack had stolen her paper that she ignored any Chinese customs of saving face and approached the teacher during class, explained that she felt Jack had copied her paper, and showed the teacher both essays. Here is Lin’s account of this interaction with the teacher:

[The teacher] think, “why are you angry, why are you being angry?” And I say, “why they the same opinion?” And the lecturer saw the first [xxx] introduction and she say “not really very same, similar.” So she ask me don’t worry about this. So I say “okay.” So I do this; I also do his essay. Yeah it’s goodness.
4.6.3.9 – Finishing the Final Draft

The peer review was on Friday and the final draft was due on the following Monday. Lin spent two and a half hours that Friday night completing her final draft. She edited her grammar and made some changes that the teacher had suggested while reading her paper during the peer review activity in class. She also wrote another paragraph into the body of her essay “because [she] need[ed] also more longer.” Lin was worried that she did not have “the 1000 word essays” and declared, “It’s too hard to me. So I need to add one argument in the essay.” And she again worked on “paraphrasing” the portions of her paper “downloaded from the Internet” because she “must change something and not use that.”

Lin then submitted her final draft to the website turnitin.com on Monday morning before class and, as part of the class submission practice, handed in her first and second drafts to the teacher during class.

4.6.3.10 – A Conference with the Teacher

When the teacher saw on the turnitin.com report that 30% of Lin’s essay was copied from the Internet, she wrote across the top of the essay “0% due to plagiarism.” At the next class, the teacher took some time to talk to Lin about the problems with her essay. During this consultation, the teacher highlighted three sentences, indicated that sentences such as these must be enclosed in quotation marks, and underlined the sentences and drew quotation marks around them on Lin’s final draft to emphasize the point. Here is one sentence that the teacher highlighted just as it was written in Lin’s essay (to review this sentence in context, see paragraph two of the essay in appendix J):

A fetus is the beginning of human life, also it has not mind, not breath, so it is not really human life. (Rory Osbrink, 2005)
The first part of this sentence was copied directly from an article; however, the second half of the sentence, beginning with the word also, was written in Lin’s own words, and is an explanation and extension of the meaning from the copied portion of the sentence. Although it does not appear that the teacher specifically discussed the other two sentences during the consultation, these sentences too were a combination of words of the source text and Lin’s own words.

Lin left this conference feeling confused about why she had received a zero on her essay. She felt that the teacher did not follow the predetermined marking schedule for assigning marks to her paper. Lin explained that giving the whole paper a zero because some parts were not properly referenced was inconceivable to her:

The reference totally is 15 or 10 marks, so I think I just broken this reference list, but also my introduction and my conclusion and my body is not very poor, so I think maybe I can get some mark for the body or introduction like this, but I know my reference maybe not well, so I say the reference I cannot get the maybe 15 or 20 mark, I say just one-by-one, not together, all just because my reference not good, so I get a zero.

Lin argued that even if she had plagiarism in the body of her essay and received a zero on the body because she plagiarized a portion of it, she should still have been awarded credit for her work on the introduction and conclusion, which did not contain copying. However, at the beginning of the semester, the teacher had told the class that they would be turning in the final drafts of their assignments to turnitin.com, and she had warned the class that papers showing more that 10% copied text would receive a zero. The website showed that Lin’s essay contained 30% copied text and so the teacher was following through with her stated policy; however, Lin was confronted with a grey area:

Like my classmate, she also got above the 10%, but not like my 30. I got 30%, so maybe it’s too high. And she got nearly 20% and so [the teacher] gave down 10%. So
to her the full marks is 90%. So I think this I can accept, because I know my reference is not good, so I don’t need the reference marks. But I think my introduction, my body, my conclusion, like this I can get some marks, or some grammar or some sentences, yeah like this.

Lin’s classmate had 10% reduced from her overall marks because she was 10% over the acceptable limit of copied text. Had this consequence been applied to all cases, Lin would have had 20% deducted from her total marks, which would have given her some credit for the work that she did do. However, Lin was given a zero, and the established consequences for being over the 10% limit were not evenly applied because not all students over the 10% limit were given zeros on their essays. In fact, students had to have about 25% copied text on the argument essay before they were given a zero. But this was never told to the students, possibly because it was a decision the teacher made after looking at all the final drafts from the class. Indeed, the teacher used a range of responses for being varying degrees over the 10% limit with a handful of students in the class.

4.6.3.11 – Taking the Midterm Test

Receiving a zero on her argument essay was a blow to Lin’s confidence in her ability to write and, unfortunately for Lin, she had to take the Study Writing midterm test only a few hours after the teacher handed back her essay with a zero on it. The main objective of the midterm test was to measure students’ ability to paraphrase and cite sources in support of an argument and consequently it required students to write an essay that cited four sources. Lin included only one citation in her midterm essay and defended her action thus:

In the midterm test, I’m very afraid of using reference. So after I read the article I don’t want to use the reference because I think if I use it maybe I will get the zero percent. And so I say I can’t get the second experience of the zero mark, so I don’t
want to [include] many reference, so I just used one sentence of the quotation, because
now I am very afraid of the reference.

Partly because she only used one citation, Lin earned on her midterm test a 53%,
which was just above the minimum passing grade of 50%.

4.6.3.12 – Epilogue

Six weeks after receiving a 0% on her argument essay, Lin took the final exam, a test
identical in format to the midterm, and demonstrated clear improvement with her use of
sources. Her essay contained five sources with in-text citations for each and most of her
source use was either properly quoted or adequately paraphrased text.

In the end, Lin finished the semester with a 55% overall mark which gave her a
passing “C” grade for Study Writing. She felt that she had “learned many things” in the Study
Writing class from the “many works [she] needed to do,” things such as “how to write a
report,” “how to write the research paper,” and her reading skills such as skimming.

4.7 – Jason

Jason was a male in his mid twenties from a small city about an hour and a half
outside of Shanghai, China. His case highlighted issues about motivating students who
struggle to pass writing courses.

4.7.1 – Jason’s Background

4.7.1.1 – Reading and Writing in China

Jason’s reading and writing experiences sound typical of the average Chinese student.
In China, Jason read “lots of book” like geography, astronomy, history, and novels. He felt he
was a good reader in Chinese because he could quickly identify main ideas or needed
information from texts. The most common type of writing he did in high school was when the
teachers “give you a topic and you explain your opinion about the topic,” which generally covered applying knowledge and making moral judgments. Jason offered one example topic: “when you traveling and you have trouble, but your friend has some problem and you two choice. Leave him alone and go yourself. Another one is you pick him up and go together. This is, it’s like a judgment of moral.” On average, this type of essay required about 800 words and was frequently attached to the end of exams, which Jason took about every two weeks. In addition, he wrote stories and poetry as well as academic essays. On one academic essay in 10th grade, Jason wrote a particularly interesting paper and received the highest marks on the assignment out of about 450 students. Jason felt that he was a good writer in Chinese because he could “explain something very beautifully” and had enough vocabulary to “write anything.” He had enough confidence in his Chinese writing abilities that when I asked him about weaknesses in his Chinese writing, he could not think of any.

Although Jason had been studying English since he was 12 years old, he claimed that he did not do any writing as part of his English studies while in China. However, he did do reading practice, which consisted of mainly test exercises. He would read a passage of about 300 words and then answer comprehension questions. Although he did “lots of” these exercises, Jason felt that he was only “sometimes” a good reader in English. When he was interested in the topic and had built up a bit of background knowledge on it from his reading in Chinese, “maybe [he] can easily understand it.” However, in Jason’s mind, the one thing that made Jason a bad reader in English was his lack of vocabulary knowledge, which was also the reason Jason cited for not liking reading in English very much.

4.7.1.2 – Studying English in New Zealand

When Jason came to New Zealand, he studied in the general English classes at AIS St. Helen’s English Language Center (ELC) for six months, at which point he took the in-house English proficiency exam and scored a 31 (equivalent to a 4.5 on the academic IELTS or 450
on the TOEFL), far short of the 36 (equivalent to a 5.5 on the academic IELTS or 500 on the TOEFL) needed for admission to the Bachelor of International Business (BIB) program.

Jason was then obliged to study for three more months in two English for academic purposes (EAP) courses before he could enroll in the BIB program.

As part of his ELC study, Jason practiced writing paragraphs, and moved into more complex “academic writing” in the EAP courses. For these academic writing assignments, Jason was asked to “introduce some country’s culture. And maybe introduce yourself, your country. Sometimes you can choose any topic like Internet or basketball player or famous company like Nike or IBM.” After his experience in the EAP classes, Jason felt that English writing is very “structured.”

4.7.1.3 – Matriculating into the Degree Program

Because Jason’s English was still not considered proficient enough for independent study in the degree program, Jason was conditionally admitted to the BIB program contingent upon his taking English support classes. AIS also required all students who were in their first semester of the degree program to take Study Writing. During his first semester in Study Writing, the class had five writing assignments, and on the first four assignments Jason earned 49%, just short of the 50% minimum required to pass. He failed to hand in the fifth assignment but managed to earn a 55% on the final exam. With all of the assignments and the final exam weighted properly, Jason had earned a 44% in the class, which was a failing grade and meant Jason had to repeat the class the following semester. Ironically, had Jason persevered, handed in the fifth assignment, and earned at least 40% on that assignment, he would have passed Study Writing and not needed to repeat it.

Jason’s second semester in Study Writing was very different from his first semester although he had the same teacher. Jason only completed the first two assignments out of five. He earned a passing grade (56%) on the first assignment and then only managed a 14% on the
second. Jason took the midterm test—an argument essay similar to the third assignment, which he skipped—and earned a dismal 17%. The midterm test was the last assignment Jason completed that semester and he finished with a failing grade, which meant that Jason had to reenroll in Study Writing for a third semester.

At the time of this study, Jason was in his third semester in the BIB program. He had passed only one course, Business Economics, and was taking Study Writing for the third time. He felt like Study Writing was difficult to pass because there was a conflict between the assignment intensive nature of the Study Writing course and his “lazy” character that gave him a distaste for doing more work than he perceived was necessary.

4.7.1.4 – A Self-Assessment of His English Writing Abilities

Jason did not feel that he was a good writer in English. And the fact that he was taking Study Writing for the third time clearly put a stigma on how he viewed his English writing abilities. He said, “If I’m a good writer, maybe I think I can pass this course easy. But unfortunately I have done Study Writing. This is the third time. So, I think, firstly I don’t like writing in English.” When I asked him why he did not like writing in English, Jason rattled off a long list of reasons such as he is lazy, it is difficult to write introductions, he cannot get enough information on the writing topics, and his vocabulary is deficient. The ignominious conclusion to this part of our conversation in the interview was Jason’s declaration that there was nothing good about his writing in English.

4.7.2 – Overview of Jason’s Essay Assignment

This section gives a brief overview of Jason’s writing processes over the course of the argument essay assignment and a description of the final draft of Jason’s essay.
4.7.2.1 – Overview of Jason’s Writing Process

Table 8 outlines the major incidents from the event listing used to recreate Jason’s writing process for the argument essay during Jason’s third semester in Study Writing.

4.7.2.2 – Description of Jason’s Final Draft

Jason’s final draft consisted of 1387 words and 8 paragraphs. Table 9 provides a quantitative description of Jason’s final draft. (See chapter 3 for the definitions used to

Table 8 – Outline of the Major Events in Jason’s Writing Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Received assignment in class</td>
<td>- Choose to write that abortion is not selfish</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Read the class articles</td>
<td>- Made a plan for his essay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>- Searched the Internet for other articles</td>
<td>- Discussed class articles in class</td>
<td>- Reread the diagnostic test articles on abortion</td>
<td>- Reread his response essay, critique, and argument essays from last semester</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>- Wrote first draft</td>
<td>- Handed in first draft during class</td>
<td>- Analyzed classmate’s first draft and received his own first draft back from teacher during class</td>
<td>- Read classmate’s essay again to compare it with his second draft</td>
<td>- Peer review in class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Wrote second draft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td>- Wrote the final draft</td>
<td>- Handed in final draft</td>
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Table 9 – Quantitative Description of Jason’s Final Draft

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<td>Actual number of copied words (percent of total)</td>
<td>253 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of paraphrased words (percent of total)</td>
<td>81 (6%)</td>
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<td>Number of quoted words (percent of total)</td>
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<td>Number of original words with no identifiable source (percent of total)</td>
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determine the number of copied words, paraphrased words, summarized words, quoted words, and original words, or alternatively, see appendix L.) This quantitative description, however, may be a bit difficult to interpret at a glance. Thirty-two percent of the text in Jason’s final draft was borrowed from a paper he wrote during his previous semester in Study Writing. Hence, the website turnitin.com showed such a high percentage of copied text (49%) while the actual percentage of copied text was relatively low (18%). Furthermore, due to Jason’s using a portion of a previous assignment, he received 0% marks for his final draft of the argument essay.

Structurally, Jason’s essay was very well written. It began with a clear thesis set out in the introduction and then supported that thesis by refuting four different arguments that abortion is a selfish choice. It then presented one situation in which abortion could be a selfish
choice and finished by restating some of the arguments made in the body of the essay. Jason integrated the sources into his final draft by pitting their arguments against each other, using the ideas in one source text to counter the ideas from another. Although at times this resulted in chunks of text that were transferred directly from a source text to his essay, these instances were interspersed with large amounts of Jason’s “own” writing as evidenced by 71% of the words in the final draft having no identifiable source.

4.7.3 – The Story of Jason’s Essay Assignment

4.7.3.1 – Receiving the Assignment (Common Event)

For the initial activity that had the students decide which of the three positions best described their opinion on abortion, Jason chose to argue that abortion is not a selfish choice. Jason worked with a partner and came up with the idea that abortion is not a selfish choice because a woman is thinking about her baby when she knows she will not be able to look after her baby and consequently has an abortion. The teacher liked Jason’s ideas and put him with another group that was trying to argue that abortion can be a selfish choice but is sometimes absolutely necessary. Jason and this group argued against each other by offering examples and counterexamples of their position and thinking.

When the teacher led a discussion about whether the students needed to argue both sides of the essay question in their essay, Jason participated actively expressing the viewpoint that writers should argue both sides of the issue.

4.7.3.2 – The Next Few Days

Sometime during the next couple of days, Jason read the two articles distributed in class. He had three purposes in mind when he read them. First, he wanted to identify main ideas and supporting information in order to build a basic understanding of the articles. Second, he was looking for ideas to support the position he had chosen to argue for in the
essay, that abortion is not a selfish choice. Third, he felt that he could not meet the 1500-word length requirement from solely his own ideas. He, therefore, read with the purpose of finding more ideas to supplement his own. Jason was not in the habit of taking notes when he read, but rather tried to “just remember” the information with his “good memory.” Nor was he in the habit of using his bilingual dictionary but would rather “guess the meaning” of unknown words.

Also during this time, Jason made an initial plan for his essay. While lying in bed one night, he thought about his decision to argue that abortion is not a selfish choice. In order to defend this position, he came up with the idea that abortion is a woman’s right and is therefore not selfish. And he began thinking about how to write the introduction to his essay.

The assignment required Jason to use five different sources in his essay, and a day or two after making this initial plan, Jason went to the Internet to search for additional sources. He skimmed through a number of web pages to “find useful articles” but did not find any.

4.7.3.3 – Discussing the Class Articles (Common Event)

In class, the teacher grouped Jason with three other students in order to discuss the critical reading questions for the class articles. Jason’s group remained highly engaged in this task throughout and Jason constantly contributed to the conversation. When the teacher joined the group midway through the activity, she was impressed with Jason’s ability to pinpoint one author’s meaning and intention. However, during the discussion with Jason’s group, the teacher challenged the main argument Jason was planning on using in his essay—that abortion is not selfish because it is a woman’s right. The teacher pointed out that if something is a natural human right, then it can be neither selfish nor unselfish because it is a basic part of our existence. In response to this realization that his planned argument had a major weakness, Jason “need[ed] to think, think carefully.”
4.7.3.4 – After Class on Wednesday

Later that Wednesday, I had an interview with Jason. At this point, he still planned to argue that abortion is not a selfish choice but was rethinking his ideas for supporting his position. Although he was developing a plan in his head, he had not written down any notes or plans on paper. In looking for a solution to his argument’s “weakness,” Jason considered using pieces of the first assignment he wrote for Study Writing during the previous semester, which was also on abortion. This was one strategy “to find other point or other ideas to support [his] argument essay.” However, Jason was unsure whether using his previous assignment would be acceptable or not.

During the interview, Jason expressed his displeasure with the Study Writing class. He felt the assignments were not really helpful for successfully completing other courses’ assignments and that two semesters of Study Writing was “enough” to learn “all skills” the course was trying to teach. Furthermore, the large number of class assignments drove him “crazy” because other courses only had “maybe just one or two assignments.” In addition, writing three drafts of the same paper was “very boring” and excessive. In order to cope with his feelings about the drafting requirement, Jason planned to only write a partial first draft so that he did not have to go back and rewrite a lot of things when the teacher found mistakes.

4.7.3.5 – Doing More Reading

Sometime during the three days following our interview, Jason reread the diagnostic test articles used at the beginning of the semester in Study Writing. He also dug out his response essay and critique that he wrote during his previous semester in Study Writing. These two assignments were also on the topic of abortion although the specific writing tasks varied from the essay Jason was working on. Rereading the assignments he had previously written on a topic was a habit Jason had when working on a new assignment. While reading these assignment, Jason found “good support” ideas and “good examples” to use in his essay.
In the end, he felt that he could not “find others better than this one,” so he decided to use it in his essay.

4.7.3.6 – Writing a First Draft

On Sunday evening from 9:00 pm to 12:00 am, Jason wrote the first draft of his essay. Before composing this draft, Jason had struggled with the argument to present in his essay. The teacher’s criticism of his argument in class on Wednesday had truly caused Jason to “think carefully.” In order to find a better argument in support of his position, Jason created an argument that supported abortion as selfish, the opposite of his position, and then “knock[ed] it down.” He repeated this process over and over until he came up with the idea that “the fetus is not human and abortion is not murder.” However, he soon realized that these ideas too had no “connection to selfish choice.” Eventually, he came up with two supporting ideas from his “own thinking” that he used to write his first draft. Perhaps it is this line of thinking that led Jason to one of his strategies while writing—to anticipate arguments from the other side and counter them in his essay.

When Jason began composing, he started writing from the introduction and composed in order from the beginning to the end of his essay. When he had trouble thinking of how to continue his writing, he would stop writing and reread his essay. If rereading did not propel him forward in his text, he would begin revising what he had already written to make it “a bit better.” He felt this made it “easier” to “continue to write.” Another strategy Jason used while composing was to refer back to the source texts when there was something from them he could not remember. This led to a bit of copying from these texts in his first draft.

After writing the introduction and first two body paragraphs, which were 744 words in total, Jason copied into his first draft from one of his previous assignments three more body paragraphs and the conclusion, totaling 634 words. Thus, the first half of Jason’s essay was
newly written that semester and the second half was taken from an assignment he wrote for Study Writing during the previous semester.

The next day, Jason handed in his first draft.

4.7.3.7 – Analyzing a Classmate’s First Draft (Common Event)

During the class after handing in his first draft, the teacher had copied a student’s first draft and distributed it to everyone in order to analyze it. Jason actively participated in the hour-long essay analysis constantly volunteering answers to the teacher’s questions and contributing to the discussion. When I asked Jason why he was so willing to participate in class when other students were more reticent, he explained, “Maybe they worry about if they answer wrong, maybe they will embarrass or lose their face. For me, it doesn’t matter.” At the end of this analysis session, the teacher handed back Jason’s first draft with her comments on it. While in class, Jason read through these comments and began revising by deleting unnecessary information.

4.7.3.8 – Writing a Second Draft

After class, Jason met me for an interview. He expressed his plan for adding some arguments and reorganizing the body of his essay for the second draft because, as the teacher had indicated, it “repeat[ed] the same thing.” Jason also expressed dissatisfaction with his first draft because he felt the ideas were unstructured. In fact, if his first draft had received a grade, he guessed it would have been a D+. Despite this, he believed that the argument essay assignment was not difficult, especially not as difficult as the previous class assignment that semester, for which he earned a C.

Following our interview, Jason wrote his second draft. He spent three to four hours working on it and wrote it like he was “doing the final draft.” The majority of the changes he made reorganized and paraphrased the text in his essay. He reordered paragraphs and wrote
headings to clarify the various arguments he was making in the body of his essay. He also wrote a completely new section that argued “an embryo is not a baby,” a very similar argument to the fetus-is-not-human argument he rejected for his first draft.

4.7.3.9 – The Homeward Stretch

From this point, Jason did very little to his essay before submitting the final draft. Before taking his second draft to class on Friday for the peer review session, Jason reread the classmate’s essay he analyzed in class on Wednesday in order to compare the structure of that essay to the structure of his own essay although it is unclear whether or not he made any changes to his paper based on this analysis.

Then, during class on Friday, Jason traded papers with another classmate and participated in a peer review session; however, Jason “didn’t learn anything” from reading his partner’s essay and he did not read the comments his partner wrote about his essay. This was unfortunate because Jason’s peer review partner received some of the highest marks on the argument essay assignment and finished the semester with the second highest grade in the class.

On Sunday, Jason wrote his final draft by correcting a few grammatical errors towards the beginning of this essay and completing the reference list at the end. He then submitted his final draft the next day completing the assignment.

After submitting the final draft, Jason felt it was “very good. Maybe C or C+” or “maybe B-.” However, he was worried about how the borrowing from his previous semester’s assignment would affect his marks.

4.7.3.10 – Jason’s Marks on the Assignment

When Jason received his marked essay assignment back, he received a 0% on it for plagiarism. All students submitted their assignments to the website turnitin.com, which found
that Jason had copied 32% of his paper from the previous semester along with 8% from an article provided for the diagnostic test at the beginning of the semester. Jason seemed bothered, rather than devastated, about receiving a 0%. He noted, “I try to do my best, but sometimes [the rules regarding plagiarism] are different from my thinking.” He also added, “because this is all my thinking, I feel a little innocent.”

4.7.3.11 – Epilogue

After receiving a 0% on his argument essay assignment, Jason took the midterm exam, which was a timed argument essay, and earned a C-. Over the rest of the semester, Jason wrote a report (which earned a C+), a research paper (which earned a B), and a final exam essay (which earned a D+). Jason also received an A for class attendance over the semester. In the end, Jason did not need to take Study Writing for a fourth time because he passed with a C-, the lowest possible passing grade, even though he received a 0% on the essay assignment.

In reflecting on the Study Writing class, Jason felt that his writing had improved over the semester because he “did a lot of assignment,” had attended “most classes,” and “learned how to write a report and how to write a research report.” His views on the difficulty and complexity of writing had also changed. Jason commented:

Before I do Study Writing course I didn’t think writing is difficult, but now I think it is difficult. In EAP II, I write essay without any research or any information; it’s just write it down by my thinking. But now I need to do the research and get more information and I need to organize it.

And Jason was reserved when I asked at the end of the semester if he was a good writer. He remarked, “It depends on the topic and the essay style. If it’s a topic that I know lots of, then maybe I can be a good writer. But if something I feel boring I don’t think I can.”
4.8 – Andy

4.8.1 – Andy’s Background

Andy was a 20-year-old male from Guanjo, China, near Shanghai. Before coming to New Zealand, Andy studied business at a Chinese college for a year and a half. When he first arrived in New Zealand, he studied English for four months at AIS’s English Language Center where he was enrolled in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. After completing the course, Andy took the in-house English proficiency exam and scored a 32 (equivalent to 4.5-5.0 on the academic IELTS and about 470 on the TOEFL), which minimally qualified him to enroll in the degree program. When I asked him how he felt about his English proficiency exam score, he replied that it was “not very good.” Because of a low yet minimally adequate score on the English proficiency exam, he was required to take a concurrent English language support class with the mainstream business class in which he enrolled. The support class focused on enhancing the core vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing skills English language learners needed to pass the specific business course in which Andy was enrolled.

4.8.1.1 – Reading and Writing in China

Andy had only a limited variety of writing experiences while in China. He depicted his writing experiences in high school as reading comprehension exercises of ancient Chinese texts. The teacher would distribute a text and Andy had to read and study the text in order to interpret the main idea of the text and then explain his ideas by writing “more details for the main idea.” These ancient Chinese texts were “very hard to understand.” One of Andy’s strategies for helping him understand the texts was to “check the dictionary” in order to translate the words into modern Chinese, and then “make the words into a sentence” in order to come to a fuller understanding of the ancient text. Typically, this strategy would not yield enough information to write a 700 to 800 word text as the assignments required, so Andy had
to supplement his writing by “giv[ing] some of [his] own ideas.” As for Andy’s writing in college, it seems that Andy did more writing in high school than he did in college because he could not remember doing any writing for the business classes he took while in college in China.

Andy felt confident about writing in Chinese and described it as “not very difficult; not very hard” and added “I think I can do it very well.” One of his strengths with writing in Chinese was composing narratives such as “writing stories, some novels.” Andy felt this type of writing was more enjoyable because it has fewer constraints placed on content by the audience. On the other hand, Andy disliked academic writing in Chinese because this type of writing “has some demands [that] limit your writing,” such as demands placed upon content by the task and audience: “you must follow the author’s idea and you must follow the teacher’s idea.”

In China, Andy enjoyed daily reading books such as action novels and true stories. He felt confident about his ability to read in Chinese saying that “I can understand all the Chinese novels, Chinese stories.” Andy also felt he was a good reader in English as well. He described reading in English as a hobby. When he was younger, he read stories by Hans Christian Andersen, and this interest in English reading gave him practice and confidence in his ability to read English texts.

4.8.1.2 – Writing in English

Although Andy could not remember writing for his business classes at college in China, he had a clear recollection of writing in his English class. The writing he did in his English class was “very boring,” an attitude he attributed to his low English proficiency; he said, “maybe when I study at Chinese college my English level is not very good. I don’t have a lot of things to write. So I feel boring.” The writing assignments consisted of topics such as an experience you will never forget, your favorite things, and fears about studying in college.
These writing assignments were not long (about 500 words) and came regularly with one assignment about every two weeks.

Andy felt that his English writing skills were not good and provided evidence from his marks for the EAP II course; “when I studying in EAP II course, my total is average.” He was enrolled in this course for three months and completed writing assignments that were descriptive and argumentative in nature. One of these assignments was to write an essay on “how to be a manager.” His first draft of this assignment was “very terrible,” but after some help from the teacher, Andy completed a satisfactory essay. Another assignment was to write a travel report for which “you can choose a country and you can write an essay about the country: for example, the country’s topic, country’s history, and the country’s economics, and that.” To find information for this assignment, Andy used library books, encyclopedias, and the Internet. Andy cited this report assignment as a type of writing that he felt he could “do well.” Andy felt that through the EAP II class he had achieved a noticeable improvement in his English writing, and he credited his teacher because “the teacher is very, very want to help you.”

4.8.2 – Overview of Andy’s Essay Assignment

4.8.2.1 – Overview of Andy’s Writing Process

Table 10 outlines the major incidents from the event listing used to recreate Andy’s writing process for the argument essay. They are listed in a manner similar to the tables used in the previous case studies.

4.8.2.2 – Description of Andy’s Final Draft

Andy’s final draft consisted of 1173 words and 8 paragraphs, was argumentative, and used facts and examples from other authors to support the arguments. Table 11 provides a quantitative description of Andy’s final draft. (See chapter 3 for the definitions used to
Table 10 – Outline of the Major Events in Andy’s Writing Process

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Andy’s final draft followed what Hinds (1990) terms a quasi-inductive style of writing that is characteristic of Chinese writers. He writes:

This technique has as its purpose the task of getting readers to think for themselves, to consider the observations made, and to draw their own conclusions. The task of the writer, then is not necessarily to convince, although it is clear that such authors have their own opinions. Rather, the task is to stimulate the reader into contemplating an issue or issues that might not have been previously considered. (pp. 99-100)

This is an apt description of Andy’s final draft. There was no thesis statement in the introduction that would guide the reader’s thinking by framing the essay; rather, there was an
Table 11 – Quantitative Description of Andy’s Final Draft

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<td>60% / B-</td>
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</table>

invitation for readers to “decide their opinion” through the presentation of both sides of the issue. The first three body paragraphs argued that abortion is not a selfish choice, heavily borrowed words and ideas from the source texts, and each contained a topic sentence that provided support for the idea that abortion is not selfish. Body paragraphs four, five, and six, rather than arguing that abortion is selfish, each summarized a main point from the Mother Teresa article, one of the articles distributed in class. These paragraphs heavily borrowed words and ideas from the class article due to their summary nature. The eighth and final paragraph was very brief, written entirely in Andy’s own words, and stated Andy’s opinion that abortion is not selfish. The teacher wrote on the final draft, “You have worked really hard on this and should be proud of yourself. You have made a real effort to understand the sources you have been given but have failed to do any research of your own.”
4.8.3 – The Story of Andy’s Essay Assignment

4.8.3.1 – Receiving the Assignment (Common Event)

On the first day of the assignment, Andy was present for the whole class and actively participated. He paired himself with his friend Polo, a student who had previously failed the Study Writing class, for the class activities. During the first activity for which students chose one of three options to defend in a paragraph, Andy had a bit of direct interaction with the teacher. The teacher approached Andy and Polo and spent about four minutes quizzing them about their thinking. She pointed out that they had chosen the opinion that abortion was selfish but was sometimes necessary, but in the support paragraph they were writing, they were only arguing that abortion is not selfish. To support their chosen opinion, they needed to show why abortion is generally selfish and why there are times when it is not selfish. The teacher asked Andy and Polo to think of some examples for when abortion is a selfish choice, but they had trouble thinking of any examples. The teacher then suggested that their opinion was probably better expressed by opinion #2—abortion is not a selfish choice.

One other telling event during this class occurred right at the end when the teacher was asking the students questions about the purpose of an argument essay and how to use sources within one. One of her questions focused on the differences between the 5-paragraph essay the students previously analyzed and the “research-based” argument essay they were to write for this assignment. After discussing the differences, the teacher asked who had written this type of research-based argument essay before. Andy indicated that he had.

4.8.3.2 – Working Through the Week

During the week following the class introduction to the argument essay assignment, Andy’s work on the assignment consisted almost solely of reading. The day after Andy received the assignment, he read the two articles distributed with the assignment task in class.
After reading these two articles, Andy felt like he understood the main viewpoint of each article and about 60% of the information contained in the articles.

On the following day, Andy searched the Proquest database, a database of newspaper, magazine, and professional journal articles. Andy looked on Proquest for about half an hour for information to support the idea that abortion is not murder, an idea raised in the Revolutionary Worker article distributed with the essay assignment and also previously raised in the Sloan article used for the previous class assignment. Andy managed to find and read information on this topic.

There were four purposes driving Andy’s reading on the Internet and Proquest. First, the teacher discouraged the students from solely using the Internet to locate other source texts to use in their essays and had suggested that the students use Proquest. Second, Andy felt that the “Internet … is the best way to find information.” Third, Andy was looking for more information on the essay topic in order to come to a better understanding of the issues. He explained, “the teacher give us the article about the assignment, but I think the information is not enough. So I want to find the more information.” A final and more specific purpose for Andy’s reading was to find information that would clarify the articles given to him in class. The previous class assignment was to write a critique of an article written by Don Sloan. In his article, Sloan argued that abortion is a woman’s right and provided many examples and analogies to make his points. One of his points was that the word murder is a label applied to abortion by anti-abortionists; however, not all killing is murder. One of Sloan’s examples used to support this point was the concept of collateral damage in military operations. Andy did not understand clearly what collateral damage was and he felt that better understanding these words would help him to more clearly understand Sloan’s opinion on why abortion is not murder. Accordingly, he searched the Internet for the meaning of collateral damage. He explained:
Dr. Don gave the example about the college (collateral) damage, so first time I don’t know what is the college damage, so I type the college damage in the website in the Internet, and Internet will give some information to explain what is this, and I can understand it, I can read some example, so I think make me better to understand Dr. Don’s opinion.

It appears, then, that one of Andy’s principle purposes for using the Internet was to provide himself with a fuller understanding of the articles distributed in class. He searched for information and concepts raised in those articles. The purpose of his reading was to either clarify key words or concepts within the class articles or to expand and deepen his understanding of their arguments by reading other similar arguments. The class articles were the focal point of Andy’s essay throughout the whole drafting process. He was not able to integrate other sources outside these three class articles into his essay. However, he was able to comprehend these articles well enough to integrate them with his own knowledge and produce an essay that demonstrated a level of integration and understanding of the sources and topic that was acceptable to the teacher.

4.8.3.3 – Discussing the Class Articles (Common Event)

Andy discussed the class articles for about half an hour comparing his understanding of the articles with that of the other students in his group. He described the interactions with the other students in his group like this: “Maybe we can change the idea, we can know the other students’ idea and the other students will know my idea.” This discussion helped Andy to better understand the articles and he commented, “In class I tell the students my idea. The other students said different with us, so I think maybe my idea have some mistake, so I change it.”
4.8.3.4 – The First Interview

On the following day, I interviewed Andy for the first time about his reading and writing for this assignment. By this point, Andy had read the Mother Teresa and Revolutionary Worker articles two times to help boost his comprehension of them. He had not yet composed a formal draft of his paper but had created a detailed plan for his essay in his head. The introduction would state that abortion is a selfish choice and outline the arguments in the body of his essay.

First I give the main point sentence, for example the first paragraph, I think abortion is selfish so I will use the Mother Teresa and Dr. Don’s and the reference comment on their opinions to support why is abortion selfish, what about it is selfish.

The body would have three paragraphs. Andy credited his EAP II instructor for teaching him the organizing plan that he used to structure the information in the body of the essay:

When I study in the EAP II course, the teacher said three body paragraph is the best because, have three paragraph, first is disagree or agree, and the second is agree, and the third is agree. So the reader will understand maybe the writer is disagree or agree the selfish or selfless. So it is easy to understand. If give four paragraph, I think the reader will think “oh, is writer disagree or agree?” Can’t easy to understand.

Andy planned to use this organization to frame the body of his argument essay:

The body paragraph, I will give three paragraph. The first I will agree the abortion is selfish. The second paragraph I will say the abortion is selfless…. And maybe if the students or the teacher reading my assignment will think only these two paragraph, the teacher will think what is my opinion, is abortion selfish or selfless. So I need to do the third paragraph. The third paragraph I will give the opinion that supports abortion is selfish or abortion is selfless. So, maybe the teacher will understand “Oh, I know. His opinion supports selfish or supports selfless.”

The conclusion of the essay would simply “give [his] own opinion.”
4.8.3.5 – Writing a First Draft

Sometime between Thursday of week two and Monday of week three, Andy wrote the first draft of his essay. As indicated previously, Andy began writing his first draft with a clear plan in his mind. He knew “what is [his] main idea, and every paragraph’s main point sentence.” He drafted his essay from beginning to end, moving from the introduction to the body and then the conclusion, and drew most of his ideas straight from the articles. While writing, Andy frequently referred to the class articles in order to “have lots of ideas in [his] mind.” He also borrowed words directly from those articles. When I asked if he took words directly from the articles and put them into his essay, he said: “Yes, I think some ideas in the articles is very good. I can I think take them.” In addition to copying from the articles, Andy indicated that he also summarized the authors’ ideas.

The analysis of Andy’s first draft supports elements of his process description. The analysis showed that rather than writing an argument essay in which he states a position within the debate and then supports it, Andy was writing a summary and response paper. The introduction did not contain a clear proposition that guided the argument in the essay. Rather, it introduced the three class articles (Mother Teresa, Revolutionary Worker, and Sloan) and then gave an invitation for the reader to decide on his own opinion based on the opinions of these three authors. The first body paragraph began by stating that Mother Teresa believes that abortion is a selfish choice and then summarized her article in 356 words with very little of Andy’s personal interpretation or opinion inserted. The second body paragraph began by stating that the Revolutionary Worker believes that abortion is not a selfish choice and then summarized the article in 230 words, with very little of Andy’s personal interpretation or opinion inserted. The third body paragraph was only 81 words long and stated that abortion is not a selfish choice. The concluding paragraph was only 42 words long and restated the
position from the third body paragraph and suggested that most of the people in the world agree.

Because Andy’s organizing plan was to summarize the articles and then respond to them, and because Andy had developed his understanding of the articles through the classroom activities, Andy felt confident about his process for composing his first draft. He knew the main idea for each paragraph because it was the main idea of each article, which he had developed an understanding of in class. He did not just draw general ideas from the articles but while writing, frequently referred to them in order to borrow words and ideas because his purpose was to summarize and reproduce the content of them.

Andy handed in his completed first draft to the teacher during class on Monday of week three.

4.8.3.6 – Analyzing a Classmate’s First Draft (Common Event)

Andy arrived 15 minutes late to class on the day the class analyzed a student’s first draft. When he walked into class, the teacher had written on the board the thesis statement and four claims made in the body paragraphs that the students had identified from the example student essay. During the next 12 minutes, Andy did not comment or contribute to the class discussion about whether the claims supported the thesis. This was possibly because he missed the introduction to this part of the instruction and was trying to orient himself into the conversation.

For the six minutes that the students discussed the second thesis and set of claims, the teacher worked with Andy’s group helping them evaluate the ability of the claims to support the thesis. The changes Andy made to his essay in the second draft suggest that the small group setting and close contact with the teacher possibly had a small impact on Andy’s comprehension of the instruction and helped him better understand the importance of explicit claims that relate to a thesis. Furthermore, the organizing plan the teacher taught during this
class was very different from the organizing plan that Andy used to write his first draft. And it likely had some impact on Andy, because his second draft contained 43% different text from his first draft.

After the teacher had passed back the first drafts and asked students to highlight on their first draft the thesis statement and topic sentences of each body paragraph, Andy highlighted for his thesis statement a sentence in his first paragraph that said, “So difference kinds of people have different opinions.” He then highlighted the first sentence in each body paragraph as his topic sentences.

4.8.3.7 – Writing a Second Draft

At the end of class on Wednesday of the third week, Andy received his first draft back with written comments from the teacher. Andy seriously considered the teacher’s comments while writing his second draft because, he said, “I think this comment is teacher’s mind for my essay, and he give the good comment and the good example and good information for my essay, so I will use them in my second draft.”

One revision Andy made for his second draft was to restructure the body of his essay. He completely rewrote the second body paragraph into three new paragraphs each with a topic sentence focused on the implied thesis. His idea for restructuring this way came at least partially from the teacher’s comments on his first draft. He commented:

Maybe in the paragraph, my main point sentence is difference with the example, so this have different meaning, so the teacher point out and I need to make the main point sentence with the example and, how to say, good connect.

Furthermore, Andy drew ideas and text for these three new paragraphs from the class articles and one article from the diagnostic test at the beginning of the semester.

Andy also did some reading as part of writing his second draft. He claimed that reading helped add supporting ideas to his paragraphs. “Have more ideas for my second draft,
will make the paragraph in the second draft more strong, more information and details in my second draft.” This reading included the three class articles, the articles from the diagnostic test, and various websites. The websites included information about “what is abortion, how to do the abortion, and some famous person, how to say, the famous person give the advice for the abortion.” While searching for information on the Internet, Andy looked through both English and Chinese websites because “some academic English I can’t understand.” It seemed that a little more than half of his Internet reading was in English.

Although Andy described reading on the Internet as part of his process for writing the second draft of his essay, none of the information or text in Andy’s second draft could be identified with a website. Therefore, it is unclear what role this Internet reading played in this stage of Andy’s writing. It is possible that the textual analysis I conducted, as described in the methodology chapter, simply did not detect the uses of Andy’s Internet reading within the second draft. However, it is also possible that Andy’s Internet reading provided background information to support Andy’s comprehension and interpretation of other English texts. Or, it is possible that Andy could not comprehend enough of the Internet texts to integrate them into his developing understanding of the essay task and the argument he was building.

In the end, Andy liked his second draft better than his first draft. He commented, “I think second draft is better than first draft because have lots of changes, and has more information in the second draft.” Andy felt that his paper was moving in a positive direction that was probably more in line with what the assignment required and the teacher expected.

4.8.3.8 – Participating in a Peer Review Session (Common Event)

During this peer review, Andy exchanged papers with his friend Polo. Andy claimed in the interviews that the peer review session was helpful “because I can learn some information from other’s essay. I can know…how to do the writing, and it can help me do better in the final draft I think.” However, the only changes Andy made from the second to
final draft were a minor change to his conclusion and the addition of in-text citations throughout his essay. If Andy did learn something from the peer review session other than what was reflected in these minor changes to his essay, it was not apparent in his writing.

4.8.3.9 – Writing a Final Draft

Sometime between the peer review session in class on Friday and the following Monday, Andy completed the final draft of his essay. Before starting on his final draft, he went back to the Internet to see if any of the websites he had previously visited had posted any new information. Then, he checked his first and second drafts for any mistakes he may have repeated to be sure and correct them in the final draft.

The final draft had four basic changes from Andy’s second draft: the addition of the fourth body point to the introduction, addition of in-text citations, dividing the fourth body paragraph into three paragraphs without changing the content or organization of the original paragraph, and adjusting the voice in the conclusion to sound more direct and personal. So, if Andy did find any new information while he read, he did not include it in his essay. Also, the repeated mistakes that he checked his first and second drafts for could have only been minor mistakes because the changes he made for the final draft were very minor. He certainly could have been made aware of the missing in-text references through the in-class analysis of a classmate’s paper, other classroom instruction, the peer review, or through his own examination of his first and second drafts.

In the end, Andy felt good about his final draft and declared, “I think the final draft is the best for the essay assignment.” He submitted his final draft in electronic format to the website turnitin.com before class on Monday of the fourth week and handed in his first and second draft in class on the same day to complete the assignment.
4.8.3.10 – Epilogue

Andy completed the argument essay assignment rather well earning a B- (60%). The teacher wrote on the bottom of his marked essay, “Andy, you have worked really hard on this and should be proud of yourself. You have made a real effort to understand the sources you have been given but have failed to do any research of your own.” Andy was quite pleased with this result particularly because he felt the teacher was a very strict marker.

At the end of the semester, the marks Andy earned on the argument essay were the highest marks of any assignment he completed for Study Writing. Andy finished the semester with 54% marks, which earned him a C grade for the class.

4.9 – Jenny

4.9.1 – Jenny’s Background

Jenny was a 19-year old Chinese student enrolled in the Bachelor of International Business (BIB) program at AIS where she had been studying for three semesters at the time of this study.

4.9.1.1 – Reading and Writing in Chinese

Jenny grew up in Nangin, an average-size city three hours outside of Shanghai. While living in China, Jenny attended a boarding school where she wrote “a lot.” Most of her writing was “just for homework” because the teacher felt that writing in class “wastes time.” Jenny remembered doing “lots of homework for writing, probably…one essay per week.” The topics of her writing varied from the “first time doing something” to “what’s the job you want to do in the future” and also sometimes included self-directed writing “about whatever you like.” The length of these homework assignments was about 2 or 3 pages, which Jenny labeled as “not short.” Jenny spoke about the attrition of her Chinese writing skills and felt that at the time of this study, she was no longer a good writer in Chinese because she had
been living in New Zealand for three years, spent “most time…writing English,” and had not practiced her Chinese writing (for an in-depth examination of this attrition phenomenon, see Carson & Kuehn, 1992). She explained that she did not “like” writing in Chinese because it was “just quite boring. You need sitting there and plan a draft first and writing, writing, write a lot, and you will change later. It’s quite hard for me.” However, one good thing about writing in Chinese was that “it is easier for [her] to use the words.” Jenny was also able to use reading to support her Chinese writing skills. She would sometimes “read the other people’s article first” and use that author’s “example, and the way that person writing” in the paper she was writing.

Jenny’s reading in China seemed to occur in closely controlled environments at school. Jenny described one daily reading routine at the school she attended:

We got the textbooks. And every morning we got a short class that is just for reading the books. And all the classmates just reading together and speaking it out. And it’s for 20 minutes every morning, quite early, half past seven, before the first class.

This method of reading orally together continued into her other classes as well. Sometimes teachers would read the textbook to the students and then “explain the meaning of that” while the students would “just listen.” Sometimes teachers would “ask one person to stand up and read it.” And sometimes the whole class would “read together” in a manner similar to what occurred in the “short class” every morning. The teachers did assign reading homework, but Jenny would “never do it” because “it is not like writing. Writing you must hand it in. Reading it is not.” Jenny did not feel that she was a good reader in Chinese and noted, “my friends know that. They often laughing at me because I’m bad with my reading.” For Jenny, reading in Chinese was a “hard task” that felt “heavy” because she had to sit “for a long time to read it.” She did not like reading “whole pages with all the words, but [she] must do that because [her] test got lots of reading. And if you don’t understand, it is very hard.” However,
she did “like reading the magazine with the photos” because “it’s more interesting.” In the end, Jenny much preferred to “listen to someone talking.” She did not “want to read.”

4.9.1.2 – Coming to New Zealand

When Jenny was 16 years old and before she had graduated from high school in China, she moved to New Zealand. After arriving, she studied English for a year and scored a 5.5 on the IELTS test. Next, Jenny enrolled in form six at Western Springs College where she did “not have that much writing.” At this high school, Jenny’s reading and writing mainly consisted of “read the books and understand it… before the test” and then “writing in the test.” Subsequently, Jenny briefly attended another institution before transferring to AIS, where she was given a noticeable increase in the amount of writing assignments. Despite having studied in New Zealand for three years, it appeared that the Study Writing class was Jenny’s first experience with academic writing-from-sources tasks in English.

Compared with Chinese writing, Jenny preferred writing in English and she described using a prewriting strategy that she felt made her English writing good. Jenny would “write what [she was] thinking first” in a sort of freewriting or brainstorming fashion. This helped her “relax” so that she could “write a lot.” Focusing too narrowly on the assignment task in the beginning was “more hard” for Jenny. She would worry about “which way [she] should go” and the level of formality in her word choices. Interestingly, the one weakness Jenny cited for her English writing was vocabulary, which was the one strength she cited for her Chinese writing. She tied this English writing weakness to her reading saying that “you need to read information first. And before that, I need to read lots of new words and check their meaning.” In other words, Jenny felt that weak vocabulary skills led to weak reading skills, which led to weak writing skills.

Jenny did not think she was a good reader in English. She cited three difficulties that made reading in English hard for her: the “culture difference” between China and New
Zealand, “the way people think,” and “words.” Even though she cited vocabulary as one of her difficulties, she did have strategies for dealing with unknown words. She would “check the meaning of the word” and sometimes try to “put [it] in one sentence.” And despite her downplaying her English reading ability, she also named a clear strength that supported her reading. Jenny knew “the structure” of English texts and could “guess the meaning, and what the people [were] trying to tell [her]” based on that structure. However, Jenny did not likely develop this textual awareness in Chinese noting that “Chinese writing is sometimes a little bit strange.”

Jenny felt she was a better writer than reader in English. She preferred writing to reading because with “writing you got more time.” She explained:

If one word I don’t know, I can check it from my dictionary. And the grammar problems, I can do it with my computer. It is easier for me. Plus, reading, it’s difference is the people using real words. Some words the meaning is quite easy for you to understand, but when you just see the word, you don’t understand the meaning. You have to check it. Or maybe sometimes forget.

4.9.2 – Overview of Jenny’s Essay Assignment

4.9.2.1 – Overview of Jenny’s Writing Process

Table 12 outlines the major incidents from the event listing used to recreate Jenny’s writing process for the argument essay. They are listed in a manner similar to the tables used in the previous case studies.

4.9.2.2 – Description of Jenny’s Final Draft

Jenny’s final draft consisted of 1161 words and 6 paragraphs, was argumentative, and used facts and examples from other authors to support the arguments. Table 13 provides a quantitative description of Jenny’s final draft. (See chapter 3 for the definitions used to
Table 12 – Outline of the Major Events in Jenny’s Writing Process

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<th>Sun</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Received assignment in class</td>
<td>- Read the task sheet</td>
<td>- Read the two class articles and the abortion article from the previous assignment</td>
<td>- Reread two class articles</td>
<td>- Searched for sources on Proquest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Read the task sheet</td>
<td>- Reread two class articles</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Read Proquest articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Decided to write that abortion is not selfish</td>
<td>- Discussed class articles in class</td>
<td>- Wrote first draft</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Handed in first draft during class</td>
<td>- Made outline with thesis and main points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Received first draft back during class</td>
<td>- Wrote second draft</td>
<td>- Edited grammar in class</td>
<td>- Peer review in class</td>
<td>- Read peer’s comments on her essay</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reread articles from diagnostic test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Wrote the final draft</td>
<td>- Handed in final draft</td>
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Jenny’s final draft of the argument essay contained many of the features typical of the English argument essay genre (Hyland, 1990). The teacher wrote on Jenny’s final draft that it was a “well organized argument.” It began with a thesis in the introduction, continued with
body paragraphs that all contained clear topic sentences mostly related to the thesis, and finished by restating the thesis and summarizing some of the points made in the body. Jenny integrated the source texts into her essay well by using in the body of her essay arguments drawn from the source texts. She created support for these arguments by integrating ideas from the source texts with her own. Although the structure of her essay was well crafted, the teacher wrote on the final draft that “the main weakness is with providing a convincing argument for some of your ideas.”
4.9.3 – The Story of Jenny’s Essay Assignment

4.9.3.1 – Receiving the Assignment (Common Event)

For the first activity where the students had to choose one of three opinions, Jenny chose to support the position that abortion can be a selfish choice but sometimes is absolutely necessary, and she ended up in a group of students who also felt the same. As the teacher interacted with Jenny’s group while they were trying to write a paragraph in support of their opinion, it became apparent that the group had only come up with support for circumstances when abortion is absolutely necessary. Jenny explained to the teacher that abortion is not selfish for a poor woman who does not have time or money to support the baby, and others in the group offered similar support. The teacher then clarified that the students needed to also include explanations for when abortion can be a selfish choice. After talking with the teacher, Jenny’s group wrote their ideas into a paragraph and the teacher put this paragraph on the board to analyze with the class.

For one of the final activities in the class, the teacher distributed a handout that had six statements describing typical difficulties of the writing process. She asked the students to mark the statements that they agreed were difficult. In the ensuing discussion and contrary to most of the other students in the class, Jenny stated that she did not think source texts used in writing-from-readings assignments were generally difficult to understand.

4.9.3.2 – Reading Through the Source Texts

After this initial class, the first thing Jenny did was to read the task sheet to “find out the topic of the essay.” Despite the previous class activity designed to draw out Jenny’s personal opinion on the essay topic, Jenny did not make a firm decision at this point about which opinion to defend in her essay. Even though she was leaning toward abortion as a selfish choice, it was only “after long time” and “trying to find out which side should be better for [her] to discuss” that Jenny came to a firm decision. As she read the assignment task
sheet, Jenny also looked for the minimum word requirement, the number of required references, the “format” of the paper, and the due dates. One of her purposes when reading the task sheet was to assess the amount of time it would take to write the essay and plan “which day should [she] spend to write about that” because she also needed “time to study other courses.”

The next step was to read the two articles distributed in class for use as source texts in the assignment. Jenny spent about 40 minutes reading these two articles, which were about 2700 words total. As she read, Jenny was actively engaged in transacting with the texts and creating meaning. Jenny began to read each article by previewing the headings because it made her “clear of the structure of the article.” Then, as she read the text in detail, she wrote down translations for selected words and she underlined sections that she felt would help her with “writing [her] own essay.” She circled keywords in the text that represented its “main points” and sometimes wrote marginal notes. While the articles were not riddled with underlining and highlighting in a manner that would render the markings meaningless, most paragraphs in the articles contained some sort of marking that highlighted the central meaning. Jenny also indicated the overall opinion of the class articles by writing “pro-life” at the top of the article written by Mother Teresa and “pro-choice” above the article written by the Revolutionary Worker. In addition, Jenny displayed the depth of her comprehension of the articles with a marginal note written at the beginning of the Mother Teresa article that briefly summarized the first quarter of the article and then indicated “not focus on abortion topic,” which was an accurate comment because the article was an excerpt from a speech that Mother Teresa had given and the article started as Mother Teresa was finishing one topic and transitioning into abortion. Although it is unclear in the data whether or not it occurred soon after the first reading, Jenny read these two articles a second time sometime before composing her first draft.
Jenny then reread the abortion article that was written by Don Sloan and used for the first class assignment of the semester. This article too was marked in the same manner as the Mother Teresa and Revolutionary Worker articles with boxes and parentheses around words, underlining, word translations, and the occasional brief marginal comment.

Sometime after she finished reading the class articles, Jenny went to the school library and searched on Proquest for additional sources to use in her essay. (Proquest is a database of newspapers, magazines, and professional journals.) Rather than turning to the Internet like many other students in the class, Jenny searched on Proquest because the teacher told the class that they should use Proquest to find source texts for the assignment. Jenny spent about 20 minutes searching on Proquest for suitable articles and she had two criteria that guided her search. First, she searched for articles that were within her ability to both comprehend and paraphrase. Jenny explained, “The most important thing is for me to understand it. If I read lots of things, heaps of reading, but I cannot understand all, I do not know it, how can I use it in my own words?” And second, she had not yet decided whether to argue for selfish or not selfish, but she was still leaning towards selfish. Therefore, she tried to find articles that also leaned that direction. This search yielded two articles.

At this point, Jenny read the articles she found on Proquest. She started with the shorter article, written by Sullivan, and underlined ideas that she thought were “important” so that she could “go back” to these particular ideas to better assess whether she could “use” them in her essay. As further evidence of the depth of Jenny’s engagement with this article, Jenny caught on to a train of thought while reading and an idea came to her. Because she wanted to remember the idea, she wrote at the top of the article a Chinese word that encapsulated the idea but for which she did not know the English translation. This idea was an extension of the ideas contained immediately in the article and she later used it in her essay.

Jenny was initially interested in the second article she found on Proquest because she thought it would explain whether “the government should have some policy” towards
abortion. However, after Jenny started reading it, she soon realized that it was “a little bit different from [her] opinion,” “quite long,” and “hard” which caused her to “give up” before she had finished it. This article had a short lifespan because neither the article nor the ideas in it made it into Jenny’s essay.

4.9.3.3 – Deciding on a Direction

About five days after receiving the argument essay assignment, Jenny finally came to a decision to argue in her essay that abortion was not a selfish choice, the opposite direction that she was initially leaning. The one overarching factor that brought her to this decision was amount of available information to support either side of the argument. She chose to write that abortion is not selfish simply because there was “more information” to support this side. Thus, she thought “it should be easier.” In further support of this decision, Jenny felt that supporting the selfish side would have been “repeating of [her] first essay” and she wanted to “just change another side” in order to “make [herself] more interesting” in the assignment.

4.9.3.4 – Discussing the Class Articles (Common Event)

Two days after making this decision and a week after receiving the argument essay assignment, Jenny spent an hour in class engaged in critical reading discussions about the class articles. Having finally decided on a direction for her essay, these discussions were an opportunity for Jenny to share her views of the class articles with her classmates, hear other opinions about the articles, and solidify her ideas through defending them within a group debate.

4.9.3.5 – Composing a First Draft

Jenny wrote her first draft in two stages. The first stage was done in class in response to the teacher’s instruction “to write [an outline] first.” Jenny’s outline consisted of “simple
sentences” and it “showed different points” that she was planning on using in her essay. The second stage followed closely after, when at home, Jenny used this outline to compose a complete first draft.

At home, Jenny spent about two hours composing her first draft. She began by using her outline to type headings for the “main points” she planned to include and she “follow[ed] the structure to write” her essay. Getting the ideas flowing onto the page was not easy at first, but she “just start[ed] to type.” Jenny explained, “It’s quite hard to [write] when I just start. I got nothing to say. But when I start it, it’s getting better, and got more and more things to discuss and explain.” Jenny used two strategies to jump-start her writing. First, she focused on her “personal opinion…about the topic” rather than what other people and source texts had said. Second, she set aside grammar and focused first on getting information on the page: “I’m not quite good at the grammar, but I just forget it, just write write write.” Once Jenny got into the flow of her writing and got some of her own ideas down, she referred back to her marked articles “for some parts that [were] useful” for her essay.

Jenny’s first draft reflected the ideas that Jenny had gathered through reading and class discussion. Some of the ideas in the body of the essay were clearly paraphrases and summaries of ideas from the source texts; however, the majority of the ideas were extensions and reformulations of ideas Jenny found in both the source texts and through class discussions. She had synthesized the information from the source texts with her background knowledge in a way that made the text truly her own. And the teacher readily acknowledged this after Jenny handed it in.

4.9.3.6 – Analyzing Jenny’s First Draft (Common Event)

Jenny had done so well on her first draft that when she arrived in class the day after handing it in, the teacher asked for, and received, Jenny’s permission to distribute her first draft to all the students in the class so that they could spend a portion of the class time
analyzing it. The class analysis of Jenny’s essay drew attention to two problems with her essay: the topic of the second body paragraph was difficult to identify and the arguments in the body of the essay were not connected to the thesis.

First, the class had difficulty identifying the “topic,” or argument, in the second body paragraph. The teacher had the students skim through the essay and identify the argument in each body paragraph. After three different students unsuccessfully offered ideas about the argument in the second body paragraph, the teacher instructed the class to “keep reading down to ‘contraception’” and asked, “Is there a topic there? If you have to give the topic of the paragraph in one word, Lin, what is it?” Lin responded, “We need to reduce abortion” and another student said, “Educate.” The teacher continued to guide the students down into the paragraph: “And what else? There is a key word in the paragraph right at the end.” Jason responded, “Contraception.” The teacher declared, “Right! As a reader, I would say the purpose of the paragraph is to reduce the number of abortions through contraception.” And then she asked, “Do you agree Jenny?” To which Jenny responded, “Yes.” The fact that many students had different ideas about the topic of the paragraph indicated that the main argument of this paragraph was indeed vague and validated the teacher’s prior suggestion to put the topic sentences first in the body paragraphs.

The second problem was that each of the arguments in the body of the essay was not connected to the thesis statement. A few minutes after discussing the topic of the second body paragraph, the teacher summarized the thesis statement and topic sentences from Jenny’s first draft on the board and asked, “Do the arguments support the thesis statement?” Jason responded, “No.” Jenny tried to defend her essay by repeating the topic of her first body paragraph saying, “the fetus is not human so abortion is not murder,” to which the teacher replied, “So how does that relate to the thesis?” Jenny tried but could not make a connection between the topic of the paragraph and the thesis of her essay that abortion is not selfish. So,
the teacher offered some assistance by suggesting that humanness is an important issue because if the fetus is not human, then an abortion cannot be selfish.

The teacher then moved to the claim made in the second body paragraph and asked, “Is it relevant to the thesis?” One student responded “No, because there is no relation between selfish and reducing the number of abortions.” Jenny again tried to defend her reasoning but was unable to render a coherent explanation. The teacher again offered an idea:

Even though the fetus is not human, women do not want to make a habit of having abortions, so contraception and education will help. Even though abortion is not selfish, it isn’t something women want to make a habit of.

Skipping the third and fourth body paragraphs, the teacher then emphasized her instructional objective for this analysis: “The point I’m trying to make is your arguments must support your thesis and your arguments must be in the topic sentence in each paragraph.”

Jenny’s essay was clearly a negative example of arguments that supported the thesis.

Possibly to emphasize her point, the teacher then asked the class, “Which paragraph is the weakest in structure in Jenny’s essay?” Jenny was the first to respond, “Paragraph two,” to which the teacher complimented, “Excellent, you’re thinking about your own work.” Jenny’s comment here seems to suggest that Jenny had understood what changes she needed to make so that her essay would be more acceptable.

Although the teacher wrote throughout Jenny’s first draft numerous comments that were designed to be constructive and helpful for improving the paper, the note the teacher wrote at the end of the essay summed up the teacher’s positive feelings. It said, “Jenny, You are developing an excellent argument and demonstrating an understanding of the research.”

4.9.3.7 – Working on a Second Draft

There was not much time to revise her first draft into a second. Jenny received her first draft back on a Wednesday and had to bring her second draft to the very next class, which
was on Friday. One of the comments that the teacher wrote on Jenny’s first draft was that Jenny needed “more articles in [her] essay.” The assignment required five articles but Jenny had only used four because she never finished reading the second article she found on Proquest. In order to quickly locate a fifth source, Jenny turned to the articles distributed for the diagnostic essay test given on the second day of class. The diagnostic essay was also on the topic of abortion and there were four short articles that were part of it. Jenny skimmed through these articles to locate an example she could use to support one of her already existing arguments. Thus, she found the fifth source for her essay.

On Thursday night, Jenny spent just less than an hour revising her essay. She began revising by using the teacher’s comments to make changes. Some of these changes were minor such as grammatical corrections or revising cohesive devices. Some changes were on a more moderate scale like revising the topic sentences so that they more clearly stated her intended claim. And some changes were more extensive such as further developing ideas and completely overhauling the second body paragraph so that it more directly supported the thesis. Unlike the process for writing her first draft, Jenny did not reread any of the articles while writing. Rather, she used the information that was already on the page and in her head.

The last step in her revision process was to assemble a reference list at the end of her essay. Jenny had included in-text citations in her first draft but had not written a reference list at the end for those citations. Jenny was “not quite clear with the format of the reference” and “read the [text]book” to find the answer. She then understood that there were many “different ways to reference” and wrote a complete and accurately formatted APA reference list at the end of her essay.

On Friday morning before class, Jenny printed her second draft and then took it to class for the peer review.
4.9.3.8 – Participating in a Peer Review Session (Common Event)

At the beginning of this class, the teacher gave some instruction on “how to write good grammar.” The students then took some time to self-correct the grammar in their essays. Jenny made a handful of corrections on the first two paragraphs of her essay, and the teacher even came around and corrected a few things.

For the peer review, Jenny traded essays with a classmate with whom she was a close friend. This classmate answered the questions on the peer review handout and wrote some reactions, questions, and corrections on the second and third page of Jenny’s essay. At the end of the peer review session, Jenny traded back with her classmate so that Jenny had her own essay along with her classmate’s comments on the peer review handout.

4.9.3.9 – Completing the Final Draft

When Jenny went home after the peer review, she read over her classmate’s comments about her essay and spent about half an hour making changes. Two of the comments Jenny responded to were to remove first person pronouns from her essay in order to “make it more formal” and to change a sentence so that it was “more simple and more easy for the reader to understand.” The classmate also advised Jenny to change the word *fetus* to *child*; however, Jenny rejected this comment because her “first main point” was that a “fetus is not human.” Jenny explained that changing the word would destroy her argument: “if I change it to *child*, this means I think it is human. I cannot change it.” In addition to these changes, Jenny also combined a number of sentences throughout her essay to make them “look more formal and more better” because the teacher had commented that Jenny’s “sentence is too simple.” And Jenny also typed the grammar corrections she made in class into her essay. Finally, Jenny submitted her final draft of the argument essay assignment online to the class website.
4.9.3.10 – Epilogue

Before Jenny received her score for her essay, I asked her what grade she thought she would get. She responded “B” because she felt her paper was “not good enough to get A, and not that bad to get C.” Jenny earned a “B+” on her argument essay, which in the end she felt was “not bad.” To put this grade in perspective, this was the second highest score that the teacher gave on this assignment out of 17 essays. The one student who scored higher on the argument essay also earned the highest grade in the class for the semester. Jenny’s final grade in the class was a “B,” which was the third highest grade in a class of 19 students.

4.10 – Summary Comments

The primary purpose of this chapter was to provide an answer to the first research question: What is the nature of individual L2 students’ experiences when engaged in a writing-from-sources task within an intensive academic writing course? The four case studies presented in this chapter demonstrated that the nature of the participants’ experiences was highly complex and contained both similarities and differences.

Despite attending the same Study Writing class, having the same teacher, and engaging in the same writing-from-sources assignment, there were many unique aspects of each participant’s experience that set the participants apart from one another. Lin felt very concerned about meeting the minimum word requirement of the task—much more so than the other participants. This concern drove her to spend the most time searching for source texts and consulting the widest variety of possible information sources. Despite this search, Lin’s essay ended up with the largest amount of text copied from other authors and this resulted in zero marks for plagiarism. Only hours after learning that the teacher had given her a zero, Lin had to take the midterm test with her failing marks fresh on her mind and her emotions surging.
Jason was dealing with possible low motivation and low self-image of his writing skills after failing Study Writing the previous two semesters. During these two semesters, Jason came to realize that there were many assignments and requirements for the Study Writing class, which required a consistent effort and did not sit well with his “lazy” nature. Despite his lack of interest in the class, Jason knew he needed to pass to prevent his automatic enrollment in the class for a fourth semester. After learning a hard lesson about the acceptability of using his own previously submitted writing and receiving a zero for his efforts on the argument essay assignment, Jason managed to stay motivated enough to successfully complete the remaining assignments and pass the course.

Andy had been in New Zealand for only five months, a year less than any other participant, and struggled with English proficiency, as evidenced by the English support-stream class in which he was enrolled. He had also just come from an academic writing course that he felt was very helpful and used this experience to guide his plans for the argument essay. After working for a week and a half to produce a first draft that he believed matched the assignment, he discovered that his assignment was way off track. Despite the difficulties posed by his low language proficiency, he mustered his strength to redirect his essay, rewriting large portions of it, and managed to pass the assignment with the best marks he received that semester.

Jenny had the advantages of the longest time in New Zealand, the best English proficiency, and academic writing experience at both secondary and tertiary schools in New Zealand. These advantages allowed her to approach the assignment task from a more expert perspective. Jenny delayed her decision on whether to argue for selfish or not selfish until she had gathered a bit of information and was able to assess which side would be the most advantageous for her to write. Jenny was able to interact with the source texts as she read writing marginal notes and highlighting text. This led Jenny to compose a first draft that integrated the source texts within an argument, even though it was a bit misdirected at first.
Jenny then had the advantage of a class discussion of her first draft with the teacher’s guiding input, all of which helped her rewrite her essay and earn some of the highest marks in the class on the argument essay.

While each of the four participant’s experiences was unique in many respects, they were the same in that all of the participants were involved in a highly complex writing task. Because the assignment task was a writing-from-sources task, the participants had to coordinate their reading and writing processes, which resulted in a highly complex orchestration of skills. Writing was dependent on reading to obtain content for the essay. Reading was dependent on the participants’ formal schemata, content schemata, and language proficiency for accurate comprehension. Accurate reading comprehension was necessary in order to construct an overall schema of the topic, which then enabled the participants to make decisions about the direction of their essays and select content to include in the essay that matched the determined direction. Once the participants had selected content, they also needed to have an overall organizing plan that suited their rhetorical purposes for their writing into which they could insert the selected content. The participants also needed knowledge about how to integrate sources with their own ideas and they also needed to know the proper conventions for distinguishing between the two in the text of their essays. Furthermore, the participants had to find ways to correct their grammar, adjust the formality and style of their language, and edit their spelling and punctuation within essays they had written in their second language. In addition to all of this, they had to allow these processes to be guided by the rhetorical context, which involved, at its core, the teacher and the assignment task.

The participants had to interpret the rhetorical context in order to understand whether they were engaged in acceptable practices. Lin felt she was doing the right things for writing the essay but ended up with a zero for plagiarism. Jason wondered whether it was okay to use his previous assignment in order to meet the requirements of the current essay assignment but received a zero for plagiarism. Andy wrote a first draft that was a summary and reaction to the
class articles, which was very different from what the assignment task required, and ended up making major revisions to bring his assignment in line with the task. Jenny wrote one of the best first drafts in the class; however, she had problems connecting her arguments in the body of her essay to the main thesis, a serious flaw when trying to construct a coherent argument. All of the participants, in one way or another, found themselves diverging from the assignment task and they had to rely on the context to make them aware of their divergence. Jenny and Andy were made aware of their mistakes in time and were able to make some corrections. Unfortunately, Lin and Jason did not discover that their practices were unacceptable until it was too late. Interpreting the rhetorical context involved the difficult task of noticing contextual cues, which were sometimes subtle and implicit. For example, the assignment task explicitly required a minimum of 1500 words; however, word length was not indicated anywhere on the marking guide and the teacher did not mark the essays based on word length but on the quality of the content. In addition to the absence of word length as a criteria on the marking guide, one subtle contextual cue regarding how the teacher would mark the essays was the teacher’s focus in the classroom on building a solid argument rather than generating numerous ideas. Therefore, navigating the context and orchestrating the concatenation of necessary skills and strategies made the argument essay a highly complex writing task for all of the participants.

The secondary purpose of this chapter was to lay a descriptive foundation upon which the following two results chapters will build. The following two chapters highlight two aspects of the four participants’ experiences and discuss and analyze those aspects in detail. Those aspects are, first, the process of creating and revising a task representation and the factors that influenced that process, and second, the internal and contextual factors that contributed to Lin and Jason’s plagiarism.
CHAPTER 5
TASK REPRESENTATION

5.1 – Introduction

This chapter discusses the results for the second research question: What factors influenced the participants’ representations of the assignment task throughout the process of writing? Before going any further, I need to operationalize the term task representation as I will use it in this chapter. A task representation is how the participants conceptualize the requirements of the task, whether the requirements are genre, format, content, length, rhetorical purpose, or any other type. While the participants had a particular cognitive representation of the task, there may have been a gap between their cognitive representation of the task and their actual skill with embodying that understanding in writing. Thus, what a participant understood in his or her head may be different from what he or she was able to produce on paper. Therefore, I will primarily focus on the data from the interviews to sketch each of the four participant’s cognitive representation of the assignment task while drawing on the essay drafts as supporting evidence noting the differences between the interview accounts and the actual drafts produced.

Student representations of academic writing tasks play a significant role in the learning and evaluation process because how a student interprets the writing task has a strong effect on the written product and, consequently, on the marks that student will get on the writing assignment (Flower, 1990). For example, if a student interprets a writing-from-sources task as requiring a summary and reaction to the sources but the teacher wanted a argumentative synthesis, the student may produce a well-written summary-reaction paper but the teacher will likely not mark it very highly because the teacher may feel that the student did not fulfill the learning goals of the writing assignment. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to uncover some of the factors that influenced the participants’ task representations in order to
come to a better understanding of the process of creating a task representation. With a better understanding of this process, teachers may be able to make better decisions about how to present a writing assignment to students so that they generate a more appropriate task representation and produce a more acceptable product.

The following sections will present the results pertinent to answering the research question on task representation. The first section is a brief reminder about the requirements in the assignment task. Then, there are several sections that describe the participants’ initial task representations and the factors that influenced the creation of them. After discussing the participants’ initial task representations, the next section discusses the changes in the participants’ task representations and the factors that influenced those changes. Finally, the last section is a summary and consolidation of the factors that influenced the development of the participants’ task representations, which leads into a proposed tentative theory of how people construct their task representations for academic writing tasks.

5.2 – The Assignment Task

The writing task that the four participants completed asked the following question (see appendix A for the complete assignment task):

Because the consequences of our actions can affect many people around us, some people feel that having an abortion is a selfish choice while other people feel that abortion is not a selfish choice. What do you believe? Is abortion a selfish or a selfless choice? Why or why not? Write an argumentative essay that explains your position. Appropriately use facts and examples from other authors to build your argument.

The assignment task also required the participants to write three drafts and include in their final drafts “at least 5 references from a variety of sources” and “at least 1500 words.”

The teacher gave the participants two articles to use as sources in their essays. One was written by Mother Teresa and argued against abortion, argued for other alternatives such
as adoption, and implied that abortion was selfish. The other article was written by the Revolutionary Worker and argued for abortion, argued against governmental control of abortion, and explicitly stated that abortion was not selfish (see appendix E for summaries of the articles). Additionally, the teacher used throughout class discussions the pro-choice article from the previous assignment written by Don Sloan. Sloan argued that abortion was not murder, was a natural woman’s right, and made no overt indications about the selfishness of abortion.

5.3 – Participants’ Initial Task Representations

The participants constructed their initial task representation over a week and a half, which began on the first day of the argument essay assignment and ended when the participants completed their first drafts. During this time, the participants created representations of the formal and content schematic aspects of the task, which are discussed in the following two sections.

5.3.1 – Representations of the Formal Schematic Aspects of the Task

This section will describe how the participants initially represented the formal schematic aspects of the assignment task. Formal schemata are cognitive representations of text structure, and one use of formal schemata is to facilitate reading comprehension. For example, a reader’s formal schemata might lead a reader of a narrative text to expect certain events to happen in a particular order, such as introduction, conflict, climax, and resolution. Also, that reader may also expect a narrative text to contain certain elements such as a setting and characters. Writers also use their formal schemata to create the structure and surface features of a text. This section divides formal schemata into four distinct aspects: text elements, text structure, characteristics of the text, and assignment task requirements. Each of these is defined and discussed in the following sections.
5.3.1.1 – Text Elements

Text elements were the components of the essay that defined its shape and purpose, components such as introduction, thesis statement, and supporting arguments. A quick glance at Table 14 shows that the participants’ representations of the text elements required by the assignment task were fairly consistent across all four participants. All participants understood the basic essay structure of introduction, body, and conclusion, and they all acknowledged the role of a thesis statement and topic sentences in guiding their essays. However, there were some differences among the participants’ representations of the text elements required by the assignment task.

The most divergent representation among the four participants was Andy’s because Andy did not mention using supporting examples or counterarguments in his body paragraphs. This was because Andy perceived that the task involved writing a summary of the

Table 14 – Participants’ Initial Representations of the Text Elements Required by the Assignment Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Elements</th>
<th>Lin</th>
<th>Jason</th>
<th>Andy</th>
<th>Jenny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis statement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic sentences</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples and support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterarguments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of class articles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
class articles. Rather than include information that supported an argumentative point made in the topic sentence in the body paragraphs, Andy believed the body paragraphs should summarize the content of the Mother Teresa and Revolutionary Worker articles, and summarizing does not carry an argumentative purpose that requires support, examples, and counterarguments. The topic sentences of the first two body paragraphs in Andy’s first draft demonstrated Andy’s lack of argumentative purpose for his essay. The first topic sentence said, “Abortion for Mother Teresa is a selfish choice,” and the paragraph summarized the first half of the Mother Teresa article. The second topic sentence said, “Abortion for a revolutionary worker is a selfless choice he has the similar opinion to Dr Don,” and the paragraph summarized the Revolutionary Worker article.

Andy’s perception that the task involved summarizing the class articles also affected the form of Andy’s thesis statement, which differed from the other participants’ representation of a thesis statement. Although Andy identified a particular sentence as the “main point sentence” in the introduction of his essay, it was different because it did not express an argumentative purpose but expressed Andy’s purpose to summarize the class articles. It read, “So difference kinds of people have different opinions” and was placed unusually early in the introductory paragraph. This thesis statement was followed by a brief summary of the three class articles, and the paragraph concluded by more clearly articulating the purpose of Andy’s essay: “So through depend the three persons opinions, people can easy to decide their opinion.” Thus, Andy’s task representation to summarize the class articles also affected the form of his thesis statement.

5.3.1.2 – Text Structure

Text structure is an overall plan of how to organize the content within the essay and is arguably the most influential formal schematic aspect on a text. Table 15 displays the participants’ initial representations of the text structure and shows some similarities and
differences between the participants’ task representations. The most notable similarity is Lin and Andy’s use of the 5-paragraph essay structure. However, the sources of this aspect of their task representations were likely different. For Lin, using a 5-paragraph essay structure was likely due to the teacher distributing an example 5-paragraph essay just prior to the argument essay assignment. Lin explained, “The lecturer give me the examples for the 5-paragraph [essay], so I think this [essay assignment] is like this.” But Andy attributed his knowledge of the 5-paragraph essay structure to his EAP II teacher from the previous semester. He said, “When I study in the EAP II course, the teacher said three body paragraph is the best.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Structure</th>
<th>Lin</th>
<th>Jason</th>
<th>Andy</th>
<th>Jenny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- “Structure must match the 5-paragraph [essay]”</td>
<td>- “Good organization and good structure”</td>
<td>- “The body paragraph, I will give three paragraph. The first I will agree the abortion is selfish. The second paragraph I will say the abortion is selfless…. The third paragraph I will give the opinion that supports abortion is selfish or abortion is selfless.”</td>
<td>- 6-paragraph structure. First three body paragraphs give supporting arguments for the thesis. Fourth body paragraph is an argument against a counterclaim.</td>
<td>- 6-paragraph structure. First three body paragraphs give supporting arguments for the thesis. Fourth body paragraph is an argument against a counterclaim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “Give…the main point and we talk about and discuss this main point…very similar as the IELTS test”</td>
<td>- “You have to think lots of time how to organize the sentence and make your assignment perfect”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 7-paragraph structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interestingly, Andy was fusing an argumentative 5-paragraph text structure with his non-argumentative purpose of summarizing the class articles. Andy described how to use this text structure so that it expressed his opinion, which the assignment task had elicited. He said the body should:

…have three paragraph, first is disagree or agree, and the second is agree, and the third is agree. So the reader will understand maybe the writer is disagree or agree the selfish or selfless. So it is easy to understand. If give four paragraph, I think the reader will think “oh, is writer disagree or agree?” Can’t easy to understand.

In other words, one paragraph presents one side of the issue while two paragraphs present the other side of the issue. And the reader knows what Andy’s opinion is because he will write two paragraphs for the side of the issue that represents his opinion. But if he writes four paragraphs with two paragraphs for each side of the issue, the reader will not know what Andy’s opinion is. Consequently, Andy wrote three body paragraphs in his first draft. The first body paragraph summarized the Mother Teresa article, the second body paragraph summarized the Revolutionary Worker article, and the third body paragraph expressed ideas similar to the Revolutionary Worker article. Thus, Andy used the 5-paragraph essay structure to summarize the articles, presenting both sides of the issue, and express his opinion on the topic.

In contrast, Jason and Jenny did not hold to a 5-paragraph text structure. Jason wrote seven paragraphs and Jenny wrote six with both of them using one paragraph in the body of their essays to counter opposing arguments. The difference with Jason and Jenny’s representation of the text structure was that they were not bound to only three body paragraphs. Their representations were more flexible and allowed them to compose as many paragraphs as they had supporting arguments.

However, a more flexible representation of the text structure did not necessarily make the task of organizing content into that structure easier. While composing his first draft, Jason
would often “read it” but feel “it’s confused.” He clarified, “Sometimes I read it, it’s like a mess. But I don’t know how to change it because lots of ideas bring in my brain. So can make it difficult to organize, put them organize.” In using more detail to describe this difficulty, Jason explained:

I don’t know how to put [all the ideas] because, like this, it can be some, women do abortion is can be think about their children and not themselves. It can also be like a value judgment, comparing two bad things and choose the better one. I don’t know this example belong to which topic.

Jason had trouble making decisions about where to place specific content within his text structure. Thus, having a representation of the structure of the essay did not necessarily lead to easily arranging the content within that structure.

5.3.1.3 – Characteristics of the Text

Another formal schematic aspect of the participants’ task representations was the characteristics of the text. These characteristics dealt with linguistic and stylistic aspects of the text such as level of formality, similarity between a source text and a participant’s essay, and grammatical accuracy. Table 16 displays the participants’ initial representations of the characteristic of the text. Interestingly, both Lin and Jason were the only two participants that showed an explicit awareness of the characteristics of the text that are commonly associated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of the Text</th>
<th>Lin</th>
<th>Jason</th>
<th>Andy</th>
<th>Jenny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannot copy more than 10%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must use “own words”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct grammar</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with plagiarism: limiting the amount of copied text and using one’s own words. And Lin and Jason were the two participants given zeros for plagiarism on their argument essays. One other point that stands out is that Andy did not show any explicit awareness of the characteristics of the text. It is possible that Andy had an implicit awareness of the characteristics of the text, which would not have been revealed in the interviews. Or, it is equally possible that Andy was not concerned about the characteristics of the text. The data did not provide an explanation.

5.3.1.4 – Assignment Task Requirements

The final formal schematic aspect of the participants’ task representations was the assignment task requirements. The assignment task requirements were parameters of the assignment task that made the assignment unique and distinguished it from other writing tasks. These were parameters such as the word length requirement, number of required sources, and time frame for the drafting process. Table 17 displays the interview comments the participants made regarding the assignment task requirements. A blank in the table does not indicate that the participant had no representation for the particular aspect of the

Table 17 – Participants’ Initial Representations of the Assignment Task Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Task Requirements</th>
<th>Lin</th>
<th>Jason</th>
<th>Andy</th>
<th>Jenny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write 1500 words</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1200 words)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use 5 different sources</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include quotations</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write 3 drafts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of due dates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
assignment task requirement but signifies that the participant did not discuss that aspect in the interviews. Indeed, all the participants likely had some kind of representation, whether implicit or explicit, for all of the elements in the table. However, the table may show which assignment task requirements were the most conscious and at the forefront of each participant’s mind while forming an initial task representation, and conversely, which assignment task requirements may have been much less of a concern.

There are three results from this table worth mentioning. First, Andy stands out among the four participants simply because he did not specifically mention any of the assignment task requirements in the interviews. This could have been a natural consequence of his representation as that of summarizing the class articles. The class articles were the main sources to use within the essay precluding any concern about the required number of sources. Although word length alters the process of summarizing (Hare, 1992), Andy may not have been concerned about the required word length because summarizing text does not require generating new or novel content. This contrasted with Lin and Jason who were very concerned about how much content they had to produce, a concern that will be discussed in more detail in the content schemata section later in this chapter.

Second, although the assignment task obviously had other requirements, Lin was most aware of and concerned about the minimum word requirement. Despite this concern, her belief that the assignment task required at least 1200 words undercut the actual number by 300 words: the actual minimum word requirement was 1500 words. Lin’s concern about the minimum word requirement was likely directly connected to her anxiety over generating content, which will be discussed later.

And third, Jason’s task representation included using quotations. However, it is unclear where this particular aspect of his task representation came from. The assignment task sheet makes no mention of quotations. The teacher did not mention the use of quotations in any of the observation data. And, none of the other three participants mentioned using
quotations as part of the essay. It is possible that the teacher discussed using quotations during a class that was not observed. It is also possible that Jason carried this aspect of his task representation over from his previous two semesters of Study Writing. Or it may be that Jason associated the use of quotations with using sources in writing. The data did not provide an answer to this interesting question.

5.3.2 – Representations of the Content Schematic Aspects of the Task

This section will describe how the participants initially represented the content schematic aspects of the assignment task. Content schemata are cognitive structures containing the background knowledge one possesses on a particular topic. Readers use their content schemata to interpret and comprehend texts, and writers must draw upon these knowledge structures to generate content for their writing. This section discusses the participants’ background knowledge on the topic of abortion as an element of their representations of the assignment task. The section is divided into five parts: sources of information, background knowledge on abortion, schematically mapping together incongruent concepts of abortion and selfishness, other “unknowns” causing difficulty with content, and a brief summary of the challenges imposed by content schemata.

5.3.2.1 – Sources of Information

In order to write, the content of the message must come from somewhere whether it is one’s own background knowledge, a class lecture, or a discussion with a friend. Therefore, one content schematic aspect of the participants’ initial task representations was the sources from which they would draw information to include in their essays. Table 18 displays the participants’ initial representations of the sources of information for the argument essay assignment task.
Table 18 – Participants’ Initial Representations of the Sources of Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Information</th>
<th>Lin</th>
<th>Jason</th>
<th>Andy</th>
<th>Jenny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class articles</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic test articles</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proquest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other students in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own opinion and ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously written assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All four participants considered the class articles and the Internet to be possible sources of content for their essays. It is not surprising that all four participants mentioned the class articles as part of their task representations. The teacher distributed the class articles along with the assignment task sheet on the first day of the assignment, asked the students to read them, and then subsequently had the students discuss the articles in class before the first draft was due. With this kind of emphasis placed upon the class articles as a source of information, it logically follows that all four participants would believe they were supposed to derive information for their essays from these articles.

It is unclear, however, why all four participants believed the Internet was a possible source of information. The assignment task sheet mentioned “books, periodicals, magazines, journals, and newspapers” as possible sources but not the Internet. During the class when the assignment was first distributed, the teacher clarified that she wanted the participants using Proquest—a database of magazine, newspaper, and journal articles—rather than the Internet. She instructed the class to “use Proquest to find your research for this assignment” because “Proquest is better than the Internet.” Then in class a week later, the teacher asked the class about the possible sources of information for the assignment. When someone said the
Internet, the teacher responded emphatically “No! What is the database you are supposed to have done your tutorial in?” to which the class responded “Proquest.” Despite these more direct instructions to avoid the Internet, the teacher at one point hedged a bit by saying, “You are not meant to research solely off the Internet,” suggesting that using the Internet to find some sources of information was acceptable. All four participants seemed very familiar with using the Internet. They all described using various search engines such as Google and Yahoo! to locate information on the essay topic. Perhaps it was this familiarity and the ease of access to information that attracted the participants to using the Internet for finding sources. However, using the Internet was not an aspect of the assignment task nor was it encouraged by the teacher.

The most notable difference between the participants was the small number of possible sources of information Lin mentioned. Lin only had three identifiable sources of information while Jenny cited four and Jason and Andy both had five. One of the major issues with completing the assignment task for all participants was obtaining and generating sufficient and appropriate content. If finding and producing content was an issue, then it would logically follow that the participants with a broader vision of possible sources from which to acquire content would be better equipped to successfully obtain it. This is because if one source did not yield any information or only limited information, then the participant with other sources of information in mind would have been able to draw upon those sources. Therefore, participants with more possible sources of information in their task representation may have been more likely to find suitable information. As revealed in Lin’s case study, Lin spent numerous hours over multiple occasions unsuccessfully searching for information on the Internet and in the end, resorted to copying from the Internet. It is feasible, therefore, that Lin’s narrow representation of possible sources of information played a role in her copying from the Internet.
One interesting difference between the participants that is not shown in Table 18 is that Jason was the only participant who drew upon every source of information in his task representation to compose his first draft. Jason used the class articles, the diagnostic test articles, information from the Internet, his own ideas, and his previous assignment to compose his first draft.

Like Jason, Andy had five possible sources of information in his task representation. However, Andy only used three of those possible sources in his first draft: the class articles, other students in the class, and his own opinion. Although it was probably not necessary to use the Internet or Proquest when he believed the task required him to summarize the class articles, Andy’s representation to summarize the articles was conjoined with an argumentative 5-paragraph text structure that required Andy to subtly choose a side on the abortion and selfishness issue. And consulting the Internet or Proquest for information probably was in response to a possible need to collect additional information in order to choose a side. Andy explained:

If I do the writing, I want to agree with the author’s opinion, so I can use the article from the teacher give us. If I disagree with the opinion, I need to find the more information. So, the Internet I think is the best way to find information.

It seems, therefore, that the Internet was a back-up source of information if Andy could not generate the needed content himself.

5.3.2.2 – Background Knowledge on Abortion

Arguably the most important aspect of the participants’ content schematic representation of the task was the information that they knew about the topic prior to the assignment. Although the data did not provide an exact quantitative measure of each participant’s background knowledge, they did provide a general picture of the extent to which each participant’s content schema structures surrounding the essay topic were developed.
At the least, all four participants’ schematic development began on the first day of the Study Writing class when the teacher distributed the articles to be used in the diagnostic test. These were four articles covering the basics of the pro-life and pro-choice positions on abortion. On the second day of class, the participants each wrote a diagnostic essay in which they had to argue for either a pro-life or pro-choice position within the abortion debate. In the two hours provided for the test, all four participants wrote essays that were at least 473 words long, discussed multiple issues surrounding the pro-life and pro-choice abortion debate, and expressed their own opinions in their own words.

After the diagnostic test, all four participants completed a critique assignment for which the participants read the Sloan article and wrote a critical essay about it. The Sloan article presented a 2800-word argument in support of abortion offering ideas such as “an embryo is not a baby” and “abortion is not murder.” The critique assignment spanned two and a half weeks, required three drafts, and involved class discussion of the article and the abortion topic. All four participants received passing marks on this assignment.

Prior to the diagnostic test and critique assignment, the participants likely varied in their exposure to the topic of abortion. When I asked Lin how much she knew about abortion before the semester, she responded:

Sometimes my friend’s friend, my friend will tell me “Oh, her or his friend, and the girl will have abortion” like this. But just a sentence, one sentence, and not happen like this. So I did very little bit about abortion. I haven’t heard about abortion. And no one can told me this one, and I say no one can discuss like this topic. No one to discuss abortion.

Andy gave a similar reply when I asked him the same question:

I know abortion in China only a little knowledge. I know abortion for the woman is a very very, how to say, terrible, yeah very terrible. And some woman afraid to do abortion. And I think abortion is bad for woman’s health.
Jason may have had a bit more exposure to the topic of abortion than Lin or Andy. During his previous semester in Study Writing, Jason had written at least two assignments involving the topic of abortion. Both of the assignments required Jason to read an article on abortion and respond to it in some way. The section that Jason copied from one of these assignments into his argument essay showed that Jason had thought about why abortion is necessary and demonstrated a fairly deep level of thinking, as evidenced by the passing marks he received on that assignment the previous semester.

Jenny’s exposure to the topic of abortion was different from the other three participants. Having moved to New Zealand when she was 16, Jenny had lived longer in New Zealand society, which possibly held more open and varied opinions on the issue of abortion. While Lin, Jason, and Andy felt they had little prior exposure to the topic, Jenny felt the topic carried some public interest and was discussed in society. She said, “This topic is around us, a good topic. And everybody know it and heard something about it before. So it’s more make me pay more attention, more attractive.”

These data show that all the participants had some prior exposure to the topic of abortion. Although the data are not informative of the exact nature of each participant’s understanding of the topic, they are sufficient to demonstrate that abortion was not a wholly new concept to any of the participants at the start of the argument essay assignment.

5.3.2.3 – Forcing the Concepts of Abortion and Selfishness into an Incoherent Schema

Despite having this background knowledge and various experiences with the topic of abortion, the participants still encountered concepts that were new and mysterious. Arguably the most difficult concept for all of the participants was the notion of selfishness. It appears that the concept of selfishness was not connected to the participants’ schematic structures on abortion, and the participants had great difficulty mapping these concepts together in order to understand the relationships between them.
In order to construct a schema that accounted for the elements of abortion and selfishness, the participants generally associated the argument that abortion is selfish with anti-abortionists and the argument that abortion is not selfish with pro-choice advocates. At the beginning, Lin could not “distinguish selfish or not selfish,” but after reading the Mother Teresa article, she could “know which means selfish or not selfish.” However, it is unclear exactly how much she understood about the concept of selfishness after reading the Mother Teresa article because the article never once mentioned the word *selfish* nor discussed the concept but argued for adoption as an alternative to abortion. It is, therefore, possible that Lin felt she understood the concept of selfishness in relation to abortion because she associated selfishness with Mother Teresa’s pro-life position.

Jenny also explained her initial confusion about the concept of selfishness: “At the beginning I had no ideas about [whether or not abortion is selfish].” Jenny also associated the concept of selfishness with the first assignment of the semester. When I asked her why she had chosen to argue that abortion is not selfish, she answered, “because my first assignment is talking about abortion too, and my opinion is saying abortion is selfish. So I want just change another side.” Later, Jenny confirmed this connection when she said, “At first I want to write about it’s selfish, but I found it’s just like repeating of my first essay.” However, the first assignment was a critique of Sloan’s article, which was connected to the pro-life/pro-choice debate. The notion of selfishness was not part of that assignment nor was it mentioned in Sloan’s article. Jenny was, therefore, likely associating selfishness with the pro-life and pro-choice positions.

Andy also associated the notion of selfishness with the first assignment. When I asked him what position he would take in his essay, he replied, “I think I will support abortion is selfish. I think it is easy to do.” I asked him why he thought it was easy and he said, “Because the first assignment, I have do it, I have done.” Like Jenny, Andy was equating selfishness with the pro-life and pro-choice positions through associating it with the first assignment.
And Jason connected his assignment from the previous semester with the concept of selfishness. When I asked him why he chose to write that abortion is not selfish, he replied, “last semester I do that.” However, none of the assignments from the previous semester mentioned selfishness in any way, but they were concerned with the pro-life/pro-choice debate. Jason even offered in the interviews the idea that “the pro-life will think abortion is a selfish choice,” thus showing the direct connection he had made between the pro-life position and selfishness.

The teacher’s instruction in class may have also contributed to the participants’ incongruent schemata of the relationship between selfishness and abortion. During the class discussion of the articles, the handout with the discussion questions that the teacher distributed to the participants contained only two out of ten questions related to selfishness. One question asked, “Mother Teresa believes that it is selfish to have an abortion. Why?” The participants would have needed sharp inferencing skills to answer this question because the Mother Teresa article did not directly discuss the issue of selfishness. Then, as a follow-up question to this one, the second question asked, “What kind of response would the Revolutionary Worker have to Mother Teresa’s argument?” However, the answer to this question was dependent on the participants first finding an answer to the Mother Teresa question. Furthermore, these two selfishness questions were buried among eight other questions unrelated to the notion of selfishness. These other questions asked, for example, “What type of reader would be attracted [to the Revolutionary Worker article]?,” “Does Sloan think that control is an issue in the abortion debate?,” and “Why is Mother Teresa opposed to contraception?” The goal of these questions as printed on the handout was to help the class “fully understand [the] articles” and to “compare and contrast across [the] sources” in order to “help [the students] develop [their] arguments.” Given the content of the class articles, these goals seem more in line with helping the class to develop arguments along the lines of the
pro-life/ pro-choice debate rather than help the class understand the relationships between selfishness and abortion.

In addition to their interview comments and the class instruction, the participants’ first drafts show that the participants were schematically mapping the selfish/not selfish distinction directly on top of the pro-life/pro-choice dichotomy. Even though both Lin and Jenny mentioned the selfishness issue in the introductions of their essays, they presented supporting arguments that were framed in the pro-life/pro-choice paradigm. Lin’s support stated that “abortion is not a murder because a fetus is not a child,” “adoption is not better than abortion,” and “abortion is a common and significant part of women’s control way to their own lives.” And as the class discussion of Jenny’s essay pointed out, the supporting arguments were not “not related to the thesis” of the essay.

Andy’s approach was a bit different because he was writing a summary of the class articles. However, he attempted to tie his summaries to the idea of selfishness by beginning the first body paragraph “Abortion for Mother Teresa is a selfish choice,” and the second body paragraph, “Abortion for a revolutionary worker is a selfless choice.” Following these sentences, Andy summarized the articles without again mentioning selfishness. The third body paragraph in which Andy expressed his own opinion contained statements such as “women have the rights to choice” and “if the woman have enough money, have enough energy to support the children, she will choose birth the baby, opposite is abortion.” These statements seem more strongly associated with the pro-choice position rather than the concept of selfishness.

Jason’s first draft was different from the other three participants’ first drafts because Jason was beginning to form connections between abortion and selfishness. His thesis statement asserted, “In my opinion, abortion is a selfless choice, because women do abortion are not only think about themselves, they are also thinking about the baby’s future and their family.” The first half of the first body paragraph argued that “a woman who can’t afford the
baby” may have an abortion because “the child can’t have good education,” which would lead to an unhappy future for the baby, an outcome that a loving mother would not desire. The second body paragraph cited statistics on complications with abortion procedures and then loosely connected abortion and selfishness by asking, “If abortion is a selfish choice, and they all know do abortion is danger to their lives, why so many women do abortion?” However, the final four paragraphs were taken from Jason’s previous assignment, which was not connected to the concept of selfishness, and led his essay back to the pro-life/pro-choice debate.

It appears, then, that one reason the participants struggled to generate appropriate content for their essays was that they could not understand the relationships between the concept of selfishness and abortion. They had formed an inaccurate and sketchy schematic map of the two concepts, which may have been partially the result of limited background knowledge on the topic of abortion.

5.3.2.4 – Other “Unknowns” Causing Difficulty with Content

In addition to the difficulty of tying selfishness to abortion, the participants also had trouble understanding the class articles. Lin thought the Revolutionary Worker article was “hard to understand,” and when I asked her what she learned from reading the class articles, rather than discussing the article’s content, Lin simply replied, “I just learned… how to support my main point.” Jenny felt “confused about some parts of [the articles].” Andy could not understand some of the examples in the Sloan article and believed that “if [he could] understand the example, maybe [he could] understand the [argument that] abortion is not murder more deep.” Despite these difficulties with understanding the class articles, it seems that the in-class discussion of the articles helped develop to some extent the participants’ comprehension of them. When I asked Andy if this class discussion was helpful, he replied,
“Yes, I think so. Maybe we can change the idea, we can know the other students’ idea and the other students will know my idea.”

Finding other sources and extracting content from them also proved difficult. Jenny searched on Proquest for additional sources to use in her essay, but Jenny found this a difficult task. When I asked her why she chose to use a particular source text in her essay, she explained the difficulty she encountered with comprehending the source texts she found:

When I search on [Proquest], I find lots of information from it, but most of them is quite hard of understanding. But this one is more easier for me and I understand it, and I think “yeah, it’s right” and maybe I can use it in my own writing. I just use it, but some other it’s too much and make me feel “oh my gosh.” So I just choose this one which I can understand and more easier for me.

Jenny also printed an article from Proquest that she did not use in her essay. When I asked her if she read it, she replied, “Yeah, but it’s quite long, and I found it’s too complex…. So I give up.”

Jason searched on the Internet for other sources to use in his essay. However, when I asked him if he found anything from his search that would be useful for his essay, Jason simply replied, “No.” In his first draft, Jason only used one source that he found on his own, which suggested that Jason only found one website that he considered useful.

Like Jason, Lin searched for additional sources on the Internet. She commented on the difficulty of obtaining content for her essay from the Internet when I asked her if she had searched the Internet more than one time. She said, “Yeah, more than one time, because sometimes maybe you can’t find you wanted information.” The type of information she wanted was “the academic, professional article,” but she could not “find the article…so [she thought] this [was] very difficult to find the reference.” After searching on the Internet over four days, Lin “just [found] one article [that] talk about abortion,” which happened to be the article she copied into her essay. She said of her efforts, “I just find one, this one. And another
is not good.” Thus, four days of searching the Internet yielded only one article that Lin ended up copying into her essay and was too difficult for Lin to properly paraphrase.

The difficulty with finding other sources and extracting content from them affected the Lin’s choice on the thesis of her essay. The first two occasions she searched the Internet, she was looking for information that supported abortion as a selfish choice. However, she felt that could not obtain enough information to support this side of the assignment task. She explained:

During this time, I just find the information to support the selfish choice. I want to find the argument like the what makes the selfish choice like this, why I think this is a selfish choice, and find the information. But I think the information is not too much, so I think maybe the not selfish is easy to write than selfish. So I change my mind in yesterday’s class.

Thus, a week into the assignment, Lin switched from arguing that abortion is a selfish choice to arguing that abortion is not selfish because she could not extract enough content from the Internet to write a 1200-word essay (her representation of the assignment task requirement) arguing that abortion was selfish.

5.3.2.5 – A Brief Summary of the Challenges Imposed by Content Schemata

Generating content was probably the most difficult aspect of the argument essay task. There were several factors involved in this difficulty. First, the participants had only limited background knowledge on the topic of abortion, which meant that their abortion schemata may have been considerably underdeveloped. Second, the participants could not generate a schema that accurately accounted for the relationships between abortion and selfishness, which created fundamental problems with understanding the question they were to respond to in their argument essays. And third, the participants’ lack of background knowledge (which also implies low linguistic skills in the topic area) and difficulty forming an appropriate
schemata for the assignment task likely contributed to the participants’ difficulty with comprehending and extracting content from source texts.

The overall result of this was an intense concern with generating content for the essay. Lin constantly worried that she “can’t write too many words” and frequently commented about adding content, such as, “if I added near 200 or 300 words, I can get enough.” Jason also commented about the difficulty of generating enough content to meet the minimum word requirement: “I need to write 1500 words, so it’s difficult.” Interestingly, Andy and Jenny did not express concern about the minimum word requirement in their interviews but focused on other issues such as the structure of their text. And in the end, the most significant result of Lin and Jason’s concern about generating content was that Lin and Jason received zero marks on their final drafts for their attempts to generate sufficient content, which resulted in plagiarism. This issue is further discussed in the next chapter.

5.4 – Factors Influencing Initial Task Representations

One of the aims of this chapter is to identify some of the factors that influenced the participants’ task representations. Although the following section utilizes data previously discussed, the purpose here is to highlight factors that likely influenced aspects of the participants’ initial task representations, which were developed over the week and a half prior to writing the first draft of the assignment. The factors are displayed in Table 19 and discussed in the following sections according to the task representation category and specific aspect the factor influenced.
Table 19 – Factors that Influenced the Participants’ Initial Task Representations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Representation Category</th>
<th>Specific Aspect</th>
<th>Influencing Factor(s)</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Elements</td>
<td>Discussing main points in an essay</td>
<td>- IELTS test</td>
<td>Lin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating an introduction</td>
<td>- Past writing experience</td>
<td>Jason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>5-paragraph essay</td>
<td>- Example 5-paragraph essay</td>
<td>Lin, Andy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Past writing experiences in Chinese and English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- EAP II instructor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment task requirements</td>
<td>General requirements</td>
<td>- The assignment task sheet</td>
<td>Andy, Jenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Schemata</td>
<td>Schematic map of appropriate content</td>
<td>- Teacher knocking down his ideas in class</td>
<td>Jason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Known information about abortion</td>
<td>- Interactions with other students in the class</td>
<td>Andy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.1 – Text Elements

5.4.1.1 – Discussing Main Points

Lin believed that to successfully accomplish the assignment task, she had to write an essay that presented several main points and discussed them separately. She related these text elements of main points, or topic sentences, and discussion to IELTS writing. She explained:

I think, maybe this essay is very like, the similar as the IELTS, the writing, yeah this essay the second assignment…. Like “give me the main point,” and we talk about and discuss this main point, so I think this is very similar as the IELTS test.

Lin believed that the IELTS writing was the closest match between her previous writing experiences and the requirements of the assignment task. Thus, her experiences with IELTS writing partially formed Lin’s representation of the text elements required by the assignment task.

One interesting point to add is that Lin did not find IELTS writing very helpful to her academic studies. Her experiences taught her that other classes did not give assignments that required her to present and then discuss points like the IELTS writing:

The IELTS is not helpful to me to do the subject, to do the paper, because I think the assignment is not like this. Like the accounting assignment you just tell, count something something. And like the marketing or the management, just write about how, give me some examples about company and then you discuss the company how to going, how to management, like this. But I think not like give me just the point, “Oh this is good or not good” and discuss this point, I think no.

Because Lin drew upon her experiences with IELTS writing to form part of her task representation for the argument essay, she also transferred to the essay her feeling that the type of writing required by the argument essay was not helpful. She said:
Maybe they will have [this type of assignment in] our future study, but I think the writer write this assignment is not very helpful…. Give me the main point and discuss which is the selfish or not selfish, I think not helpful to my future study.

So, not only did Lin transfer her representation of the text elements required by IELTS writing to the argument essay task, she also transferred her affective stance regarding the IELTS writing to the argument essay because Lin felt that the argument essay assignment was not helpful for her future study. Thus, Lin Lin’s experiences with IELTS writing was one factor that influenced her initial task representation and also her affective stance toward the argument essay assignment.

5.4.1.2 – Creating an Introduction

It seems that Jason may have relied on a “default” task representation for his introduction. Flower (1990) explains that writers construct a task representation “integrating elements from a large set of options and schemas” and that writers can use the “default” option as “an efficient way to bypass problem solving and leap in with familiar goals, plans, or strategies” (p. 54-55). Jason used his standard approach, or default option, to conceptualize the introduction to his argument essay:

J: Every assignment usually use the same words [for the introduction]. It’s like “recently abortion can become a serious social problem.”

M: Why do you always use those words?

J: I don’t know how to open a sentence or how to open an introduction, so I choose to introduce the background of abortion.

M: So you do it the same way every time?

J: Yeah, it’s more easy.

The above comments show that Jason did not “know how…to open an introduction,” and consequently, “use[d] the same words” that he used in “every assignment.” Thus, one factor
that may have influenced Jason’s decision to use a default task representation for his introduction is that he knew of no other options. And Jason’s self-proclaimed “lazy” nature may have steered Jason away from searching for other ways to conceptualize the introduction because using his default representation was an all-too “efficient way to bypass problem solving and leap in with familiar goals, plans, or strategies.” Thus, Jason’s past writing experiences, or lack of them, influenced the way in which Jason represented the introduction of the essay because they limited his representation to a single option.

5.4.2 – Text Structure

5.4.2.1 – 5-Paragraph Essay

Both Lin and Andy represented the assignment task text structure as a 5-paragraph essay. Although their representations of the text structure were similar, the data revealed different factors that led to this representation. Lin’s representation grew out of the example 5-paragraph essay and her earlier writing experiences in China, and Andy’s representation originated from his EAP II instructor from the prior semester.

Just prior to the essay assignment, the lecturer handed out an example 5-paragraph essay on zoos (see appendix F) and had the students analyze its structure (thesis statement, topic sentences, paragraph organization, etc.). Lin explained that analyzing the 5-paragraph essay made her assume that the argument essay assignment involved the same kind of writing:

The lecturer give me the examples for the 5-paragraph [essay], so I think this [essay assignment] is like this. And actually, in China, our assignments also like this, introduction, body, and a conclusion, the same. So, this structure is very easy like this. The above comment also reveals that Lin was relating the 5-paragraph essay structure to the assignments she had written in China. She felt these two types of writing were “the same,” and consequently, the 5-paragraph essay was “very easy.”
As mentioned in Andy’s case study in chapter 4, Andy credited his EAP II instructor with teaching him about the effectiveness of using three body paragraphs in an essay. By writing two paragraphs that support a particular position and only one paragraph that supports another position, the writer communicates his or her personal opinion to the reader. So, in the case of this argument essay task, Andy would argue that abortion is not selfish by writing one body paragraph that argues abortion is selfish and two body paragraphs that argue abortion is not selfish, and this is exactly what Andy did in his first draft.

5.4.3 – Assignment Task Requirements

5.4.3.1 – General Requirements

Both Andy and Jenny mentioned using the assignment task sheet in order to initially orient themselves to the requirements of the assignment task. Jenny mentioned reading this task sheet specifically for information on particular aspects of the assignment, such as topic, word length, format, and number of references. Jenny said:

I just read [the assignment task sheet]. I tried to find out the topic of the essay. It’s about abortion and it’s let us to write about why you think it’s selfish chance or not selfish chance by the mom. And my opinion is not selfish chance…. I just trying to find out how much words do I need to write. And some lines to teach you how to write the article, how many words, what’s format, and we should show 5 reference. Yeah, something like that, and what’s the date it is due date.

According to Jenny’s event listing, reading the assignment task sheet was one of the first things Jenny did for the assignment. And consequently, the task sheet was one of the first factors to shape Jenny’s representation of the assignment task.

Andy too mentioned reading the assignment task sheet, but he did not mention specific aspects of the assignment he noted from reading it: “I reading the order about the assignment, and want to guess what did the teacher want me to do about the assignment, and I
will catch the main point.” His purpose for reading the assignment task sheet was to “guess” how the teacher envisioned the assignment task, and Andy likely based his initial representation of the task requirements on this guess. Furthermore, like Jenny, reading the assignment task sheet was one of the first things Andy did for the assignment and thus the assignment task sheet played an early role in shaping Andy’s task representation.

5.4.4 – Content Schemata

5.4.4.1 – Schematic Map of Appropriate Content

Creating a schema that accounted for the relationships between abortion and selfishness was a difficult task for the participants. Jason perhaps had the best formed schemata for the topic and began thinking early about the arguments that he could make in his essay. Through an in-class interaction, the teacher influenced Jason’s representation of the appropriate content to include in the essay. He described this interaction and its result:

This morning in class [the teacher] had knocked down my idea…. First I said abortion is a selfish choice and it is woman’s right, and then the woman is not just thinking about themselves. And then Louise said if abortion is a woman’s right then you don’t need to think about whether the abortion is think about themselves. So, I have no idea. After this interaction, Jason felt unsettled about the arguments he had generated for his essay and “need[ed] to think, think carefully” about content that would better suit the essay. Thus, through this small interaction where the teacher evaluated Jason’s ideas, the teacher had been influential in changing Jason’s task representation.

5.4.4.2 – Known Information About Abortion

Forming an appropriate schema for the assignment was a difficult task, but the students in the Study Writing class were one factor that influenced the way Andy developed his representation of content for the essay. During one of the classes prior to writing the first
draft, the class spent time discussing the class articles in small groups. Andy used this opportunity to compare his understanding of the class articles with that of other students, and through this experience, Andy altered his ideas about the class articles. He said, “In class I tell the students my idea. The other students said different with us, so I think maybe my idea have some mistake. So I change it. So, I think [the discussion of the class articles was] helpful.” Because much of Andy’s first draft was a summary of the class articles, this interaction with classmates shaped and refined Andy’s understanding of those articles, which understanding influenced the content that Andy included in the first draft and, consequently, Andy’s task representation.

5.5 – Changes in Participants’ Task Representations and Their Influencing Factors

This section describes the changes to the participants’ initial task representations and the factors that influenced those changes. Overall, there were seven changes in the participants’ task representations throughout the writing process (see Table 20). Andy made the most drastic change by shifting from writing a summary to writing an argument, which was influenced by the comments the teacher wrote on Andy’s first draft. The other six changes participants made were comparatively minor. Lin and Jenny worked to increase the formality of their language after in-class interactions with the teacher and the peer review. Lin and Jenny also revised their representations about where to place the topic sentences in the body paragraphs after reading the teacher’s written comments on their first drafts and discussing Jenny’s first draft in class. This in-class discussion also helped Jenny realize that she needed to show the relationship between the arguments in the body of her essay to the thesis. Lin came to understand the correct minimum word requirement and found new sources of information for her essay. And finally, Lin and Andy both expanded their representations of the text structure beyond the 5-paragraph essay. Each of these changes in the participants’
### Table 20 – Changes in Participants’ Task Representations and Their Influencing Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Representation Category</th>
<th>Change in Task Representation</th>
<th>Influencing Factor</th>
<th>Participant(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Elements</strong></td>
<td>Write an argument drawing on the class articles for supporting information rather than summarize the articles</td>
<td>- Teacher’s written comments on first draft</td>
<td>Andy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placing topic sentences first in the body paragraphs</td>
<td>- Analysis of Jenny’s first draft in class&lt;br&gt;- Teacher’s written comments on first drafts</td>
<td>Lin, Jenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Structure</strong></td>
<td>Connecting the supporting arguments to the essay’s thesis</td>
<td>- Analysis of Jenny’s first draft in class</td>
<td>Jenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing more than five paragraphs</td>
<td>- Needing to write 1500 words&lt;br&gt;- Generating content that did not fit with existing paragraphs&lt;br&gt;- Other unclear factors</td>
<td>Lin, Andy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics of the Text</strong></td>
<td>Increasing the formality of the language</td>
<td>- Interaction with the teacher&lt;br&gt;- Peer review partner</td>
<td>Lin, Jenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment Task Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Understanding the correct minimum word requirement</td>
<td>- Unknown</td>
<td>Lin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sources of Information</strong></td>
<td>Finding new sources of information</td>
<td>- Chance encounters</td>
<td>Lin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
task representations and their influencing factors is discussed in detail in the following sections.

5.5.1 – Major Overhaul of the Initial Task Representation

A major overhaul of a participant’s initial task representation involved changes to the task representation that affected a text’s overall purpose. Because the purpose of a text is a key factor in determining how a text is written, a change in a text’s purpose can result in major changes to the text. Andy was the only participant that made a major shift in his task representation. Simply put, Andy’s task representation shifted from a summary of the class articles to arguing for a position.

Forty-six percent of the text in Andy’s second draft was newly written, which illustrates the extent of the changes to his task representation. In his second draft, Andy wrote three new body paragraphs that presented specific arguments with support and examples from the class articles in defending the pro-choice position. And although the fourth body paragraph was still a summary of the Mother Teresa article, which took a pro-life position, Andy reframed this summary in an argumentative fashion. Andy began the summary paragraph, “But some people thought abortion is selfish choice, for example abortion for Mother Teresa is a selfish choice;” and ended the paragraph, “But I think these reasons are wrong;” and left the rest of the paragraph untouched from the first draft. This was a major shift in how Andy represented the task because rather than simply summarizing the class articles, Andy was now arguing for a specific position within the abortion debate. Rather than present a neutral and unbiased summary of the class articles, Andy was now using those articles to defend the claim he made in each of the first three body paragraphs.
The shift in Andy’s task representation from summary to argument could be related to a lengthy comment the teacher wrote at the end of Andy’s first draft. In it, the teacher noted that Andy’s task representation was to summarize the articles rather than use the articles to construct an argument. She wrote:

You have shown that you have read and understood the articles; however, you are writing a summary of two articles rather than developing an argument. From what you have written, it seems that you are saying abortion is a selfless choice—so this you must argue. Select ideas from your research which support this idea…. Decide your thesis, then decide what ideas/arguments you will use to support your thesis.

Andy followed this suggestion by revising his essay as mentioned above.

5.5.2 – Minor Modifications to the Participants’ Initial Task Representations

Flower (1990) notes that “because the process of constructing a task representation depends on noticing cues from the context and evoking relevant memories, it can extend over the course of composing” (p. 56). The participants regularly attended class over the two and a half weeks of writing the argument essay, during which there were many cues offered to them regarding the assignment task. Some of these cues came early in the writing process, and some came late in the process. The cues that came late in the process were, nevertheless, important for composing a good argument essay and the participants altered their task representations accordingly. These alterations in their task representations were not major enough to shift the whole underlying purpose of their writing, as with Andy, but they did result in the participants reevaluating certain aspects of their essays and making any necessary adjustments. The data analysis revealed six minor modifications to participants’ task representations as noted in Table 20 above.
5.5.2.1 – Placing the Topic Sentences First in the Body Paragraphs

Lin and Jenny made a modification to their initial task representations regarding the placement of the topic sentences in the body paragraphs. Lin noted that “the topic sentence must in the first sentence” of the body paragraphs and revised her final draft accordingly, and Jenny believed her second draft was good because she revised her body paragraphs so that they “show[ed] [her] topic sentence first,” which made them “clear.” Both Lin and Jenny learned about putting the topic sentences first in the body paragraphs when they analyzed Jenny’s first draft in class. In my observation notes from this class, I included this comment, which summarized the main instructional points of the lesson: “[The teacher] is trying to get the students to…see that the main ideas of the argument must be clearly placed at the beginning of the body paragraphs.” In addition to analyzing Jenny’s draft in class, Lin and Jenny learned about placing the topic sentences first in the body paragraphs from the written comments the teacher made on their first drafts. On both of their drafts, the teacher wrote “topic sentence?” at the beginning of the paragraphs where the topic sentence was not first. And Lin, reading this comment from Jenny’s first draft, said, “But I don’t know why [the topic sentence] must the first sentence.”

Even though Lin learned that the teacher wanted her to place the topic sentences first in the body paragraphs, Lin resisted revising her task representation to match this new information. One reason she resisted was that she felt it was boring to always put the topic sentence first in the paragraph: “Because if I’m reader and the writer put the topic sentence at the beginning of the, I just read the first sentence, after this I don’t want to read because I know what he want to say.” Another reason was that she wanted to develop a style that made her writing unique so that it stood out from the other students in the class:

I want to change some style…. All of my classmates style, all my classmates’ essay the same as me. All the style is the same. The first sentence usually talk about your
statement, so I don’t like this. I want to get some change, or some not very very similar with my, all the same, yeah. I think it is not interesting like this.

A third reason for her resistance was that “in China, [Lin’s] teacher ask [her], is give me the same style…. You must write the first topic first like this.” Lin felt that this method of uniformly structuring text “limited [her] mind,” and she believed New Zealand would be different. She explained:

I think here maybe the people is freedom is very freely, so I think we can write the article with more freely, more freedom, not also the shape is limited like this, you must write the first sentence in you topic sentence.

Even though Lin had numerous reasons for disagreeing with the teacher that the topic sentences should be placed first in the body paragraphs, she confessed that she would “try the same as her” and place her topic sentences first. The reason for Lin acquiescing to the teacher’s task representation seemed to be the teacher’s position of power. Lin told me:

I will change this for my topic sentences because I must follow my lecturer. My lecturer asks me we must do this like this, also I don’t want to write this, but I think if I write it like this, maybe she can’t give me the score or like this. So, I think I must follow her and write the topic sentence as my first sentence.

Lin was concerned that if she did not put her topic sentences first in the body paragraphs, despite her numerous reasons for disagreeing, the teacher would reduce the marks she gave Lin on the essay. And this was a concern because Lin’s first priority with her writing was to “get a score after the 50%,” which is at least a passing mark. Therefore, Lin conceded, “I must follow her,” and revised her task representation and final draft accordingly.

5.5.2.2 – Connecting the Supporting Arguments to the Thesis of the Essay

The in-class discussion of Jenny’s first draft was an influential experience that affected Jenny’s task representation and showed Jenny that the arguments she made in the
body of her essay were not connected to the main thesis. During this class analysis of Jenny’s first draft, the teacher and students discussed whether or not the arguments supported the thesis statement. The general response from the class was “no,” and despite Jenny’s attempts to defend her essay by explaining the relationships between the arguments and thesis, she failed to connect them. Consequently, the teacher gave Jenny suggestions for relating the arguments in the first and second body paragraphs to the thesis of the essay, but she pointed the lesson in a different direction before offering advice for forming connections between the arguments in the third and fourth body paragraphs and the thesis.

The result of this interaction was that Jenny modified her content schematic representation of how to form connections between the thesis and supporting arguments in the first and second body paragraphs. Jenny spoke about this gap in her essay in an interview:

But I do not like this [second body] paragraph…. It’s not clear and it’s not related to the thesis. I found information about the topic and just used the information to write a discussion, but I forgot to relate it and back it up to the thesis. I found it when [the teacher] read it and we discuss it in the class.

In her second draft, Jenny used the teacher’s suggestions for revising the arguments in the first and second body paragraphs. She commented in an interview, “[The topic of the second paragraph] is not support my thesis, but in my second draft I try to change something and try to link it with the thesis.”

Even though Jenny connected the arguments in the first and second body paragraphs to the thesis, she did not attempt to connect the arguments in the third and fourth body paragraphs to the thesis. These two paragraphs are devoid of the word selfish in the second and final drafts. It is possible that because the class extensively and explicitly discussed the first and second body paragraphs and the teacher offered suggestions for connecting the arguments in these paragraphs to the thesis, Jenny understood the disconnected nature of these paragraphs to the thesis and consequently made changes in them; however, because the
teacher skipped over discussing body paragraphs three and four and offered no suggestions for connecting their arguments to the thesis, Jenny was unsure about how to make a connection.

Jenny’s failure to connect the arguments in the body to the thesis of the essay was not a unique problem to Jenny alone. Lin and Andy failed to connect the arguments and thesis in their essays and Jason was able to form only weak connections between them. It seems that, as discussed previously, part of the difficulty here was with forming an appropriate content schemata that accounted for the relationships between the concepts of selfishness and abortion. Jenny seemed to understand the connections that the teacher suggested between the arguments in her first and second body paragraphs and the thesis of her essay because the teacher’s suggestions were explicit and specific to the arguments in Jenny’s essay. However, this minimal schematic framework upon which that understanding was built was not enough to help Jenny create connections between the arguments in the third and fourth body paragraphs and the thesis. Thus, these paragraphs remained separated from the main point of the essay.

5.5.2.3 – Moving Beyond Five Paragraphs

Initially, Lin and Andy believed that their essays should have five paragraphs and based this task representation on previous experience: Lin based it on the example 5-paragraph essay on zoos and Andy based it on his EAP II class. However, as their writing processes moved forward, they made changes to this aspect of their task representations so that their final drafts contained more than five paragraphs: Lin’s final draft contained six paragraphs and Andy’s final draft contained eight.

The factors that caused this change in task representation are different for Lin and Andy. For Lin, she was concerned throughout the process of writing about generating enough content to meet the minimum word limit. And consequently, as discussed in the previous
section, Lin found new sources of information from which to draw content. As she assembled this content into the three body paragraphs of her first and second drafts, her ideas exclusively argued that abortion was a woman’s choice (although Lin claimed she was arguing that “abortion not a selfish choice”). But after talking to her landlord and reading the pamphlet handed to her by a “church man,” Lin wanted to include a comment showing that abortion is not always the right choice, and this comment did not fit with the three existing body paragraphs. Therefore, she created a fourth body paragraph to house this new idea. Lin explained it this way in the final process interview:

L: And after this I think I haven’t got the 1500 word essays. It’s too hard to me. So I need to add one argument in the essay. So I add one argument in the essay, and this is the quiz, The Abortion Times, this one “finally,” add this other one.

M: How did you think of that?

L: Because I thought abortion have two sides, so I just think one side, and I say I want to say abortion is sometimes is weakness, is not good for the woman, but I can’t say this because I agree with abortion not a selfish choice. So the final [body paragraph] I say also abortion is not selfish but don’t do abortion too many times because we are loving must passing. So I added another argument in the final argument, the fourth argument…. Oh, do you know I talk about, discuss with my landlord, my landlord don’t agree with abortion and she also give me many many opinion many many idea why she don’t agree with abortion, so I also agree with her, so I think I need to add some more, like the loving must pass.

Thus, Lin’s task representation of using five paragraphs expanded as a result of two factors that worked in tandem. First, she was looking to add more content to her essay in order to meet the minimum word requirement. And second, the type of content she wanted to add to her essay did not fit conceptually with the content in the existing paragraphs.
In his initial task representation, Andy believed that in order to communicate his opinion to the reader, he needed to “have three [body] paragraph. First is disagree or agree, and the second is agree, and the third is agree. So the reader will understand maybe the writer is disagree or agree the selfish or selfless.” And his first draft followed this pattern. His second draft too followed this pattern, but with four body paragraphs. The first three presented pro-choice arguments and the fourth was a reframed summary of the Mother Teresa article from Andy’s first draft. However, his final draft departed from this pattern with six body paragraphs, three arguing for a pro-choice position and three summarizing Mother Teresa’s pro-life argument. Andy created the three paragraphs on the Mother Teresa article by dividing the single paragraph from his second draft into three paragraphs without altering the text. Thus, Andy’s final draft presented a balanced argument with the same number of paragraphs arguing each side. But it clearly argued for a pro-choice position because of the framing Andy added around the summary of the Mother Teresa article.

Unfortunately, the data did not provide any solid reasons why Andy made this change to six body paragraphs. It could have been that Andy was exploring the boundaries of the explicit nature of his new task representation. Rather than imply an argument through the amount of attention given to each side, he could overtly state his opposition to Mother Teresa’s opinion, as he did by framing the summary of her opinion. Or, it is possible that Andy attached the notion of implicit argumentation to the 5-paragraph structure, and when Andy moved beyond using strictly five paragraphs, he also abandoned implicit argumentation. Similarly, it could be that with such a drastic shift in his task representation, Andy simply forgot about weighting his paragraphs towards his own opinion. Or finally, it could be that after generating enough content to rewrite 46% of his draft, the new ideas would not conceptually fit within a 5-paragraph structure, so Andy expanded his representation of the number of body paragraphs in order to fit the number of different arguments he was making in his revised essay.
5.5.2.4 – Increasing the Formality of the Language

Lin and Jenny both realized, through experiences in class, that the teacher wanted them to avoid first person references in order to increase the formality of their essays. Lin stated, “We can’t use ‘my opinion,’ like this words. ‘I think that’ or ‘my opinion is,’ we can’t use like this sentence.” And she made changes to her final draft that reflected this change in her task representation. Jenny too said, “In my essay, I often got some ‘I think’ and ‘in my opinion’ and I change it and make it more formal,” which she did to several but not all instances in her final draft.

When I asked Lin how she knew she should not use first person references, she replied, “[The teacher] told me. Yeah, she told us we can’t use ‘my opinion’ or ‘I think’ like that. So I know, oh, I can’t use like this sentence.” Jenny’s source was her peer review partner, who told Jenny that “the formal writing should not have the ‘I,’ ‘me.’ And it should be changed to more formal.”

In addition to not using first person references, Jenny also modified one other aspect of her task representation in order to create a more formal text. “[The teacher] said sometimes [Jenny’s] sentence is too simple” and she advised Jenny to “try to mix two of them together, like into one sentence” because it “looks more formal and more better.” Jenny enacted this new aspect of her task representation with twelve instances of sentence combining in Jenny’s final draft. Thus, Lin and Jenny altered their initial task representations regarding the formality of their essays after receiving contextual input towards the end of their writing processes.

5.5.2.5 – Understanding the Correct Minimum Word Requirement

One minor change to Lin’s task representation was understanding the correct minimum word requirement. Lin’s initial representation was that the minimum word
requirement was 1200 words. However, in the second process interview, which was after Lin completed her second draft and received her first draft back from the teacher with the teacher’s written comments, Lin mentioned that the minimum word requirement was “1500 words.” Although this may seem like a minor change in Lin’s task representation, it was 300 words more than Lin had initially believed were necessary for the essay. And considering Lin’s concern for generating sufficient content to meet this requirement, an increase of 300 words was a significant adjustment to her task representation, especially because after copying a large chunk of text from the Internet into her essay, the essay was still about 200 words short of Lin’s initial representation of 1200 words. Therefore, realizing that the actual minimum word requirement was 1500 words may have caused further concern in Lin.

The data did not provide any reasons why Lin’s initial representation of the minimum word requirement was not aligned with the assignment task sheet. And, unfortunately, the data did not provide any clues about the factors that caused Lin to correct her representation of the minimum word requirement.

5.5.2.6 – Finding New Sources of Information

Another change to Lin’s task representation was adding more possible sources of information. After initially drawing upon only the class articles, the diagnostic test articles, and the Internet, Lin seemed to stumble upon other sources of information. After four days of searching the Internet, Lin was engaged in a casual conversation with her landlord when Lin “asked her a question” about “this article” she had been reading on abortion. The landlord “discuss[ed] it with [Lin],” and “told [Lin] some story about abortion” and “gave [Lin] some good idea about abortion,” which Lin then planned to “use it in [her] article (essay).” Thus, Lin found a new source of information by asking her landlord a question about something she had read.
Another possible source of information that Lin happened upon was when “the teacher told [the class] about another article,” Jenny’s first draft, and distributed it for analysis in class. While analyzing it, Lin recognized that some of the arguments Jenny made were “the same” as Lin’s arguments but Jenny had used different supporting ideas. Jenny’s ideas “gave [Lin] example[s],” which she then “just write some words” in the margin of her essay to note the examples she could later add to her essay. Therefore, Jenny’s first draft became an additional source of information for Lin’s essay.

A third possible source of information that Lin encountered by chance was the “magazine” distributed to her door by a “church man.” This pamphlet was written in “Chinese, not English” and Lin found it “so very interesting” even though “they don’t agree with abortion.” When Lin was writing her final draft, she added a fourth body paragraph that contained information from this pamphlet. While she was composing this paragraph, the ideas from this pamphlet surfaced in Lin’s mind. She explained: “When I writing, the sentence or the idea will happen in my mind…so I write this…. ‘The human history was stopped by abortion,’ like this, they give me idea like this.” Thus, another source of information for the essay was delivered to Lin’s doorstep.

5.6 – Summary and Consolidation

The aim of this chapter was to answer the second research question, which asked: What factors influenced the participants’ representations of the assignment task throughout the process of writing? The chapter identified fourteen factors that influenced the development of the participants’ task representations at various points within the participants’ writing processes. These fourteen factors can be grouped into four categories: 1) historical factors, 2) teacher factors, 3) other people factors, and 4) writing process factors (see Table 21).
Table 21 – Summary of Factors That Influenced the Participants’ Task Representations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Influencing Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Factors</td>
<td>- General writing experiences in Chinese and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- IELTS writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Default method for writing introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- EAP II instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Factors</td>
<td>- Example 5-paragraph essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The assignment task sheet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The assignment task requirement to write 1500 words</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Interaction with the teacher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Teacher’s written comments on first draft</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Analysis of Jenny’s first draft in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-People Factors</td>
<td>- Interactions with other students in the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Peer review partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Chance encounters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Process Factors</td>
<td>- Generating content that did not fit with existing paragraphs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historical factors were writing experiences prior to the argument essay assignment that the participants drew upon to help them formulate an initial task representation. The historical factors all seem to indicate that the participants used their prior experiences as a basis for understanding and formulating an initial representation for the argument essay task because these factors were most influential at the beginning of the writing process when the
participants were forming an initial task representation. Later in the writing process, these factors played a significantly diminished role in the shaping of the participants’ task representations.

Teacher factors were contextual cues originating from the teacher regarding the nature of the assignment task. All of these factors helped communicate to the participants’ how the teacher was representing the task and allowed them the opportunity to better align their task representation with the teacher’s. The participants encountered teacher factors consistently throughout the writing process. The input the teacher provided varied according to the stage of the writing process in which the participants were working. For example, at the beginning, the teacher analyzed the example 5-paragraph essay and distributed the assignment task sheet. Next, she interacted with the participants individually and with the whole class to help build their content knowledge. After the participants finished the first draft, the teacher wrote comments specifically reacting to each participant’s first draft and then analyzed Jenny’s first draft with the class in order to provide further specific input. Thus, the teacher guided her input to match the needs of the participants at whatever stage of the writing process in which they were working. This provided the participants with constant contextual cues regarding the nature of the assignment task and helped to influence the shaping of the participants’ task representations.

Other-people factors were cues about the assignment task from people other than the teacher. The participants’ encounters with other people were influential on the participants’ task representations throughout the writing process. Other people provided alternative viewpoints on the formal and content schematic aspects of the assignment task. These viewpoints provided the participants with previously unnoticed options for representing the task, which in some cases prompted change in the participants’ task representations.

Writing process factors were natural consequences of the participants’ evolving understanding of the writing task. As the participants gained content knowledge and
perspective on the abortion and selfishness issue, the opinions and ideas that they wished to express in their essays evolved. Consequently, the participants had to modify their task representations to accommodate the new perspectives. In this study, the one writing process factor had an impact late in the writing process. With only one factor in this category, it is difficult to say whether writing process factors have a bigger influence towards the end of the writing process or a consistent influence throughout the whole writing process. However, it does seem logical that once a writer begins to solidify his representation of the task and compose an essay, the act of composing would raise problems unforeseen in the planning stage. As Hayes and Nash (1996) note, “In many cases, the act of carrying out a task leads us to notice new task-relevant information…. Such unanticipated information could influence planning by leading planners to modify their representations of the available resources or of the goal specification” (p. 42). Thus, writing process factors may have the biggest impact later in the writing process.

5.7 – A Working Model of Creating a Task Representation

The results from this chapter suggest a working model about how second language writers develop a task representation for an academic writing assignment (see Figure 1). This model is tentative because of the small number of participants upon which it is based and the qualitative nature of the data. Therefore, it should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, it provides a perspective for applying the results of this chapter to some comparable academic writing situations. The model is divided into two time-sequential stages and attempts to answer two questions, the first of which is the main focus of the model: 1) How does a task representation initially come together and subsequently evolve? and 2) How are a task representation and the written product related?
5.7.1 – Stage One

The first stage begins with the teacher initially providing information about the requirements of a new writing task. This action starts within the students the creation of a mental representation for the task and can occur any length of time prior to the commencement of a student composing a draft. The task information will have areas of vagueness and specificity that will constrain the task to some degree. For example, it could be as simple as a directive to “write an essay” or it could provide detailed information regarding aspects of the assignment such as the topic, genre, content, style, length, and timeframe for writing. The format of this task information could be written, oral, or a combination of the two.

Once students have received information about the requirements of a task, they map the task requirements onto their past experiences in order to facilitate an initial conceptualization of the task. Writers may have some familiarity and experience with certain task requirements and they may formulate an initial representation for these requirements that
draws heavily on their relevant background experience. Some of the task requirements may be unique to the task and thus contribute directly to the initial task representation without being filtered through the background experiences. This process creates a unique task representation that is a hybrid of past writing experiences and current task requirements. After this initial stage of forming a task representation, the writer’s past experiences become less influential in the development process and the cues from the writing context become more influential.

5.7.2 – Stage Two

In the second stage, which occurs after the writer forms an initial task representation, the teacher becomes the most influential factor on the writer’s task representation. It is possible that the teacher’s position of power over the eventual evaluation of the assignment makes the teacher the most influential factor at this stage. The writers focus on teacher factors, such as classroom interactions with the teacher and the teacher’s written comments on the writer’s drafts, to hone and refine their task representations in order to better align them with the teacher’s representation of the task.

However, in this second stage, there are also other factors that play a less central role in developing a writer’s task representation. Interactions with other people, whether they are students in the class or people independent of the class, can challenge a writer’s thinking and result in the writer revising his or her task representation. These could occur at any point in time during the second stage. Also, the natural process of knowledge creation and learning that occurs during the writing process can result in the writer needing to reshape his or her task representation in order to accommodate the new knowledge. Writing process factors may have a more powerful influence towards the middle and end of the writing process.

During the second stage, the writer uses his or her task representation to compose a written product for the task. One constraining factor on the transfer of a writer’s task representation to the written product is a writer’s skill with composing. In other words, the
writer’s skill determines the degree to which the written product accurately portrays the task representation. Although the product will ideally be an isomorphic manifestation of the task representation, this is often not the case for several possible reasons. The writer may lack the writing skills to carry out the task precisely as represented, or the writer’s task representation may continue to evolve during or after composing.

5.7.3 – Comparison with Flower’s Theory

This working model of creating a task representation in second language writers has some points of similarity with Flower’s (1990) “tentative theory of task representation as a constructive process” (p. 54) as described in the literature review, and in one respect, it further develops Flower’s theory. One similarity is that Flower’s theory suggests that a writer uses “the schemas, conventions, patterns, and strategies the writer already knows” (p. 54) to integrate various elements into a task representation. My model too suggests that prior writing experience plays a key role in developing the foundation of a task representation. Another point of similarity is that Flower’s theory recognizes the role of “noticing cues from the context” (p. 56), and my model too emphasizes the role of the teacher and other people in helping to shape a writer’s task representation. And a final point of similarity is that Flower’s theory acknowledges that there may be “problems in constructing an integrated task and text” (p. 58), while my model also recognizes that a writer’s task representation may not always match the text the writer produces.

The way that my model further develops Flower’s theory is that it suggests a general linear progression for task representation creation with different factors playing a more significant role at different points in time. Flower’s theory was built upon data from a single draft assignment that required the participants to write from a single source text. Consequently, the data did not provide a longitudinal perspective across multiple drafts of an assignment. My data provided perspectives from multiple points in time allowing me to view
the development of a task representation through time and its influencing factors at different stages of development.
CHAPTER 6

PLAGIARISM

6.1 – Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted some of the difficulties the participants had with representing the assignment task. Some of these difficulties could have contributed to Lin and Jason receiving zero marks on their argument essays for plagiarism. However, there is more behind the issue of plagiarism than was discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter, then, presents and discusses the results pertaining to the third research question: What factors contribute to a participant producing a final written product that the teacher or the institution considered plagiarized?

Before moving into the discussion of results, I need to clarify one issue with terminology. Typically, plagiarism is defined as “material that has been taken from some source by someone, without acknowledgement and with/without intention to deceive” (Pecorari, 2001, p. 235). And for some people, the word plagiarism has become a term loaded with negative connotations. These people seem to connect the word to a sense of judicial process and it carries the meaning that the accused student has been convicted of a crime. However, I have elected to use the term plagiarism throughout this chapter with a different intended connotation. I have used the word simply to mean that the teacher judged Lin and Jason’s essays to fall short of the standard she had set. Thus, when I refer to Lin and Jason’s plagiarism, I am pointing to the textual features of their essays and the processes that brought the essays about that resulted in the teacher’s judgment. By using the word plagiarism, I am not implying that my own conclusion is that these participants were guilty of academic dishonesty. Indeed, the reader may find my own view to be quite different.

Plagiarism is generally associated with using text or ideas from another author without attribution. In a school setting, as in most other settings, a teacher makes a judgment about
whether or not a paper is plagiarized based on the text within that paper. However, there are “many complex things going on behind the surface phenomenon of apparent plagiarism” (Pennycook, 1996, p. 225-226). These “complex things” are not seen in the text of a paper but work behind the scenes and have an effect on the text going into a paper, thus making them possible factors in a plagiaristic outcome. The purpose of the third research question was to try to uncover some of these factors.

In order to organize the results pertinent to answering the third research question, I have divided the chapter into five sections. Beginning with the most salient factors that can point to plagiarism, the first section looks at the textual features of Lin and Jason’s final drafts, which the teacher considered plagiarized, and it provides the teacher’s, Lin’s, and Jason’s perspectives on those textual features. The second section moves below the surface and examines contextual factors surrounding the assignment that affected Lin and Jason’s writing processes and may have contributed to Lin and Jason’s plagiarism. The third section is a brief comment on the role of second language proficiency as a common thread through many of the factors identified in the previous two sections. The fourth section steps away from identifying specific factors that contributed to the participants’ plagiarism and discusses other closely related issues, such as the participants’ intention as they worked on their essays, the sense of injustice Lin and Jason both felt after the teacher denied them any credit for their work, and the efficacy of the teacher’s punitive response to Lin and Jason’s plagiarism. The fifth section summarizes and consolidates the findings of the chapter.

6.2 – Textual Features in the Final Draft

Plagiarism is found nowhere except in the text of a paper. Therefore, the first place to look for factors that caused the teacher to consider a participant’s essay plagiarized is in the text of the essay itself. This section will discuss the textual features of the participants’ essays from two points of view: the teacher’s and the participants’.
6.2.1 – Teacher’s Perspective

The data provided three textual features in the participants’ final drafts that signaled plagiarism to the teacher: direct copying from other source texts into the essay, copying portions of a previously submitted assignment into the essay, and a lack of proper quotation practices. Each of these is discussed below.

6.2.1.1 – Copying from Source Texts

The teacher had told students at the beginning of the semester that 10% was the maximum limit of copied text allowable in an essay; more than that constituted plagiarism. There were two reasons that guided the 10% limit. First, the teacher believed that this was a uniform policy that created “consistency” across all Study Writing classes. And second, she said, “Ten percent seems reasonable, seems to allow for a margin of error whereas 20% would be almost condoning [plagiarism].” And turnitin.com was the tool the teacher used to determine the percentage of copied text. Turnitin.com showed that Lin’s essay had a similarity index of 30% when compared to other sources, which was well over the 10% limit, and this seemed to be indication enough to the teacher that Lin’s essay contained too much copying directly from other source texts and was thus plagiarized.

Despite the teacher’s policy, the data do not support the conclusion that violating the teacher’s 10% standard necessarily led the teacher to consider an essay plagiarized. It seems that plagiarism was not such a black and white judgment for the teacher. Rather, there seemed to be degrees of copying from source texts that lay along a continuum, and the consequences of plagiarism varied according to the severity of the plagiarism. Jenny had 10% copied text, which put her precariously on the outer boundary of acceptability, and she did not receive any consequences but earned a B+ (72%) on her essay. Andy was just over the specified limit with 12% copied text, but he too escaped without any consequences and was given a B-
(60%) on his essay. The student who was not a participant in this study but wanted Lin to confront the teacher about receiving a zero had 20% copied text, well over the 10% standard, and had her total marks reduced by 10% but did not receive a zero on the whole essay assignment. Then, there was Lin who had 30% copied text and received a zero. (Jason, who had 49% copied text and also received a zero, is a slightly different case and will be discussed in the next section.) In confirmation of this flexibility inherent in the way she applied the plagiarism policy, the teacher admitted that “I feel that compromises need to be made sometimes because you are working in a system where students with a low level of English are…given entry to a degree program. You have to swim with the tide.” Thus, simply violating the 10% standard did not strictly lead to the teacher declaring an essay plagiarized.

The 10% standard seemed to be only one of two elements working together within the teacher’s plagiarism policy. After identifying plagiarism, the other element was determining the consequences. Identification may have followed the 10%-copied-text-equals-plagiarism policy—the teacher admitted that “seeing…10% set off alarm bells”—however, this conclusion is tentative because the data did not reveal whether or not the teacher made any indication to Jenny and Andy, the two participants with borderline amounts of copied text, whether their papers contained plagiarism. If she had strictly followed the policy, it is likely that she would have said something to Andy about being 2% over the limit. However, this is a grey area because determining the consequences for plagiarism seemed a bit more open to the teacher’s judgment with more severe cases of plagiarism receiving harsher penalties. And it is possible that the teacher determined that 2% over the limit was not worth any penalty, which would effectively push the standard of copied text up to 12%. Therefore, the blending of these two parts of the teacher’s plagiarism policy makes it difficult to specify the amount of copying from sources that contributed to a participant producing a final written product that the teacher or the institution considered plagiarized. Although I cannot specify an amount, it
is clear from the data that copying from source texts itself was a factor that contributed to the teacher’s determination that an essay was plagiarized.

6.2.1.2 – Copying from a Previous Assignment

By giving Jason a zero on his argument essay, the teacher made clear that using a previous assignment to write a current one was considered plagiarism. Copying text from a previously submitted assignment is a similar factor to copying from source texts, which was discussed in the previous section, but there was one important difference: one does not automatically assume that one’s own writing is included as a source text. And Jason had assumed that plagiarism was using someone else’s words without acknowledgment, and he was not using someone else’s words but had composed the text himself. However, at AIS, plagiarism was more than using other’s words without proper acknowledgement: it was also using your own words again or “recycling” them from one assignment to the next. The AIS student handbook stated that “recycling” was “submitting the same assignment more than once, with or without alteration, for the same or another course” and this was a type of plagiarism.

The major factor in the teacher’s judgment that Jason’s essay was plagiarized seemed to be that turnitin.com showed Jason had copied 32% of the text in his essay from a previous assignment. In a separate conversation with me before handing back Jason’s final draft and marks, the teacher told me that Jason had used a portion of an assignment he had written previously for Study Writing and she had consequently given him a zero on his essay. The teacher also wrote on the top of Jason’s final draft “He has used last semester’s assignment. 0% due to plagiarism” (emphasis in original). Furthermore, on the other three participants’ final drafts, the teacher wrote comments and reactions as she read and marked them. However, on Jason’s final draft, she wrote no further comments, as if she had not even read
through Jason’s essay. All of this supports the conclusion that using his previous assignment was a major factor in the teacher’s decision to declare Jason’s essay plagiarized.

6.2.1.3 – Lack of Proper Quotation Practices

When the teacher met with Lin to discuss her zero marks and plagiarism, the teacher had marked on Lin’s final draft three places that the teacher felt needed quotation marks. It is possible that because the teacher had already seen that Lin’s final draft contained 30% copying when she retrieved it from turnitin.com, the teacher was looking for inappropriately copied sentences without citation as she read through Lin’s essay. Nevertheless, she explicitly marked three places on Lin’s final draft as needing quotation marks and then highlighted at least one of these during her conference with Lin.

This could indicate that not properly quoting copied passages was a factor that contributed to the teacher deeming a paper plagiarized. However, quotation practices alone do not seem to be a factor that worked in isolation. The teacher also enclosed one sentence on Jenny’s final draft with quotation marks and wrote “acknowledge as a quote” next to it.¹ Yet, Jenny was not penalized for plagiarism but was awarded high marks on her essay. Thus, not using proper quotation practices on directly copied text could have been a factor contributing to the teacher’s decision that an essay was plagiarized; however, this factor by itself was not likely to induce a plagiarism judgment.

6.2.2 – Participants’ Perspectives

6.2.2.1 – Lin’s Perspective

Lin had a slightly different perspective on the textual features of her essay that contributed to the teacher pronouncing it plagiarized. The data indicated that there were four

¹ Incidentally, as with the sentences the teacher marked in Lin’s essay, the sentence the teacher enclosed in quotation marks in Jenny’s essay was not a direct quotation but was in fact entirely a paraphrase from one of the class articles.
factors Lin identified: lack of paraphrasing, lack of proper quotation conventions, lack of citations, and variations in the purpose of the essay.

6.2.2.1.1 – Lack of Paraphrasing

Lin recognized that the paraphrasing in her essay was inadequate. When I asked her about a specific section of text in her essay, Lin explained, “I’m not really paraphrasing, not all paragraph use my own words, so I’m not really check the paraphrasing.” However, the source use analyses of Lin’s second and final drafts show that Lin did in fact attempt to paraphrase the lengthy 296-word section of text copied from the Internet. Within this section, Lin combined sentences and sentence parts, substituted words and phrases, altered the word and phrase order within sentences, deleted portions of the original, and added new information. As an example of Lin’s paraphrasing, Lin rearranged the word order from the original phrase, “women who make the decision with clarity,” to “women make clarity the decisions which.” She also deleted the beginning words from this original phrase, “They are women who are clear about their options,” so that it read, “Women are clear about their options.” And onto the end of this sentence, “They appear to me to have a good sense of their own capabilities and limitations,” Lin added the phrase, “at most of time.”

By attempting to paraphrase, Lin managed to reduce the total number of words in this section to 268, of which 247 were copied words, reducing the total amount of copied words in this section by 8%. However, Lin’s paraphrasing strategies primarily involved rearranging text rather than rewriting it and resulted in a final draft that contained only three fewer copied words than the second draft (see Table 22). Lin did add 125 more words of paraphrased text to her final draft; however, most of this formed the basis of an additional paragraph and was not primarily within the section copied from the Internet.

When I asked Lin about her paraphrasing skills, she described the confidence she had built through her experiences in China: “In China, we also we will do like the paraphrasing in
Table 22 – Lin’s Source Use Through the Drafts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Draft</th>
<th>2nd Draft</th>
<th>Final Draft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copied words</td>
<td>138 (27%)</td>
<td>455 (44%)</td>
<td>452 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrased words</td>
<td>75 (15%)</td>
<td>75 (7%)</td>
<td>200 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarized words</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quoted words</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Original” words</td>
<td>305 (58%)</td>
<td>506 (49%)</td>
<td>492 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total words in essay</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>1036</td>
<td>1173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The results presented in this table are from the textual analysis. See the methodology chapter for a definition of the terms.

Chinese, and I know how to do.” And then she explained the limitations of her paraphrasing skills in English: “If the short paragraph… I can understand it and I can use my own words to explain. If too longer, I’m not sure how to explain his or her opinion.” This seemed to be true in Lin’s case. Many sections of text were copied and paraphrased from much shorter passages within the class articles. The 296-word section copied from the Internet was by far the biggest chunk of text Lin tried to incorporate into her essay. In fact, if Lin had managed to adequately paraphrase the section of text copied from the Internet, the turnitin.com similarity index would have been 10%, which was within the acceptable range.

6.2.2.1.2 – Lack of Proper Quotation Practices

After the teacher gave Lin her final draft back and indicated that a particular sentence required quotation marks, Lin realized that applying proper quotation practices was an issue with her essay and that this was one of the issues that caused her plagiarism. However, the consultation with the teacher left Lin feeling puzzled about exactly how to properly quote text. She explained:
If I use quotation I think I must copy the sentence of the article, the essay. But I used my own words to explain this word, this sentence, and I say I don’t need to put the quotation. But [the teacher] think this one also you used the quotation so you must apply the quotation mark. So I’m not sure which means quotation. And because in my mind I think quotation must copy the words or copy the sentence, or all the sentence from this, I think I use my own words to explain this sentence, so put some idea in my sentence. So I think this is not use the quotation mark. She think I must use quotation mark because she think this is the same as the sentence [in the source].

Here Lin reveals that her prior understanding of quotation mark usage was correct. But it seems that as a result of the teacher misidentification of a copied sentence, Lin lost a bit of confidence in her understanding of how to use quotation marks in English academic writing. Nevertheless, she recognized that the teacher had identified improperly quoted text as a factor in her plagiarism.

6.2.2.1.3 – Lack of Citations

Lin felt that the argument essay assignment required her to cite everything. She explained, “In English, like argument essay, we must [cite] every sentence or every words, if I found some very similar from the article I must use the reference.” This impression partially came from a comment the teacher made about Lin needing to include a citation for China’s one-child policy because its existence was not common knowledge in New Zealand. It is unclear from the data at what point during Lin’s writing process the teacher made this comment, but the impact made Lin feel like she needed to cite “every sentence or every words.” And Lin partially linked receiving a zero on her final draft with her apparent lack of citations:
[The teacher] say give me zero. I say “oh, okay.” I don’t want to say anything because my referencing is like this. Like she say I do the, I very bad at the reference, so I think okay get zero. Yeah, I can’t say anything.

Even though Lin identified her lack of citations as a contributing factor in her plagiarism, Lin’s academic writing experiences in China made it hard for Lin to accept that her citation practices were lacking. In China, if Lin wanted to write into a paper some text that she maybe “learn[ed] in the university or…in the middle school,” this counted as her “knowledge” and did not require a “reference.” She further partially defined her “knowledge” as text she had memorized while reading:

Before we writing, we need to read many books. Sometimes some words or some sentence will just happen in my mind. I will use it, but I can’t remember which sentence from which book. So sometimes we haven’t write the reference list because our lecturer know…I read many books because I use some sentences very good, found some maybe some article, but I can’t remember which article I got.

The clash between Chinese and Western citation and education practices that Lin points to here has been well-documented in the literature (Bloch & Chi, 1995; Carson, 1992; Pennycook, 1996). And the fact that Lin may have been adjusting to this difference and included too few citations in her essay seems to have been one factor that Lin believed contributed to the teacher considering her essay plagiarized.

6.2.2.1.4 – Variations in the Purpose of the Essay

In the interviews, Lin discussed the different purposes teachers have for different writing assignments across classes and she identified the teacher’s purpose for the argument essay as another possible factor contributing to Lin’s plagiarism. Even though this section is discussing the textual features that Lin believed led to a plagiaristic outcome, the perceived purpose of a text can affect its textual features. The purpose of a text may not involve overt
textual features such as the similarity in wording of two texts or citation conventions, but the purpose of a text is one of the key features that establishes its function and genre (Hyland, 2004). Thus, it fits within this section that examines the textual features that led to plagiarism.

Lin recognized that part of the purpose for the argument essay was to properly apply source use conventions such as paraphrasing and quotation. The purpose was not to demonstrate her knowledge of the subject matter, as is the purpose of writing assignments in most other academic contexts. She explained:

Maybe [the financial law class] not focus on the writing skill because they just focus which example can cover the law because they do the financial law. But now I do the Study Writing. Maybe they focus on writing skill, so I must learn how to paraphrasing, like this. So maybe their purpose is different.

Lin recognized, however, that part of her own purpose in writing the essay was to express her “opinion” and this purpose was not aligned with the teacher’s purposes for Lin’s text. This mismatch in purposes for Lin’s text could have been a factor in the teacher marking Lin’s essay as plagiarized. Lin could have been focusing more on the ideas she wanted to express (her purpose) rather than the language in which she expressed them (the teacher’s purpose).

6.2.2.2 – Jason’s Perspective

The main issue underlying Jason’s plagiarism was fundamentally different from Lin’s. The main issue was not correctly paraphrasing, quoting, and citing his source use as it was with Lin; rather, the issue was the source from which Jason drew the text, his own writing produced for a previous assignment. Jason acknowledged that the teacher gave him a zero because he had used a previous assignment, but he did not agree with the teacher’s decision.
6.2.2.2.1 – Copying from a Previous Assignment

Although Jason wondered whether it was acceptable to use his writing from the previous semester, it seemed reasonable to him given his knowledge of plagiarism. Plagiarism was using someone else’s words without acknowledgment, and he was not using someone else’s words but had composed the text himself. Even the AIS Student Handbook stated that “all students should be aware that marks are only given for their own work” (emphasis in original) thus supporting Jason’s reasoning that the work he submitted was acceptable.

However, even after submitting his final draft, he felt concerned about what the teacher’s reaction would be. In the interview just after handing in his final draft, I asked Jason what he thought about his essay and his first response was, “I just worry about how many percentage I copied…. I used last semester’s paragraph, so I just worry about it.” And in the interview after Jason received his essay back with zero marks, he confirmed that using his previous assignment was the reason he received a zero. He said, “I can’t use my assignment [from] before. So [the teacher] said it’s also like plagiarism.” Thus, Jason confirmed that copying from his previous assignment was one factor that contributed to the teacher declaring his essay plagiarized.

6.3 – Aspects Surrounding the Assignment Task

Outside the surface features of the texts themselves, there were several aspects surrounding the assignment task that seemed to be factors in Lin’s and Jason’s plagiarism. Specifically, these aspects were the class plagiarism policy, the minimum word requirement, and using sources other than the class articles.

6.3.1 – Class Plagiarism Policy

The class policy on plagiarism was a bit of a paradox and gave mixed signals about appropriate ways to use sources. The purpose of the class policy on plagiarism was to prevent
students from copying, without acknowledgement, text or ideas from other sources into their own papers. Although the 10% limit was meant to “allow for a margin of error,” the class policy suggested that a certain amount of copying without acknowledgement was acceptable—to be specific, 10% of the word total could be directly copied from other sources before the teacher considered a paper plagiarized. So, the policy itself was in direct opposition to its intended purpose because it in fact condoned a certain amount of textual borrowing while at the same time it tried to prevent textual borrowing.

Interestingly, all four participants in this study submitted essays with at least 10% copied text. Jenny and Andy had 10% and 12% copied text respectively and received no penalties. Another student in the class, who was not a participant in this research but suggested Lin confront the teacher about receiving a zero, had 20% copied text and consequently had her total marks reduced by 10%, because 20% was 10% over the limit. Lin and Jason had 30% and 49% copied text respectively and failed the assignment. By indirectly inviting copying, the class plagiarism policy itself could have contributed to a feeling that some copying from sources was acceptable and thus encouraged the participants to be less cautious about their textual borrowing. However, the data did not provide a clear answer about how the participants viewed this aspect of the 10% policy.

6.3.2 – Minimum Word Requirement

The essay task required the participants to compose at least a 1500-word argument essay. Both Lin and Jason were concerned about meeting the minimum word length requirement. This concern caused them to adopt coping strategies that involved borrowing text from other sources. And as indicated previously, this borrowed text contributed to the teacher’s judgment that Lin’s and Jason’s essays were plagiarized.
6.3.2.1 – Lin: Dealing with the Minimum Word Requirement

Lin had never before written in English a 1500-word essay and was worried about her ability to meet the minimum word requirement. Adding text was one of Lin’s main concerns while writing each draft, and in each of the process interviews, Lin made several comments about the need to meet the minimum word requirement. This fear was possibly reinforced by the teacher’s comment “You need to write more” written at the end of Lin’s first draft; however, Lin never specifically mentioned this comment in the interviews.

As a consequence of Lin’s concern about the minimum word requirement, Lin seemed to focus more on the number of words in her essay rather than the quality of those words. While working on her second draft, Lin only added text without revising any text that she had previously written in the first draft. Of the four places that Lin added text in her second draft, three of them seemed haphazardly tacked on at the ends of the three body paragraphs. And as Table 22 shows, by doing this, Lin doubled the number of words in her essay although 61% of the words Lin added to her second draft were copied from source texts. This evidence supports the conclusion that one of her main concerns while writing the second draft was increasing the number of words in her essay. The increase in the number of words in Lin’s final draft was less drastic; nevertheless, Lin managed to include 137 more words by composing an additional paragraph thus showing that increasing the number of words in her essay was still a priority in the final draft. Incidentally, her final draft was still 327 words short of the 1500-word minimum requirement.

To Lin, meeting the minimum word requirement was one of the two major essay requirements she was attempting to meet. In addition to the word requirement, Lin felt pressure to include within her essay five citations, two of which she had to find herself. The combination of these two requirements, needing to include more words and cite source texts, seemed to lead to Lin’s copying into her essay the large section of text from the Internet because the copying fulfilled these two requirements: it added words to her essay and was
another source text to cite. Thus, Lin’s copying seemed to be a coping strategy that helped her accommodate the minimum word requirement of the assignment.

6.3.2.2 – Jason: Dealing with the Minimum Word Requirement

Jason too felt that he was not able to write enough to meet the minimum word requirement. The assignment asked for 1500 words, but Jason mentioned that “more than 500 is too much for me.” Within the same interview he revised this figure up to 1000 words, but then commented that assignments with more than a 1000-word minimum requirement “bore lots of students” and limits the effort they put into doing the assignment. Thus, a high minimum word limit leads students to “borrow some paragraph from the Internet and put it into your essay, like to fix the words limit.”

Jason viewed his ability to achieve the word limit as a deficiency for which he needed to compensate in order to successfully complete the assignment. Although he did not “borrow some words from the Internet,” the coping strategy Jason used was to integrate the ideas from an assignment he had written during the previous semester with the new ideas he had generated for this assignment. The first draft of Jason’s essay was divided in half with Jason writing 776 words and then borrowing approximately 550 words directly from his previous assignment giving his first draft 1326 words total (see Table 23). There was no integration of Jason’s current text with that of his previous paper in his first draft. He simply tacked the text from the previous assignment to the end of the text Jason had written for this essay assignment. It seems that Jason wrote as much as he felt he could for the essay and then filled out the word requirement with the necessary text from his previous assignment.

For his second draft, Jason managed to add 67 words by writing several new sentences at the beginning of his first body paragraph. He also reordered some of the paragraphs and reworded some of the text from his previous assignment which resulted in some integration of the new text and text from his previous assignment. And in the final draft, the total number of
words remained relatively unchanged at 1387 words, but through paraphrasing and rewriting, Jason had written more (862 words) and borrowed less (525 words) from his previous assignment better synthesizing it with his current ideas. Thus, Jason compensated for his perceived weakness for writing a lengthy assignment by borrowing from a paper he had written previously.

6.3.2.3 – Misunderstanding the Relative Importance of the Word Length Requirement

Leki (1995) noted a similar type of coping strategy among her participants who “did not understand the purpose of the teachers’ requirements, yet attempted to meet them as best they could, often only superficially” (p. 250). Lin and Jason too seemed to misunderstand the purpose of the word length requirement, or at least the relative importance of it when compared to the other requirements of the essay assignment. Looking at the length of all four participants’ essays and the marks awarded by the teacher helps bring the relative importance of the minimum word requirement into focus. Ironically, the participant with the fewest number of words in the final draft, Jenny, ended up with the highest marks on the assignment (see Table 24). Even Andy, who had only slightly more words than Jenny, got good marks on
Table 24 – Participants’ Draft Lengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lin</th>
<th>Jason</th>
<th>Andy</th>
<th>Jenny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st draft</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>1326</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional words</td>
<td>+518</td>
<td>+67</td>
<td>+203</td>
<td>+226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd draft</td>
<td>1036</td>
<td>1393</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>1154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional words</td>
<td>+137</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>+43</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>1387</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>1161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%  (B-)</td>
<td>72%  (B+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The strategies that both Lin and Jason adopted to cope with the minimum word requirement led them to copy text into their essays which resulted in the teacher declaring their essays plagiarized. And this made the minimum word requirement one factor that contributed to Lin and Jason producing essays that the teacher considered plagiarized.

6.3.3 – Requiring Outside Sources

The assignment task was designed so that students had to search on their own for additional sources beyond the class articles. Using these sources, rather than the class articles, seemed to be one of the factors that contributed to the teacher declaring Lin’s final draft plagiarized. The textual analysis of Lin’s final draft revealed that sections where Lin used the class articles had a much higher level of integration and appropriate paraphrasing than the areas where Lin used sources that she found on her own. It is possible that reading the class articles multiple times and discussing the critical reading questions about those articles during class with the teacher, in small groups, and with the whole class helped Lin develop a deeper understanding of their messages through reformulating them and integrating them into her
own knowledge base. And as a consequence of this reformulation and deeper understanding, Lin was more able to appropriately paraphrase and integrate information from the class articles into her essay. Conversely, Lin did not have the advantage of class discussions and peer interactions in order to develop and deepen her understanding of the information she found on her own as she searched for additional sources to use in her essay. She possibly struggled to reformulate that information and, accordingly, there was much less manipulation and integration of these sources in Lin’s essay.

This finding both corroborates and extends the results of other research by suggesting that reading comprehension may be a major variable in determining the degree to which an L2 student manipulates and integrates text from sources into his or her own writing. First language studies have shown that reading ability is a critical variable for successfully completing writing-from-sources tasks (Hare, 1992; Kennedy, 1985; Spivey & King, 1989). And as we know from L2 reading and writing studies, L2 proficiency is closely tied to L2 reading comprehension (Alderson, 1984; Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Carrell, 1991; Clark, 1980; Lee & Schallert, 1997) and consequently L2 writing-from-sources performance (Cambell, 1990; Conner & Kramer, 1995). While the Cambell study looked at L2 students’ composing an anthropology research proposal using a single source and the Conner and Kramer study looked at writing business proposals from single case studies, Lin’s case extends this research into the realm of argument essays from multiple sources. Using more difficult texts as sources without comprehension support may naturally incur less manipulation and integration in students’ writing, particularly from students with lower L2 reading comprehension. Using easier texts and providing comprehension support may allow for higher levels of reformulation and integration of information with background knowledge, which would lead to higher levels of manipulation and integration of the source texts.

Interestingly, Andy too possibly had low reading comprehension but he resisted the requirement that he find and use outside sources in his essay. Andy cited three sources in the
text and in the reference list of his final draft. The textual analysis showed that Andy had used one additional source, one of the articles from the diagnostic test. However, Andy limited his use of this source to three sentences, a small section compared to the extensive use of the class articles throughout the rest of his essay.

It is possible that had Lin followed Andy’s resistance strategy and only used the class articles as source texts without finding additional texts on her own, she would not have produced an essay that the teacher considered plagiarized. If the section of text Lin copied from the Internet is removed from her essay, then the percentage of copied words in Lin’s final draft falls from 39% to 23%, and this is well below the 28% copied words in Andy’s final draft (see Table 25). It is important to point out that there is a difference between the percentage of copied text as identified by the textual analysis\(^2\) and similarity index produced by turnitin.com. While turnitin.com showed a similarity index of 12% for Andy’s final draft, the textual analysis showed that 28% of his text was copied. However, the argument I am positing here is that because turnitin.com detected a much lower percentage of copied text

Table 25 – Comparison of Lin’s and Andy’s Final Drafts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lin</th>
<th>Lin minus copied section</th>
<th>Andy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copied words</td>
<td>452 (39%)</td>
<td>205 (23%)</td>
<td>324 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrased words</td>
<td>200 (17%)</td>
<td>193 (21%)</td>
<td>267 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarized words</td>
<td>27 (2%)</td>
<td>27 (3%)</td>
<td>124 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quoted words</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Original” words</td>
<td>492 (42%)</td>
<td>480 (53%)</td>
<td>461 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total words in essay</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>1176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) See the methodology chapter for a description of the textual analysis procedures.
than the textual analysis, it is possible that Lin’s turnitin.com similarity index could have been 12% or less. And if this were true, then Lin probably would not have received a zero on the assignment. Thus, requiring Lin to use outside source texts for which she had no comprehension support was another factor that led Lin to produce a final draft that the teacher considered plagiarized.

6.4 – The Role of Language Proficiency

This chapter would be incomplete without some mention of the role that L2 proficiency played in Lin and Jason’s plagiarism. L2 proficiency is a thread that runs through most of the factors previously discussed; however, it is significant enough to warrant additional mention.

Although the research methodology did not include a current standardized measure of the four participants’ English proficiency, there was evidence to suggest that Jenny’s English proficiency clearly surpassed that of Lin, Jason, and Andy. Jenny had lived in New Zealand the longest of the four participants and had a year of academic English study, after which she scored 5.5 on the IELTS. Jenny then spent a year at high school in New Zealand, and then completed a year of study at the tertiary level before participating in this research. All of this gave her experience with academic English the other participants did not have. Lin, Jason, and Andy’s English proficiency was clustered somewhere below Jenny’s at a point at or below generally accepted minimum standards for tertiary study. Lin had achieved the minimum acceptable IELTS score for admission into the program with a 6.0 on the IELTS. Both Jason and Andy were admitted to the school contingent upon their taking English support classes because their English proficiency test scores were below the minimum standard. This is a rough description of the participants’ English proficiency. Nevertheless, it is sufficient to understand the challenges that low English proficiency imposed.
As discussed previously, low L2 proficiency played a role in Lin’s reading comprehension. It limited her ability to understand the source texts and include information from those texts in her essay. Low comprehension of the source texts may have been one cause of her transferring chunks of unprocessed text into her essay in an attempt to use the source texts within her essay and meet the task requirement to use sources.

Low L2 proficiency may have played a role in constraining the transfer of L1 writing abilities to the L2 task and prevented the participants from fully utilizing their L1 skills and expertise (Cumming, 1989). Although both Lin and Jason had a reasonable amount of experience with reading and writing in Chinese, their limited L2 proficiency may have reduced the positive effect this experience could have had on their L2 writing. Consequently, they may have adopted strategies, such as borrowing text, that lowered the standard of writing they had achieved in the L1 in order to complete the essay task (Uzawa & Cumming, 1989).

Low L2 proficiency also likely added to Lin and Jason’s fears about sustaining the discourse long enough to meet the minimum word requirement. Previous L2 writing research has shown that low L2 proficiency reduces the quantity of planning (Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Whalen & Menard, 1995), leads writers to reduce the quantity of information they write in order to produce fluent text (Uzawa & Cumming, 1989), and impedes conceptual performance (Yau, 1991). Thus, the increased demands on cognitive resources due to low L2 proficiency could have led to a reduced amount of content Lin and Jason were able to produce, which would have then led to fears about producing enough text to meet the minimum word requirement.

6.5 – Other Issues

The data on plagiarism generated by this study shed light on more factors surrounding plagiarism than those needed to answer the third research question. Therefore, this section briefly discusses some of these other issues. Specifically, it looks at Lin and Jason’s intention
as they worked on the assignment. It explores the sense of injustice Lin and Jason felt after receiving zeros on their essays. And it investigates the efficacy of the punitive responses to Lin and Jason’s plagiarism.

6.5.1 – Intentional and Unintentional Plagiarism

The field of writing and composition, including L2 writing, is beginning to distinguish between intentional and unintentional plagiarism in an attempt to separate acts of academic dishonesty from legitimate attempts to learn and fulfill an assignment that unwittingly result in plagiarism (Currie, 1998; Pecorari, 2003). It is generally considered that these differences in intention warrant different responses from teachers and administrators. Therefore, identifying a student’s intention is “a crucial first question” when examining a case of plagiarism (Chandrasoma, Thompson, & Pennycook, 2004, p. 189).

In cases of academic dishonesty, one expects students to do something to hide or cover up their actions (Murphy, 1990; Sapp, 2002). In the case of the argument essay assignment, a student trying to cover up dishonest actions might do such things as hand in only a final draft, make no effort to read or understand the class articles, refuse to search for the required additional sources, or turn in a paper copy of the final draft rather than submitting it to turnitin.com. Both Lin’s and Jason’s writing processes seemed void of these types of characteristics that would indicate academic dishonesty. Rather, their writing processes were characteristic of students who wanted to learn and were working hard to do what was expected on an assignment. The many hours Lin and Jason spent thinking about the assignment, their initiative in gathering information from textual and human sources, their responsiveness to the teacher’s comments and suggestions, and the multiple changes from draft to draft all demonstrate that Lin and Jason were not trying to subvert the learning process but were actively engaged in it.
6.5.2 – A Sense of Injustice

The lack of evil intent in Lin and Jason’s writing processes is perhaps what led them to feel unjustly dealt with. Though their experiences were different and their ways of expressing their feelings were unique, both Lin and Jason felt that receiving zero marks when they had worked hard on the essay assignment was unfair.

6.5.2.1 – Lin

Lin’s unusual experience at the peer review session likely contributed to Lin’s feeling of injustice. Remember, the teacher had dismissed Lin’s accusation that Jack had copied her essay. However, the teacher’s dismissal did not sway Lin’s opinion that Jack had copied her essay. In fact, she was so convinced Jack copied her essay that she described how she believed he did it:

I know he like do this. Type my English, type in English and translate use the translator task [or disk] to translate to the Chinese, and after that translate in English. So the words and sentence may be different but the idea the same.

How ironic it must have been to Lin to receive a 0% on her assignment that she consistently and diligently worked on while Jack received a “B” grade on his assignment that Lin perceived he copied from her. As she discussed the peer review incident in the interview, the tone of Lin’s voice conveyed a feeling of injustice and confusion. How was she to feel any confidence that the teacher and possibly AIS would reward her for her honest efforts on future assignments, and how much more difficult this experience must have made it to understand what constitutes plagiarism and how it is dealt with (cf. Sapp, 2002).

Lin also felt cheated because she believed the teacher did not follow the marking schedule. During our interview after Lin received the zero on her essay, I wanted to know how Lin felt about her paper, so I asked her how she would have marked her own paper if she were the teacher:
M: So if you have to guess, how many marks do you think you would give your paper?

L: Um, I’m not sure, because I can’t mark my essay because...

M: Why not?

L: Because I try my best on my essay, so I think in my mind my essay is a perfect one because I hand in, but now I’m not sure.

M: So your essay is perfect. Is that an A+?

L: Um, I’m not sure, because in my mind I see my essay as perfect because I used my opinion or my argue and I do my work on this, but maybe my reference is not good, so I think, I don’t know.

If this comment is taken at face value, Lin feels her final draft was perfect. In reality, she probably did not feel it was completely perfect for several reasons. First, she hedged a bit when I asked her if her paper was an A+. Second, she commented in the second process interview that she still needed to revise the portion of her essay she copied from the Internet, and in the interview after her final draft was handed in she indicated that she felt she still could have revised that section even more. These two reasons suggest that Lin did not feel her paper was completely perfect. Another possibility is that she felt her essay was perfect considering the amount of help she received, the amount of time she had to spend on it, and her skill level for accomplishing the task. In other words, given the circumstances, she felt her paper was the best she could have possibly done. The answer to how Lin felt about her essay is probably a combination of all the above possibilities. She did not think it was A+ perfect but it was the absolute best paper she could have produced under the circumstances and a paper such as this certainly warrants at least a passing grade. This feeling about the quality of her paper contrasts sharply with the zero grade it received and makes it easier to understand why Lin felt utterly shocked and deeply disappointed in the result.
In trying to make sense of what had happened, Lin thought about the marking schedule for the assignment and felt that the teacher did not follow the predetermined marking schedule for assigning a grade to her paper. The marking schedule was an analytical scale that assigned points for aspects of the paper such as the introduction, body, conclusion, references, grammar and spelling, and drafting process (see appendix A for the complete marking schedule). Lin explained that giving the whole paper a zero because of errors in referencing was inconceivable. However, because Lin did not properly reference portions of her paper, she was denied credit for every aspect of her paper represented on the marking schedule. She was denied credit for her drafting process, which she put considerable effort into. She was denied credit for her introduction, body, and conclusion, which contained sections of perfectly acceptable writing and citation practice. Lin argued that even if she had plagiarism in the body of her essay and received a zero on the body because she plagiarized a portion of it, she should still have been awarded credit for her work on the introduction and conclusion, which did not contain copying. In considering all of the factors surrounding Lin’s case including the unintentional nature of her plagiarism, her line of reasoning here makes the zero marks awarded her essay sound a bit unreasonable.

6.5.2.2 – Jason

Jason too felt a sense of injustice about receiving a zero on his essay. In his mind, using his previous assignment was perfectly acceptable and he provided two reasons why he decided to use parts of it in his argument essay. First, he felt the ideas in his previous assignment “can be a good support idea, a good example. And I can’t find others better than this one, so I choose this.” Second, he wanted to find an angle for his essay that would stand out from the other students. He wanted to find an argument that other students would not use thus making his paper unique. However, because the class was all using the class articles as source texts, this became very difficult. Any argument that he could have found in these
articles and included in his essay could have also been included by other students in the class, thus making that argument a “weakness” in his paper. “So I give up. So I use my assignment.” And Jason hoped that the arguments from his previous assignment would set his paper apart from the other students.

In contrast to Lin, Jason seemed more bothered than devastated about receiving a zero on his assignment. Although his experience seemed to be less dramatic than Lin’s and Jason assumed a more subdued manner when discussing his plagiarism in the interviews, he was unusually articulate in expressing his feelings. He first explained the circumstances surrounding the plagiarism: “I try to do my best, but sometimes [the rules regarding plagiarism] are different from my thinking.” And then he eloquently added, “because this is all my thinking, I feel a little innocent.” How many other students who are accused of plagiarism must “feel a little innocent” when their “plagiarism” is dealt with punitively as the teacher did with Lin and Jason (see also Murphy, 1990)?

6.5.3 – The Efficacy of the Punitive Response to Lin and Jason’s Plagiarism

One of the questions heavily debated in the plagiarism literature regards the most appropriate response to plagiarism (Chandrasoma et al., 2004; Howard, 1995; Pecorari, 2001; Pennycook, 1996; Schroeder, Welch, & Howard, 1996). While opinions vary widely from one extreme to the other, Lin and Jason’s cases focus neatly on one type of response to plagiarism, a punitive response. Just as the word implies, a punitive response is designed to punish a student for wrongdoing rather than instruct a student in order to build a skill or fill a deficiency, as a pedagogical response might. The zero marks awarded by the teacher

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Murphy recounts a story of a female student who he accused of plagiarizing a paper. The student had chosen to write about the problem of anorexia, with which she struggled, for a personal essay assignment. Murphy felt she had copied the essay from a magazine and confronted her. The student, in an attempt to hide her embarrassment about anorexia, claimed that the information came from a friend even though the assignment was to write a personal essay. Because Murphy believed the essay was copied from a magazine and the student had admitted the essay was not personal, he failed her on the assignment. Only after the semester when Murphy was reading through the student’s writing journal did he discover that she had written about her own experiences in the essay. He had failed her for writing a brilliant and profoundly personal essay.
constituted a punitive response. Although Lin and Jason both received the same punitive response to their plagiarism, their cases were very different because of the nature of their plagiarism. The following discussion first looks at the effects of the punitive response on Lin and then looks at the effects on Jason.

6.5.3.1 – Lin

Receiving a zero on her assignment was devastating to Lin. At several points during the interview when she discussed her plagiarism with me she broke down in tears. One of her concerns was how a zero on the essay assignment would affect her chances of passing the class. Lin’s background suggested that she was a good student who worked hard and was not accustomed to failing classes. However, receiving a zero on one of the major assignments in the class was disconcerting to her.

The immediate reaction Lin had to receiving a zero on her essay was to withdraw from using sources in her writing. She had to take the midterm test only a few hours after the teacher gave her essay back with zero marks. And even though the midterm test required her to write an essay that cited four sources, she used only one because she did not want to “get the second experience of the zero mark.” The textual analysis of her midterm test showed that 98% of the 774 words she wrote were original (see Table 26). The other 2% were from a single sentence that she quoted from one of the midterm test articles. The tragedy of Lin’s strategy of avoidance on the midterm test was that it sidestepped one of the major learning objectives of the Study Writing class—teaching students to write from sources.

Fortunately, Lin’s devastation over receiving a zero on her assignment and her strategy of avoidance did not seem to last long. For some students, receiving a zero on an assignment could be a crushing blow to their confidence and motivation; however, Lin was not this type of student. In order to keep moving forward in her learning, Lin had to figure out
Table 26 – Textual Analysis of Lin’s Midterm Test and Final Exam Essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Midterm Test Essay</th>
<th>Final Exam Essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copied words</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>89 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrased words</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarized words</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quoted words</td>
<td>17 (2%)</td>
<td>20 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Original” words</td>
<td>757 (98%)</td>
<td>677 (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total words in essay</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of in-text citations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of references at end</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

how to push herself beyond the devastating zero she received on the essay assignment. It seems there were several factors that allowed Lin to do this.

One strategy that Lin used to move beyond the zero was to maintain a positive view of her own writing skills. This bolstered her belief that she could salvage her grade in Study Writing by getting good marks on her other assignments. She said:

Maybe after next time I can get high marks. I can equal this because I got zero so I lost 10% and I think after this I can get high mark. I can equal it if next part I can get 70 or 80%. … I think I can get, because I think my writing is not very poor so I think I can pass this paper and I say I can do better.

The essay assignment was worth 10% of the total class grade, and receiving a zero on it would undoubtedly have a negative impact on Lin’s final grade. However, Lin was a good student, which was reflected in her concern about doing well in the class, and she was determined to overcome the odds and earn a good grade in the class. Aiming for 70 to 80% on her assignments was a lofty goal when “all of [Lin’s] classmates” thought the teacher was
“very strict” with her marking. Lin explained, “[The teacher] don’t give [the students] the very high mark, just nearly pass by like the 5% or 6% like this.”

Not only was Lin able to maintain a measure of confidence in her own writing, but it she also preferred to look forward rather than backwards in her studies. In the third process interview, Lin showed excitement and enthusiasm for the next writing assignment, a report. Even though she had written two reports previously, she had never written one completely on her own and she was looking forward to that challenge. She showed a little trepidation combined with enthusiasm for the unknown when she said, “maybe it is difficult, but I want to try.” Even though she had just received a zero on her previous assignment, she was still able to be excited about the next writing assignment.

Six weeks after receiving a 0% on her argument essay, Lin took the final exam for the course and demonstrated clear improvement with her use of sources (see Table 26). The final exam was almost the same as the midterm test except it had a different question and required five different sources. Lin’s essay contained five sources with in-text citations for each. Most of her source use was either properly quoted or adequately paraphrased text. Although there were also a couple of instances of inappropriate textual borrowing, these were minor compared to the other instances of source use in her final exam and most of the borrowed text came from the essay task itself rather than the articles. Overall, Lin’s final exam essay showed improvement in transforming source texts and incorporating them into an essay in appropriate ways.

Although Lin initially adopted an avoidance strategy as a reaction against the punitive response to her plagiarism, the fact that she earned “Bs” on all of her subsequent assignments suggests that she fortunately did not continue with this strategy for long. And Lin’s final exam showed no signs of an avoidance strategy. Therefore, it seems that although the immediate impact of the punitive response was dramatically negative, there did not seem to
be any lasting negative effects, which was perhaps due to Lin’s desire to be a good student and determination to pass the course.

Therefore, one could argue that the punitive response was effective in eliminating plagiarism from Lin’s writing because her writing subsequent to the punitive response was acceptable. However, this conclusion assumes that the purpose of a punitive response is solely to eliminate plagiarism without regard to any possible collateral damage to the student’s self-confidence, motivation, or education that may occur in the process. The data from this study do not show how much improvement Lin may have made had the teacher tried an alternative response to Lin’s plagiarism. Therefore, focusing solely on the issue of eliminating plagiarism, the data suggest that the punitive response to Lin’s plagiarism was effective in eliminating plagiarism from Lin’s writing. But as educators, our circle of concern certainly includes much more than simply eliminating plagiarism. Thus, I offer this conclusion with great hesitation.

6.5.3.2 – Jason

Jason’s plagiarism was a bit different from Lin’s because he had used text from a previous assignment rather than copy text from another author. If the purpose of the punitive response to Jason’s plagiarism was to prevent Jason from recycling his assignments, it seemed to be effective. Jason admitted that he was “not often with this ways to do [his] assignment.” When I asked Jason if this experience in Study Writing would change the way he wrote in his other classes, he responded, “Yeah, …[because] I don’t want to get zero.” He then added, “Even the teacher agree with these ways, but if I can’t write enough, I never do this,” showing that receiving a zero had discouraged him from using his previous assignments as a way to boost the word count in a paper.

Throughout the rest of the semester in Study Writing, Jason did not again borrow from a previous assignment to write the other assignments for the class. The passing marks he
received on all the subsequent assignments along with a passing grade for the course were evidence of that. Therefore, it seems that if the purpose of the punitive response to Jason’s plagiarism was to preclude his recycling previous assignments, then the punitive response was effective. However, I again offer this conclusion with hesitation because I did not collect data that could have revealed any possibly negative side effects to the punitive response.

6.6 – Summary

This chapter has attempted to answer the third research question: What factors contribute to a participant producing a final written product that the teacher or the institution considered plagiarized? It has suggested that there were ten factors that seemed to contribute to a participant’s plagiarism, and these factors can be divided into two categories.

First, there were two factors that describe how plagiarism was operationalized for marking the argument essay. One was copying more than a threshold level of text from another author into the text of an essay. The other was copying one’s own text from a previous assignment.

The other eight were explanatory factors that led to plagiarism. They were: 1) copying text without properly quoting and citing it, 2) not sufficiently paraphrasing text from other sources, 3) not amply attributing to other sources material used within the essay, 4) a mismatch between the teacher’s and participant’s purposes for the essay, 5) the paradoxical class plagiarism policy that both encouraged and discouraged textual borrowing, 6) the participants’ feeling overwhelmed by and becoming over-focused on the minimum word requirement, 7) the requirement to find and use sources for which participants had very little to no language support, and 8) limited second language proficiency, which seemed to underlie many of the previous factors and thus seemed to contribute to a participant’s plagiarism.

It does not seem that any one of these ten factors unilaterally resulted in plagiarism, but each factor seemed to have a different and varied influence on the teacher’s decision
regarding plagiarism. Unfortunately, the data from this study was not dynamic enough to
determine a weighted influence for each factor.

This chapter also explored three other issues raised by the plagiarism data: the
participants’ intentions, their feelings of injustice, and the efficacy of the punitive response to
their plagiarism. It seemed that neither Lin nor Jason were attempting to subvert the learning
process through intentional acts of academic dishonesty thus casting doubt on the
appropriateness of the zero marks given to them for their essays. Lin was surprised and
shocked at receiving zero marks because: a) she made an honest effort to complete the
assignment, b) she felt the zero marks violated the marking schedule, and c) she perceived
that another classmate had gotten away with his legitimate plagiarism without punishment.
Jason was frustrated at receiving a zero because he felt plagiarism was using another author’s
words without attribution, yet he had used his own words and done his own work. Although
the punitive response (giving Lin and Jason zero on the assignment) seemed to be effective at
stopping Lin and Jason’s plagiaristic behavior, it is not known what kind of other damage
may have occurred to Lin and Jason’s self-confidence, progress as academic writers, and
overall education as a result of giving them zeros on their essay assignments.
7.1 – Introduction

This study investigated the processes and contexts of four Chinese students engaged in an academic English writing-from-readings argument essay task at a small tertiary college in New Zealand. The task was part of the required academic writing course students take during their first semester of study. The task required the participants to cite five different sources within a 1500-word essay that argued whether or not abortion is selfish. It covered two-and-a-half weeks during which the participants attended eight class sessions and wrote three drafts. The teacher read and made written comments on the first draft. The participants used the second draft for an in-class peer review session. And the participants submitted the final draft to the website turnitin.com, which scans papers for potentially plagiarized text, for evaluation by the teacher.

There were several reasons that led me to conduct this study. First, I have long been interested in the skill of writing in English as a second language because writing is such a foundational skill for completing any kind of educational qualification. All L2 students interested in completing a degree at an English-medium school must learn to write well. Second, I am interested in the skill because of its complexity. Academic writing in an L2 involves the interaction of numerous cognitive, social, cultural and psychological factors. Third, many of the writing assignments teachers give in higher education classes are writing-from-sources. While there has been some research on L2 writing-from-sources, there has not been enough to clearly uncover all of the challenges that writing-from-sources tasks present to L2 students in higher education. Thus, I undertook this research.

In order to study the participants’ reading and writing processes, I used an ethnographic approach. I conducted a pre- and post-semester interviews to gain a broad
perspective on the participants’ experiences over the semester. I also interviewed each participant three times over the two-and-a-half weeks of writing the argument essay. In addition to the interviews, I observed the class three times at key points in the writing process. And I also collected written artifacts such as essay drafts, readings, and classroom handouts.

I chose to use an ethnographic approach because much of the previous writing process research has been conducted in laboratory settings. This type of setting precludes the interaction of the writing process with contextual factors such as classroom interactions, an extended time period, and motivation derived from short- and long-term academic goals. Rather than obtain a strictly cognitive account through laboratory measures, I wanted to know if students thought about their essays as they went about their everyday activities, and what the effect of shared classroom interactions were on individuals and their writing. Using an ethnographic approach allowed me to combine the contextual factors with the cognitive.

There were three questions that guided my data collection and analysis. The initial research question was: What is the nature of individual L2 students’ experiences when engaged in a writing-from-sources task within an intensive academic writing course? After collecting the data and creating case studies of the four participants, two more questions emerged that warranted further attention and study within the data. Those two questions were: What factors influenced the participants’ representations of the assignment task throughout the process of writing, and what factors contributed to a participant producing a final written product that the teacher or the institution considered plagiarized?

In order to answer these research questions, I conducted several different analyses. For the first research question, I created for each participant an event listing, which was a chronology of events over the time period of the essay. This involved comparing a list of the major events in the writing process, which each participant created after completing the essay, with time cues and related events in the interviews and evidence in the drafts. For the second research question, I coded the interviews to identify the various elements of each participant’s
cognitive representation of the assignment task. I also created an analysis process for identifying how closely a participant’s text paralleled the source texts he or she used. And I also conducted a genre analysis on each draft to see how closely the participants adhered to the academic essay genre. For the third research question, I used a combination of all of the above analyses processes to identify factors that led to a plagiaristic outcome with two of the participants. Below is a summary of the main findings that came out of these various analyses.

7.2 – Summary of Main Findings

In order to provide a better backdrop from which to interpret the main findings from this study, this section begins with a brief description of the context from which the data was collected. Following the description, the results from the analysis of the case studies, task representation, and plagiarism are presented.

7.2.1 – Description of the Study Writing Course and Context

Study Writing was an academic writing preparation course required of all new students at AIS. Classroom instruction during the course covered a variety of topics and skills associated with academic writing. Specifically, for the argument essay assignment examined in this research report, the instruction could be grouped into three categories: features of an argument essay, gathering content, and organizing content within the essay. When discussing the features of an argument essay, the teacher presented the essay structure as introduction, body and conclusion, and repeatedly discussed specific essay elements such as a thesis statement, topic sentences, supporting ideas, and counterarguments. The teacher also gave instruction on grammar correction. For instruction on gathering content, the teacher conducted activities that activated the students’ prior knowledge and supported their comprehension of the source articles distributed to the class. And to teach the students to
organize content within their essays, the teacher analyzed with the class two example essays, one was a 5-paragraph essay just prior to the argument essay assignment and the other was a first draft of the essay written by Jenny, a student in the class and a participant in this research.

During the course of the essay assignment, the students wrote three drafts. Prior to composing the first draft, the students had one-and-a-half weeks of instruction to build their background knowledge on the essay topic, which was to argue whether or not abortion is a selfish choice. Then, the teacher read the students’ first drafts and responded to them by writing comments on the drafts. Students had two days to use the teacher’s comments to revise their essays and bring a second draft for a peer review session in class, after which the students had a weekend to revise again and submit their final draft of the essay for evaluation.

7.2.2 – Case Studies

The case studies showed that there were both similarities and differences in the four participants’ experiences while writing the argument essay. Variations in the participants’ experiences grew out of their individual differences such as motivation, class attendance, amount and type of feedback from the teacher on essay drafts, L2 proficiency, both distant past and recent writing experiences, self-image of writing abilities, writing expertise, and reading skills. These individual differences caused variations in participants’ representations of the assignment task, the amount of time and effort expended on gathering information and composing the essay, the depth of reading comprehension, the extent to which information from the source texts was paraphrased and reformulated in the essay drafts, and the strategies used during the writing process.

Despite these variations among the four participants, the case studies showed that the participants’ experiences while writing the argument essay were similar in many ways. The writing-from-sources task required that the participants rely on their reading skills to obtain
content for their essays. Although the class discussions supported the participants’ reading of the class articles, the requirement to use additional sources made the participants depend on their individual reading skills for gathering information from these sources. The process of gathering information from sources was tied to the decisions the participants made about which side of the issue to argue in their essays. These decisions were also tied to the rhetorical purpose each participant attached to the essay and the organizing plan each participant used to structure the essay’s content.

Perhaps the essence of the experience for these four participants was that writing from sources was a very complex process that required the orchestration of many skills and strategies. This certainly validated Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1983) statement that “writing a long essay is probably the most complex constructive act that most human beings are ever expected to perform” (p. 20). And it showed that writing about one’s learning in content courses is perhaps one of the most complex interactions students can have with the course’s content.

7.2.3 – Task Representation

The analysis of the participants’ task representations showed that their representations of the essay task could be divided into two categories: formal schematic and content schematic aspects of the writing task. The formal schematic aspects dealt with issues such as organization, formatting, and length of the essay text. Although the participants had all received the same assignment and in-class instructions for writing the essay, their initial representations of the formal schematic requirements of the task were all different in various respects. The most dramatic difference was with Andy, who thought the assignment required him to summarize the articles given to him in class and then react to those articles. The other three participants understood that the assignment was to write an argumentative essay that required the use of examples, support, and counterarguments. However, these three
participants too showed variation in their task representations in areas such as essay length, number of paragraphs, and use of quotations in the text.

The content schematic aspects of the text dealt with participants’ knowledge of the topic and content of the essay. The analysis showed that not only did the participants likely have limited exposure to the topic of abortion prior to the essay assignment, but also they struggled to understand how the concept of selfishness within the essay task was related to the topic of abortion. The participants seemed to equate the pro-life/pro-choice dichotomy with the selfish/not-selfish distinction. In other words, the participants believed that arguing for a pro-choice position was the same as arguing that abortion is not selfish and arguing for a pro-life position was the same as arguing that abortion was selfish. The combined problems of limited background knowledge and misunderstanding the relationship of selfishness to abortion led to difficulties with reading comprehension, which was a major concern to the participants because the assignment required them to use source texts to obtain content for their essays. Thus, generating content was the most difficult aspect of the argument essay assignment for the participants.

The purpose of the task representation investigation was to uncover factors that influenced the development of the participants’ task representations, and I identified fourteen such factors that grouped into four distinct categories: historical, teacher, other-people, and writing process factors. Historical factors were any writing experiences the participants had prior to the argument essay assignment regardless of whether those experiences were in the recent or distant past. The historical factors had the most prevalent influence during the beginning stages of task representation creation. The participants would relate the argument essay task to past writing experiences and borrow from those previous task representations in order to construct a new and unique initial representation of the argument essay task.

The teacher was a constant influence on the participants’ representations of the task. Through classroom interactions, written comments on the participants’ essay drafts, and
focused instruction in class, the teacher influenced the participants to alter their representations of the assignment task. People other than the teacher also helped the participants see the assignment task from new perspectives and caused the participants to reflect on their representations and at times change them. Both the teacher and other people were influential throughout the writing process; however, of the two, the teacher seemed to have the biggest impact on the participants’ task representations because the participants understood that the teacher was the audience for the essays and they, therefore, needed to match their representations of the task to the teacher’s expectations.

The writing process also played a role in shaping the participants’ representations of the assignment task. The writing process can affect the task representation because the reality of composing the essay in concrete form can reveal unanticipated problems with the task representation, which then necessitates a revision of the task representation. For example, Lin planned to write a 5-paragraph essay, but while trying to add content to her essay in order to meet the minimum word requirement, she realized that the new content she was adding did not fit within any of the three existing body paragraphs. Consequently, Lin altered her task representation to accommodate a 6-paragraph essay. The writing process factors seemed to have the strongest effect on the participants’ task representations towards the second half of the writing process, or at least after writing a first draft.

7.2.4 – Plagiarism

Two of the participants in this study, Lin and Jason, received zero marks on their argument essays because of plagiarism. Lin had copied into her essay approximately 250 words from a webpage. Even though she attempted to paraphrase portions of this copied text, the changes she made were not sufficient to prevent her paper from receiving zero marks for plagiarism. The nature of Jason’s plagiarism, however, was different from Lin’s. Jason borrowed approximately 40% of the text in his essay from a paper he wrote for Study Writing.
while taking the class during the previous semester. He made very few changes to this text although he did attempt to integrate it into the portion that he had newly written for the argument essay assignment. Because using a previous assignment was considered plagiarism, Jason received zero marks for his essay even though he had written all of the text himself.

The results of the plagiarism analyses revealed a number of factors that led to Lin’s and Jason’s plagiarism. Two factors described how the teacher operationalized plagiarism for marking the argument essays: copying a threshold level of unattributed text from other authors into one’s own essay and copying sections of a previous assignment into the current essay. And other factors explained circumstances that led to plagiarism. These factors were not sufficiently paraphrasing, quoting, and citing sources within the essay, a difference between the participants’ and the teacher’s purposes for the essay, weaknesses in the class plagiarism policy, an ambitious minimum word requirement, the need to use source texts for which participants did not have sufficient comprehension support, and a lack of L2 proficiency in the participants. None of these factors functioned unilaterally to create a plagiaristic result. Rather, it seemed to be the combination of factors that resulted in a plagiaristic outcome.

The results also indicated that the teacher’s punitive response to Lin and Jason’s plagiarism—giving them both zero marks on the essay assignment—did not match Lin and Jason’s intentions. Neither Lin nor Jason was being willfully dishonest in an attempt to subvert the writing assignment. Rather, both Lin and Jason were actively engaged in the assignment throughout the two-and-a-half weeks of the argument essay. Lin and Jason felt the zero marks they received on their essays were unfair because of their efforts to fulfill the assignment. Additionally, Lin felt the zero marks did not follow the predetermined marking schedule and she believed another classmate had gotten away with copying her assignment without penalty, which made her zero marks even more unjust in her mind. And Jason believed that he had used his own words, just as the assignment had required.
The data showed that Lin and Jason eliminated in subsequent assignments copying from other sources into their writing, possibly as a result of receiving zero marks on the essay assignment. However, the data did not reveal any damage that may have occurred to Lin’s and Jason’s self confidence as writers or the potential lost learning opportunities that could have resulted from receiving zero marks. It is possible to conclude that punitive responses to plagiarism in these cases were effective; however, it is unknown what price was paid to achieve this, and it is possible that the same outcome could have been achieved by different, and possibly less costly, means.

7.3 – Implications Towards a Theory of L2 Writing

Currently, there is no comprehensive theory of L2 writing. There are a few distinctly L1 theories of writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 1996), but none of these consider some of the unique challenges of L2 writing (see Silva, 1993; Silva, Leki, & Carson, 1997). In explaining what a descriptive theory of the L2 writing construct would entail, Grabe (2001a) states that three of the goals of such a theory would be to “describe what writing is; how it is carried out as a set of mental processes…[and] how it leads to individual differences in performance” (p. 41). This research has something to contribute toward these goals for a distinctly L2 theory of the writing construct.

One goal for a descriptive theory of the L2 writing construct would be to describe what writing is, which would also entail describing what writing is not. Part of this process would involve delineating the boundary between reading and writing because reading and writing are considered two separate and distinct constructs. There are several types of reading that are already considered writing processes—for example, reading to revise one’s own text and reading an assignment task sheet distributed by a teacher. Hayes (1996) includes both of these processes within his descriptive theory of L2 writing. He also suggests that reading source texts to supply content information for writing is a “central process in writing” (p. 18),
and he cites several studies where problems with reading lead to inadequate or inaccurate writing. Thus, reading can be included as a critical component of the writing process. Because this research project lay on one of the critical boundaries between reading and writing, specifically writing-from-sources tasks, it provides some further insight into how reading can be included within the writing construct.

It seems that within an argumentative writing-from-readings task, such as the one examined in this study, reading to gather information may be a process that can be included within the writing construct. Reading to gather information is a planning process of selecting from source texts information to include in the writing. Planning is a critical process within writing that includes the subcomponent of content planning (Hayes & Nash, 1996). If the writing task stipulates, as it did in this study, that content planning be partially done through reading source texts and selecting information from those texts to include in the writing (the process that I am describing as reading to gather information), then reading is an indispensable part of the writing process—a writer cannot successfully complete the task without performing the process of reading to gather information—and it is thus more likely a process that falls within the writing construct because in this type of situation, reading is used to accomplish specific writing goals and thus is tightly controlled by the writing process.

Examining the planning of different writers can provide another perspective on this point. Although writers vary in how they plan, we can divide them into two basic types of planners, global planners and local planners. Global planners maintain a bird’s-eye view of the whole essay selecting information that fits into the overall scheme. As global planners read source texts to gather information, they evaluate the information’s compatibility with their plan and add suitable information to the content plan. Local planners tend to work point-by-point gathering information that seems to fit within the assigned writing task. Local planners may or may not then evaluate the amassed information to develop an overall direction for the essay and select information that is most appropriate to the overall plan to
include in the essay. Thus, for both global and point-by-point planners within a writing-from-sources task, reading can be an act of selecting information from source texts that matches the writing plan and fulfills the assigned writing task. Although this grossly simplifies the types of planning that can occur, it is sufficient to demonstrate that reading can be a central process within the planning processes for writing and a process that is highly directed by the developing plan for the essay.

Grabe (2001a) also suggested that a descriptive theory of the L2 writing construct describe the various mental processes used to carry out a writing task. These processes would entail general writing processes such as planning, formulating, and revising, as well as some of the more micro processes and strategies that comprise these general processes. One established line of research within L2 writing has examined the effect of variables such as L1 writing expertise and L2 proficiency on L2 writing processes. The general conclusion of this research is that, given a basic L2 proficiency level, L1 writing expertise is the best predictor of L2 writing outcomes and L2 proficiency does not affect the writing processes but facilitates the overall surface quality of the completed text. However, the writing tasks used within this line of research have been writing-from-experience tasks and have not included writing-from-sources tasks. It is possible, therefore, that on writing-from-sources tasks, L2 proficiency may become a stronger predictor of L2 writing outcomes because L2 proficiency is closely tied to L2 reading success.

The results of my research project suggest that if reading is combined within an L2 writing task, L2 proficiency may affect both the writing processes and the written product, particularly if the writer’s L2 proficiency is too low for comprehension of the source texts. Lin is the best example of this. She did not have a high enough L2 proficiency to adequately comprehend the source texts she was using which resulted in writing processes that may have been out of the ordinary for her, specifically copying into her paper a large chunk of text that she barely understood and then attempting to paraphrase it. Andy also provided another
example that supports this conclusion. Andy’s L2 proficiency was very low as demonstrated by the English support stream classes he was taking. However, Andy managed to succeed with the argument essay assignment by only using the class articles and avoiding outside sources that were beyond his ability to comprehend. The outcome may have been different for Andy had he searched outside source texts and used them within his essay. The weakness with this conclusion, however, is that I did not collect from the participants any direct L1 writing data with which to compare the argument essays they produced and their processes for producing them. This conclusion is based on the personal accounts of past writing experiences provided by each participant. Nevertheless, the data suggests that this is a possibility.

Therefore, in considering the role of L2 proficiency within the L2 writing process, a theory of writing would need to take into account the sources of information required to create the text. As outlined previously, we seem to understand the role of L2 proficiency within writing tasks that only require writing from experience or background knowledge. However, when an L2 writer is required to obtain information from other sources, whether textual or aural, L2 proficiency may become a more direct and intervening factor in determining a writer’s success with the task. Although studies have shown that L2 proficiency does not generally predict L2 writing performance when writing from experience, L2 proficiency may have some predictive power of the writing outcome of a writing-from-sources task.

A third goal that Grabe (2001a) suggested for a descriptive theory of L2 writing was to account for individual variations in writing performance. The results of this research indicate that variations in writing performance can be partially accounted for by differences in individuals’ representation of the writing task. There are a number of factors that can shape L2 writers’ representations of the writing task and have an effect on the form and content of the final written product. At the end of chapter 5, I presented a tentative theory of task
representation in L2 writing that attempts to describe the L2 task representation process. The main feature of this tentative theory is that the writer can be heavily influenced by social and environmental factors surrounding the context of writing. Because a writer’s representation of the task has such a powerful influence on the writing process and the written product, a descriptive theory of L2 writing would need to account for these social and environmental factors.

A descriptive theory of L2 writing would therefore need to account for the role of reading within writing, with a specific focus on writing tasks that require the use of source texts for successful completion. It would need to explain the role of L2 proficiency, particularly within a writing construct that contains a more clearly delineated view of the role of reading within writing. And it would need to consider the various influences on a writer’s task representation in order to explicate differences between individuals and their texts.

7.4 – Local Pedagogical Implications

This section offers pedagogical implications specific to the Study Writing context from which the data were taken.

7.4.1 – Things that Worked Well with the Argument Essay Assignment

There were three things that occurred during the course of the argument essay assignment that seemed to be particularly beneficial to the participants in this study.

7.4.1.1 – Reading Comprehension Support for Class Articles

The first was the reading comprehension support the teacher gave the participants. The teacher conducted class activities that allowed the participants to share their ideas and understandings of the class articles with other students in the class and she also incorporated the ideas from the articles into many other class discussions. The result was the participants
developed a deeper understanding of the class articles and were able to integrate information and ideas from the class articles into their essays. In fact, the class articles were better paraphrased and better integrated into the participants’ essays than any of the source texts the participants found on their own.

7.4.1.2 – Writing Multiple Drafts

Second, writing multiple drafts of the assignment was particularly beneficial to the participants and worked well. The participants’ first drafts all diverged from the assignment task in some way. The multiple drafting process gave the participants the opportunity to create more appropriate and accurate task representations and then revise their texts so that they reflected the modified task representations.

7.4.1.3 – Teacher’s Feedback

And third, the teacher’s written comments on the participants’ first drafts were effective at correcting problems in the participants’ task representations. Andy was the prime example of this. His first draft was a summary and reaction rather than an argument essay. However, because of the teacher’s written comments on his first draft, he recognized his mistake and made a significant adjustment to his second draft that brought his paper closely in line with the assignment task. Also, both Lin and Jenny initially realized through the teacher’s written comments that the teacher wanted them to put the topic sentences first in each body paragraph, and each of them made the appropriate corrections to their subsequent drafts.

7.4.2 – Problems and Possible Solutions

There were numerous problems this research identified with the argument essay assignment. The following section explains these problems and offers some possible solutions to them within the Study Writing class context.
7.4.2.1 – Task Difficulty

The most overarching and far-reaching problem was the task itself. It was simply too difficult for the participants. (It is important to note that the choice of prompt for the essay was a program-level decision and not determined by the researcher or the teacher.) The participants struggled to construct a schema that accounted for the relationships between abortion and selfishness. The 1500-word requirement was too high when compared to the participants’ experience with writing English academic essays and the short two-and-a-half week time period for completing it, and it caused unnecessary anxiety in some of the participants. Finding multiple source texts beyond the class articles proved complicated and time-consuming. And abortion was not a topic the participants were interested in writing about. All of these factors combined with the participants’ generally low English proficiency meant that the task was overwhelmingly difficult.

The solutions to the argument essay task’s complexity seem relatively simple. First, the essay topic needed to be more familiar and interesting to the students. Abortion was not a topic that was socioculturally connected to the participants, and thus, it did not produce the emotionally charged argumentative stances commonly elicited from students embedded in the local culture. Perhaps surveying the students on their interests would have yielded a more suitable topic. Or, at least surveying the students at the end of the previous semester and using those results to create the topic and assignments for the current semester would have been better than not surveying the students at all. Second, the essay question needed to incorporate more general, less complex concepts. The goal of the class was not to teach content but to develop writing-from-sources skills. The content was only a means to an end. Therefore, the task should have been on a simple enough conceptual level so that students could have focused most of their energy on writing rather than comprehending the content. If we assume that abortion was an interesting topic to the students, perhaps an essay question such as
“Which side of the abortion debate (pro-life or pro-choice) do you agree with and why?” would have been at a more basic and appropriate conceptual level. And third, reducing the minimum word requirement to somewhere between 1000 and 1200 words would have ensured students had a reasonable essay length in mind and may have eased some of their writing anxiety.

7.4.2.2 – No Reading Comprehension Support for Outside Sources

One of the major sub-tasks for the argument essay was obtaining content from source texts. Obtaining content from sources other than the class articles was difficult because the participants did not have any kind of comprehension support for these texts. The participants generally searched the Internet, but their low comprehension of these articles caused them to rely on sources for which they previously had support and had built at least a basic comprehension. These sources were, specifically, the Sloan article and the diagnostic test articles. As evidence of the comprehension difficulties the Internet and other outside sources posed, information from the outside source texts the participants used in their essays was less integrated and less adequately paraphrased than information from the class articles.

There are a couple of solutions that may have alleviated the problems with using outside sources. If the course goal was to teach writing skills rather than content on abortion, then the assignment task could have utilized the diagnostic test and previous assignment articles because the students would have already built background knowledge and understanding of these articles. Thus, students could have focused on incorporating sources within their writing rather than worrying about locating outside sources and building a basic comprehension of them. However, if the purpose of having students locate outside sources was to give them experience with finding sources, redesigning the whole task so that it utilized less complex content would have been the best option. An easier task would have
allowed the participants to find simpler source texts that would have likely been more easily comprehensible.

7.4.2.3 – Issues With Plagiarism

One problem that contributed to serious consequences against Lin’s and Jason’s marks for the essay assignment was that plagiarism was not clearly defined. The general rule was that papers receiving more than a 10% similarity rating through turnitin.com would be considered plagiarized. However, this rule did not define what plagiarism was so that the participants could effectively avoid it. This definition explained nothing about the extent to which passages had to be paraphrased, as in Lin’s case, or the acceptability of using pieces of a past assignment, as in Jason’s case.

Another problem was the inappropriate responses to Lin’s and Jason’s plagiarism. The data showed that neither Lin nor Jason had any deceptive or malicious intent associated with their plagiarism. Their plagiarism seemed to be the consequence of low skills and misunderstanding. The punitive response—zero marks on the essay assignment—seemed more appropriate for students who had tried to deceptively shortcut and undermine the assignment.

Perhaps the best solution to these plagiarism issues would have been to have a comprehensive institutional plagiarism policy in place. Such a policy would describe causes of plagiarism and methods for teachers to ascertain the cause in individual plagiarism cases. It would provide multiple suggestions to help students avoid plagiarism. It might give examples of plagiaristic writing and correct writing. And it would outline the possible range of consequences for writing that contains plagiarism. If AIS had such a comprehensive plagiarism policy, the teacher could have spent time in class helping the students to better understand plagiarism. Then, Lin and Jason could have better focused their efforts on
producing an essay that was acceptable and, in the end, probably made better improvements in their writing skills.

7.4.3 – A Comment on the Use of the Traditional Academic Essay

Genre studies have helped uncover the myth of the ubiquity of the academic essay genre (K. Hyland, 2004; Johns, 1997, 2002) and genre proponents have taken issue with teachers that reduce academic writing to following a few formulaic constructions. When viewed from this perspective, one could easily take issue with the teacher and the program for subjecting the participants to such outdated pedagogy. Even the participants themselves recognized the limited range of usefulness for the genre they were producing for this assignment. Both Lin and Jason explicitly noted during the interviews the absence of the academic essay in their other classes.

However, it is worth noting that the argument essay was one of four assignments given during the course, the other three being a critique of an article, a report on aspects of various models of computers, and a research paper that utilized survey data. All four assignments were added to the Study Writing curriculum after conducting a needs analysis, which involved collecting writing assignments given by the regular content faculty at AIS. Thus, the persuasive essay was not simply an off-the-shelf selection but was, in fact, connected to future writing skill needs at AIS.

Unfortunately, as noted in a later section (7.6 – Limitations), I did not collect interview data from the teacher to gain her perspective. I, therefore, cannot draw conclusions regarding the reasons behind her methodological choices to use the 5-paragraph essay and its related features to teach the argument essay. However, from my interactions with the teacher I can surmise that, as with many teachers, limited time constrained her ability to add new techniques to her teaching repertoire, which could have moved her more towards a more modern teaching pedagogy. From my observations with the class and interactions with other
Study Writing students, I can also surmise that the teacher perceived that the writing task was complex for the students and thus she tried to simplify the task by offering 5-paragraph essay formula as a guide for the students.

7.5 – Implications for Similar Courses and Writing Situations

This section provides pedagogical implications for other contexts similar to the context of this study. The reader should be aware that the qualitative nature of this research and its small sample size means that the following suggestions are presented cautiously. For environments very different from the context of this study, the implications may serve well as suggestions for further research.

7.5.1 – Effect of Task Design on Students’ Performance

This study showed that the design of a task can have a powerful impact on students’ performance. Tasks that are too complex, such as the one in this study, can affect anxiety levels and focus students on specific, and possibly less important, aspects of the task, such as what happened with Lin and Jason overly focusing on the minimum word requirement in this study. Tasks need to be carefully designed with consideration for the students’ L2 proficiency and, in assignments similar to the one in this study, students’ personal interests in mind. Targeting a level of L2 proficiency that challenges students’ abilities without overwhelming the students is important to facilitate the gathering, comprehension, and synthesis of information from sources and the subsequent use of that information in crafting a piece of writing. And incorporating the students’ personal interests can increase motivation and engagement in the assignment.

Although it would be nice to offer a list of guiding principles derived from this research for designing writing tasks, this is not possible because the data from this study did not cover a range of tasks and factors that influence the task. What does emerge from the data,
however, is that designing effective writing tasks is dependent on the context. The type of writing task a teacher assigns depends on the desired learning outcomes. Most teachers design writing tasks with specific students in mind and adjust the difficulty of the task to fit the students. Some groups of students are more academically advanced than others and thus require more complex tasks to promote learning. Some groups of students are filled with limited L2 proficient students who need less complex tasks so that they can deal with the language difficulties they will encounter. Some groups of students are small allowing the teacher to play a significantly greater facilitating role, which may permit more complex tasks. Other groups of students may be overwhelmingly large precluding any teacher involvement on an individual level, which would necessitate less complex tasks so that the students could work more independently.

Despite this milieu of contextual factors that can affect writing task design, the best this research has to offer to the general audience is to remind writing task designers to carefully consider within their own unique contexts the students’ L2 proficiency, the students’ personal interests, and the feasibility of successfully completing the assignment within length of time allotted.

7.5.2 – Writing Multiple Drafts

Writing research has shown that intervention during the writing process, rather than after it, is the most effective at producing changes in students’ writing (Ferris, 2003). In order to allow for intervention within the writing process, students need to compose more than one draft of the assignment. And this research project showed that having students write multiple drafts of an assignment can yield big improvements in the writing quality of the final draft, particularly because of the opportunity it gave the participants to readjust their task representations so that they were more appropriately aligned with the assignment task. Thus, teachers of content courses that employ writing-from-readings assignments may want to
consider requiring the students to write multiple drafts as a means for improving the quality of the writing assignments they collect from their students.

Although writing teachers are generally accustomed to collecting multiple drafts of students’ writing, there are a number of aspects about this suggestion to collect multiple drafts that could make most content teachers uncomfortable. One is that many content teachers do not have time to collect preliminary drafts from their students and respond to them. This is a fair comment given the heavy time commitment required to read and respond to students’ writing. However, such an extensive time commitment may not be necessary. There are several things teachers could do to improve their students’ writing within the drafting process.

First, a teacher could collect a preliminary draft from students and skim through them to identify any general discrepancies between the form and content of the papers and those required by the task. Making a few general comments to the class may be enough to realign the students’ representations of the task, which could result in a marked improvement in the final drafts of the assignment. This research showed that the teacher had the most powerful influence over the participants’ task representations, and any input from a teacher is likely to yield changes and improvements in students’ writing.

Second, a teacher could have students bring a preliminary draft to class and conduct a simple peer review session on one another’s papers. This would allow the teacher time to skim through some of the students’ papers while they are engaged in the peer review in order to make any necessary general comments to the class. It would also allow students to negotiate with each other their representations of the task. Comparing task representations could cause students to notice problems in their own task representation and make the necessary corrections because this research showed that students do alter their task representations based on interactions with classmates. This is precisely what happened with Andy during the in-class discussion of the class articles and with Jenny during the peer review session.
Third, it may be enough simply to collect a preliminary draft and give students credit for handing it in. This method may have a smaller effect than the previous methods for producing changes in the students’ task representations because it would not necessarily prompt from the teacher or other students any contextual cues that may highlight problems in the student’s representation of the task. However, this method would help activate any writing process factors that could have an effect on the students’ task representations. Producing an early draft of an assignment obliges the students to formulate an initial task representation and compose a corresponding draft. This, then, would give students time before composing a final draft to reflect on their task representations, compare their representations with the first drafts, and attempt to correct any discrepancies.

Another potentially troubling aspect of the suggestion to collect multiple drafts of an assignment is that content teachers do not generally believe it is their job to teach writing. This was certainly the case at AIS, where this research was conducted, and is possibly true with content teachers at other schools. Most content teachers at AIS believed that teaching writing was the writing teachers’ responsibility, and teaching subject areas such as accounting, marketing, linguistics, intercultural communication, and any subject other than writing was the content teachers’ responsibility. They made a distinct separation between the two. However, most content teachers at AIS also frequently complained about the low quality of the students’ writing in their classes yet failed to recognize that they could do anything to support their students’ writing. My suggestion here is that if these content teachers would like to see better student writing in the assignments they are asking students to do within their classes, then they need to do something to help support their students’ writing within each of their courses. Learning to write is a longitudinal process and most students cannot build in a single semester of intensive writing instruction the writing skills they need to be immediately successful in all of their subsequent content classes. Therefore, if content teachers would like
higher quality written assignments from their students, then supporting the writing process through collecting multiple drafts can be an efficient and effective way of doing this.

7.5.3 – Teacher’s Written Comments

Writing comments on students’ preliminary drafts can be an effective way to adjust students’ representations of the assignment task. Although the literature on teacher’s written comments on students’ writing is vast and at times contradictory (Ferris, 2003; Goldstein, 2001), the research project reported on here suggested that students pay attention to a teacher’s written comments on their preliminary drafts and utilize those comments when making revisions. Writing comments is a time-intensive effort that writing teachers have long believed produces changes in students’ writing. This research suggests that a teacher’s written comments are very effective at readjusting a student’s task representation and creating change in a subsequent draft.

As with the above implication on writing multiple drafts, this implication not only applies to writing teachers but to content teachers as well. If content teachers are interested in receiving from their students better written assignments, then writing comments on the students’ preliminary drafts can be effective. Although it is a time-consuming process, it perhaps has the largest payoff.

7.5.4 – Reading Support

The skills of reading and writing cannot be separated in a writing-from-sources assignment. They exist in a sort of symbiotic relationship: writing provides the focus and purpose for reading and reading provides the content for writing. This study showed the consequences to writing when reading comprehension breaks down. The participants in this study needed reading comprehension support of source texts in order to effectively and appropriate integrate the sources into their own essays.
The pedagogical implication for other courses is that teachers who give writing-from-sources assignments to L2 students may need to provide comprehension support for those texts. This support can be as simple as reviewing the main ideas of a text or discussing the author’s point of view in class. Without such support, L2 students with limited L2 proficiency may not be able to build sufficient comprehension resulting in inadequate paraphrasing and inappropriate use of those texts.

Insufficient comprehension is a particular danger for source texts that L2 students have located themselves. Self-selected texts do not ensure adequate comprehension, as was certainly the case with Lin. For writing assignments that require students to find their own source texts, it is impossible for the teacher to provide comprehension support for every text. However, the teacher could review strategies for selecting texts that are at an appropriate level of difficulty. For example, to ensure a student has adequate vocabulary knowledge to comprehend a text, the student should understand 19 out of 20 words in the text. A lower ratio will result in drastically reduced comprehension (Nation, 1997). When appropriate to the course context and writing assignment, the teacher could also provide the students with some guidance on where to find easier texts related to the writing topic. This could be in a section of the library containing overview or introductory texts on a topic, which are generally easier to understand because they assume little to no background knowledge on the topic, or the juvenile section of the library, where students can find texts using simpler vocabulary and syntax making them more accessible.

7.5.5 – Preventing Plagiarism

Writing from sources is a complex activity and necessitates that both students and teachers co-navigate the rugged landscape of text appropriation and intertextuality. Within this study, neither Lin nor Jason intentionally crossed the boundary of acceptable writing practices, and their cases raised the critical question of how to prevent plagiarism. There are
three areas that we can focus on to help our students prevent plagiarism: building knowledge, building skills, and building L2 proficiency.

7.5.5.1 – Building Knowledge

A logical place to begin building students’ knowledge of plagiarism is to define what plagiarism is so that it is easily identified. However, this is what makes plagiarism such an illusive issue with which to deal. There is widespread disagreement of what plagiarism is and how to identify it (Deckert, 1993, 1994; Pennycook, 1994; Sutherland-Smith, 2005). Some people have suggested in the wake of these disagreements that we abandon the attempt to define plagiarism and focus, rather, on the underlying causes (Chandrasoma, Thompson, & Pennycook, 2004; Howard, 1999). The hope is that by better understanding the varied and complex causes of plagiarism in the academy, we will shift our focus away from the problematic policing of plagiarism more toward understanding the learning process that occurs through writing (Howard, 2002).

Some of the underlying causes of plagiarism were discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review, and included patchwriting (a developmental stage in learning to write from sources), creating an authorial identity, and cultural differences in acceptable writing practices. Although academic dishonesty can also be an underlying cause of plagiarism, it is frequently generalized to all cases of plagiarism, and one of the barriers to building a better understanding of plagiarism has been reversing this inclination. Therefore, part of building teachers’ and students’ knowledge of plagiarism is helping teachers and students understand that plagiarism can have numerous causes that are much broader and more diverse than simple academic dishonesty.

Educating teachers and students about the underlying causes of plagiarism can happen at several levels, and perhaps the most effective is at the institutional policy level. First of all, institutional policies should steer clear of couching plagiarism in moral terms by classifying it
as an act of academic dishonesty. Rather, they can suggest that there are numerous possible causes of plagiarism by offering teachers instruction and guidelines for dealing with individual cases of plagiarism. When investigating a case of plagiarism, the policy can advise teachers to ask questions that can clarify a student’s intentions. For example, did the student plagiarize for personal gain at the expense of others? How familiar is the student with the discourse of the discipline? Was the plagiarism a result of encountering unfamiliar words and concepts? Is the student ignorant of proper citation conventions? Was the student working from readings assigned by the teacher? Answering questions such as these can provide a teacher with a clearer perspective from which to determine the student’s intentions and the cause of the plagiarism.

In addition to mentioning the causes of plagiarism, institutional plagiarism policies can include numerous other elements to educate and instruct teachers and students. Institutional policies can describe elements of the writing process that may lead to a plagiaristic outcome, for example synonym substitution when paraphrasing and patchwriting. They can offer examples of acceptable and unacceptable uses of source texts to provide a guide to students and teachers on the degree of reformulation required in the source text’s language. They might also mention cultural differences in acceptable academic writing practices, for example the Chinese practices of using memorized texts and omitting citations to well-known texts (Bloch & Chi, 1995; Pennycook, 1996). And they can provide guidelines on appropriate ways to respond to individual cases of plagiarism, which would include both pedagogical and punitive responses.

Although institutional plagiarism policies should be individually constructed to suit the unique context of each institution, the literature has produced several examples and critiques of plagiarism policies that follow some of the above suggestions (Howard, 1995; Price, 2002). Perhaps looking at some of these policies will provide further insight into how to construct an institutional plagiarism policy that guides and educates both teachers and
students on the causes of plagiarism and has a net effect of reducing the incidence of plagiarism.

In addition to creating a more effective institutional plagiarism policy, teachers can also conduct brief exercises with their L2 students to further educate them about acceptable academic writing practices. This research did not uncover any specific pedagogical techniques for building students knowledge about plagiarism. However, the growing literature on plagiarism contains some helpful suggestions for building students understanding of plagiarism, many of which may have been effective in helping Lin and Jason avoid plagiarism. For example, Barks and Watts (2001) suggest an activity where students read a list of textual borrowing strategies and then answer whether each practice is acceptable in their native country and then in the L2 environment. The purpose of this activity is to build students’ awareness that there may be differences in acceptable practices between the L1 and L2 contexts. Another example from the same authors is a discussion on authorship and originality that is built on open-ended questions such as: “What percentage of your academic papers consists of original ideas?” and “Have you noticed any differences in the ways you use texts by other authors in your academic writing here in the United States with your writing in your own country?” (p. 255). The purpose of these questions is to highlight the complexity of the plagiarism issue through discussing questions without easy answers. A third example is from Swales and Feak (1994). They offer a list of statements by experts on the purpose of citations in academic writing. There is wide variation in the statements all offering different viewpoints. Students then discuss the statements in order to formulate their own perspectives and gain a depth of understanding into the issue of citation use and plagiarism.

7.5.5.2 – Building Skills

The second component to avoiding plagiarism is building skills. There have been some suggestions in the literature about what skills to teach in order to help students avoid
plagiarism. One of the most frequently mentioned is to teach skills such as paraphrasing and quotation. There is no doubt that these skills are certainly necessary, but they are not sufficient by themselves to prevent plagiarism. One has to wonder whether the teacher in this study, or any other teacher for that matter, would have given Lin full credit if she had fully and properly paraphrased and then cited the chunk of text she copied from the Internet, which still would have resulted in 30-40% of Lin’s paper replicating another author’s essay. Would simply paraphrasing this section make Lin’s paper acceptable? Probably not. Or in Jason’s case, would the teacher have given Jason full credit if he had enclosed in quotation marks the 49% of his essay taken from his previous assignment? Technically, properly using quotation marks and citing the source would have brought Jason’s essay within the bounds of acceptable citation practice. But would any teacher happily accept a student’s paper that is half quoted? This too is doubtful. Therefore, teaching our students proper paraphrasing and quotation skills is necessary, but it is not enough to prevent students from plagiarizing.

It may also be necessary to give our students experience in the processes of summarizing and synthesizing, which are two different and cognitively complex skills. Summarizing involves identifying the most important points within a single text and rewriting those points in a concise manner, most often preserving the organization of the original (Hare, 1992). Synthesizing requires the writer to create a scheme to organize the information across texts, select the relevant information from each text to include in the synthesis, and then build connections between the information to bring coherence to the synthesis (Spivey, 1990). Giving our students practice in these skills may be one essential step to help our students properly manipulate source texts.

Another skill that can help students avoid plagiarism is reading. This is a skill that may be frequently overlooked in relation to plagiarism. Yet, it is a skill that this study clearly showed contributed to Lin’s plagiarism. Paraphrasing skills presuppose a certain degree of reading proficiency because without a basic comprehension of the passage to be paraphrased,
a student simply cannot paraphrase it. Students with low reading comprehension may resort to skills such as synonym substitution, deleting phrases, or reordering sentences, just like Lin did. However, these strategies do not necessarily lead to a true paraphrase of the source, as Lin’s case demonstrated.

In addition to building students’ skills with writing from sources, it may also be necessary for teachers to abandon particular practices when evaluating student texts. One result of this study casts a healthy dose of skepticism over a practice that many teachers of L2 students rely on, which is identifying plagiarism in L2 student papers based on sudden shifts in language. Although it is common to hear teachers of L2 students say that spotting plagiarism in L2 students’ texts is an easy task because of a shift in grammar and vocabulary usage (F. Hyland, 2001), this virtual guesswork is fraught with problems and errors. These shifts may be a natural consequence of using source texts in one’s writing. As students learn to incorporate information and text from other authors into a single document, there may naturally be other voices present in their writing. However, shifts in grammar, vocabulary, voice or other aspects of the writing do not necessarily mean that the text is directly copied or plagiarized, but they may indicate that the student is working his or her way through an increasingly intertextual world where texts are awash with the ideas of many other individuals (Bakhtin, 1986).

The teacher in this study relied on this practice and indicated in both Lin’s and Jenny’s essays that particular sentences were copied and not cited. However, none of these sentences were actually copied from other sources into the essays. This suggests that teachers should be extremely careful about using shifts in grammar and vocabulary to indicate plagiarism in students’ papers because teachers may be prone to making mistakes, and these types of mistakes can be costly to our students. Of course, the data in this study only looked at one teacher, hardly a generalizable sample size. However, there is other evidence in the literature
that teachers do make mistakes in their judgments supporting the conclusion that more
cautions suggested (Murphy, 1990; Sutherland-Smith, 2005).

7.5.5.3 – Building L2 Proficiency

The third component to helping our students avoid plagiarism is building their
language proficiency. As mentioned previously, L2 proficiency was a major underlying
influence on the outcomes of this research. Had Lin had higher L2 proficiency, she may have
been better able to adequately understand and manipulate her source texts. And if Andy had
higher L2 proficiency, he may have felt more confident in selecting and using outside source
texts. Therefore, as their L2 proficiency increases, our students should be better able to
manipulate the language of source texts in acceptable ways and avoid plagiarism.

Language proficiency requires time to develop. Many L2 students spend years
developing L2 skills prior to their enrollment in tertiary studies. ESL teachers cannot be
expected to develop in the L2 students all the language the students will need across classes
and subjects in higher education. All teachers must assume some responsibility and content
teachers can work to develop their students’ L2 proficiency within the content of the courses
they are teaching. Content teachers who actively facilitate their students’ L2 development
may find a reduced incidence of plagiarism in the papers their L2 students write for their
courses.

Although there are many things content teachers can do to support their students’ L2
development, I will offer one simple suggestion focusing specifically on vocabulary
development. Select about 10 key vocabulary used within a chapter or unit that convey the
essence of what students should learn. Then, when introducing the chapter or unit, briefly
discuss the meanings of these words in class with the students. This will help the students to
become more familiar with the central concepts of the chapter or unit and quickly recognize
these key words as they read the class texts. Highlighting the key vocabulary quickly builds
students’ L2 proficiency in that particular content area because students are immediately exposed to the essential vocabulary and concepts, which are then reinforced as students repeatedly hear and read those words throughout the unit or chapter. Recycling and repeating concepts is not just a key to learning content, but a key to learning language as well. And a simple exercise such as this can certainly be beneficial to the learning and development of both the L1 and L2 students in a class.

7.5.6 – Supporting Students With Low L2 Proficiency

Many of the problems the participants encountered were to some degree a consequence of their relatively low L2 proficiency. For example, Lin’s inability to fully comprehend and then adequately paraphrase her sources was a consequence of her low L2 proficiency. Jason’s use of his previous semester’s assignment in order to meet the minimum word requirement was at least partially due to the effect of his low L2 proficiency on his lack of confidence to generate a sufficient quantity of text. And Andy’s resistance to using outside sources in his essay was possibly because Andy struggled to understand them due to his low L2 proficiency.

Dealing with low L2 proficiency is a reality that many teachers, not just language teachers, have to face. Below is one practical suggestion for supporting students with low L2 proficiency. This suggestion is a variation on a previous suggestion, writing multiple drafts; however, the following discussion highlights how this suggestion can support students with low L2 proficiency.

One of the most inhibiting problems low L2 proficiency students encounter while writing is an overloaded demand on their cognitive resources. Because low L2 proficiency students have not developed sufficient automaticity with their L2 linguistic processing, they have to rely on conscious linguistic processing in order to formulate language. High levels of conscious linguistic processing draw cognitive resources away from more global discourse
production (Roca de Larios, Murphy, & Manchon, 1999; Whalen & Menard, 1995) and can result in a near-complete incapacitation of writers to compose text in the L2 (Wolfersberger, 2001).

Probably one of the best ways to help low L2 proficiency students deal with this issue is to have the students write multiple drafts in order to divide the students’ focus between content and language and reduce pressure on students’ limited cognitive resources. In an ideal situation, students would write three drafts of an assignment shifting their focus between content and language on each draft. The first draft would focus solely on content and allow students to use both their L1 and L2 while composing text. The result may be a text that is written completely in a student’s L1, entirely in the L2, or some combination of the two, which is the most likely scenario. In order to encourage the students to write this first draft, the teacher need only give credit for doing it. There would be no need to do any more because of the potential language switching in the text and the preliminary nature of the draft.

In the second draft, students would shift to a language focus. If the first draft was written mostly in the L1, then the second draft becomes a translation exercise. Writing a draft in the L1 and then translating to the L2 can help low L2 proficiency students have better language use in their papers (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Uzawa, 1996; Uzawa & Cumming, 1989). However, there are other problems that can result, such as transferring L1 rhetorical organization to the L2 text. Generally, when engaged in translating a text, L2 writers focus on the sentence level rather than on more global issues of organization and coherence (Uzawa, 1996) which can result in texts that contain L1 rhetorical patterns and features (Connor, 1996). Nevertheless, producing a text that may be somewhat rhetorically inappropriate is surely better than either producing a text that is plagiarized or not producing a text at all.

After translating the text, the teacher may then collect the second draft and respond to the content and language of the paper. At this stage, responding to some of the language
errors can be particularly beneficial to low L2 proficient students providing valuable linguistic input that can be critical within the long-term process of acquiring L2 language and literacy skills (Ferris, 1999, 2002; K. Hyland & Hyland, 2006). As stated previously, responding to the content or organization of students’ papers in some way may also help the students appropriately revise their task representations resulting in a better final product.

For the third and final draft, students would use the teacher feedback to revise the content, organization, and language of their papers. At this stage with most of the content and language in place, there is little need to again separate the two. The teacher can then collect the third draft and mark it.

Writing three drafts in this manner can be done for any writing assignment whether in a writing course or a content class. Content teachers may be loath to collect the second draft and write comments on it. However, as mentioned above under the section 7.5.2 – Writing Multiple Drafts, there are several other options for providing students with feedback on their second draft.

**7.6 – Limitations**

There were several limitations to this research that became apparent after I completed the data collection and began the analysis. First, I did not collect data that would have provided me with a more complete view of the teacher’s perspective. My methodology did not include interviews with the teacher, which would have provided valuable insights into her reasons for her actions. Retrospectively, interviewing the teacher after she read each of the participant’s first drafts and then again after she read the final drafts would have helped me better understand her opinions about the writing skills of each of the participants and her responses to plagiarism.

A second limitation is a lack of data relating to each participant’s L2 proficiency and how that proficiency could have related to the ways in which the participants responded to the
task. This would have helped me see more clearly what effect L2 proficiency had on the cues the participants used to develop and shape their task representations. It would have helped me better determine the effect of L2 proficiency on the participants’ reading and writing processes. And it would have helped me better ascertain the precise role L2 proficiency played in the plagiaristic outcomes.

And third, this research was conducted with four students out of 17 in the class. Furthermore, two of the four participants received zeros on the argument essay assignment for plagiarism while only three of the 17 students in the class received zeros for plagiarism. Therefore, it is possible that the write up of the research presents an unbalanced view of the class and the assignment task.

7.7 – Suggestions for Future Research

Because this research was of a qualitative-exploratory nature, it indicated a number of future directions for research. The case studies revealed a number of questions for further exploration beyond the two questions examined within this research on task representation and plagiarism. Those questions are listed below:

- Can L2 proficiency predict the quality of a written text produced for an L2 writing-from-sources task? Although previous studies have demonstrated that writing expertise is the primary predictor of L2 writing performance when writing from experience, this may change when the writing task involves writing from sources. Future research could investigate the power of L2 proficiency to predict writing performance on a writing-from-sources task.

- What use do L2 students make of reading texts in planning for an academic writing task? It appeared from the case studies that the type and availability of source texts affected the plans the participants formed for their essays. Future research could look more closely at how the available source texts and students’
comprehension of them shape students’ plans for a writing-from-sources assignment.

• In what ways do L2 students’ reading and writing processes influence each other while the students are engaged in writing an academic text? Reading provides ideas that lead to the act of writing, and constructing an essay from those ideas can lead a student back to the act of reading. So, there is a reciprocal relationship between the two processes. In the case studies, the participants engaged in more reading at times and at other times engaged in more writing. However, it appeared that there may have been triggers that led a participant to switch between reading and writing. Future research could investigate what factors cause L2 students to switch between reading and writing in a writing-from-sources task.

• Is there any transfer of skills learned from a writing-from-sources task to a subsequent writing-from-sources task? If so, what is the nature of the skills transferred? The participants in this research were taking the Study Writing course in order to bolster their skills for writing assignments in other courses. Future research could examine whether students use the writing-from-sources strategies and skills gained through a course such as Study Writing on writing-from-sources assignments in subsequent courses.

The tentative theory of task representation presented at the end of the task representation chapter provides a number of avenues for testing and extending the model in future research. One area for future research is the effect of writing expertise on the development of a task representation. And another area for future research regards identifying additional factors that can influence students’ task representations. Some of these avenues are listed below:

• Does the level of prior writing experience affect how closely the initial task representation resembles the final task representation? This question concerns the
differences between novice and expert writers and how closely and accurately their background experiences influence the direction of the essay.

• Are novice writers or expert writers more influenced by the context when developing a task representation? Although this research identified factors that affected the participants’ task representations, it did not examine whether or not extensive experience minimized, enhanced, or had no effect on the contextual cues taken to develop a task representation.

• What other contextual factors do students take cues from to further develop their task representations? The tentative theory of task representation is tentative partially because it does not identify all of the factors that can provide cues for developing a task representation. For example, it seems possible that reading a source text during the writing process could provide information that impacts the task representation.

• Does L2 proficiency have an effect on the contextual cues that different writers notice when developing a task representation? It is possible that L2 proficiency affects the contextual cues that a particular writer is able to notice. For example, if a cue requires a high degree of linguistic or cultural inferencing to interpret, then lower L2 proficient students are less likely to notice that particular cue.

Although plagiarism can be difficult to research because it highly contextually dependent and cannot be artificially set up through experimental research, researchers can be alert and further examine cases when they arise. This research happened upon two cases and showed that the issue of plagiarism is complex and much more research is needed to untangle all of the complexities. Some possible questions for future research are:

• How do students go about constructing a definition and conceptualization of plagiarism? In the current research project, the participants were given very little support for understanding what plagiarism was. Future research could look at how
students come to an understanding of what plagiarism is and the effect of that understanding on their writing.

- What are the consequences of using punitive responses to unintentional plagiarism? The current research project suggested that the punitive response eliminated the copying of text in Lin and Jason’s subsequent work. However, the data did not provide a full picture of the consequences of the punitive response on aspects of Lin and Jason’s development as writers such as their self-confidence as writers and their development of writing skills.

- What role does L2 proficiency play in a student’s decisions about what sources to use in an assignment? Both Lin and Andy had low L2 proficiency. Yet, Lin decided to use a source text that was difficult for her to comprehend and manipulate while Andy decided to completely avoid using outside source texts. It is possible that Lin felt her L2 skills were adequate while Andy felt constrained by his L2 skills. Further research could investigate the effect of L2 proficiency on these decisions.
REFERENCES


McCagg, P. (1996). If you can lead a horse to water, you don't have to make it drink: Some comments on reader and writer responsibilities. Multilingua, 15(3), 239-256.


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Appendix A – Argument essay assignment task

Task: Many pro-choice people feel that women have the right to choose what happens to their bodies. But all choices have consequences. Some people make choices that benefit many people. Some people make choices that hurt many people. Some people make choices that hurt other people because they do not want to get hurt themselves. Some people make choices in order to avoid the natural consequences of previous choices. As humans that are tied together through family, friends, and society, our choices always have consequences that extend beyond ourselves to other people around us. Because the consequences of our actions can affect many people around us, some people feel that having an abortion is a selfish choice while other people feel that abortion is not a selfish choice. What do you believe? Is abortion a selfish or a selfless choice? Why or why not? Write an argumentative essay that explains your position. Appropriately use facts and examples from other authors to build your argument.

Your final draft of your essay must include:
- An introduction that gives the reader a clear idea of the topic and direction of your paper
- A body that follows a logical organization, clearly presents key points for the argument, and provides support and explanation for the key points.
- A conclusion that gives the reader a sense of closure
- A reference list following the APA referencing format with at least 5 references from a variety sources: books, periodicals, magazines, journals, and newspapers.
- In addition, you must hand in your 1st and 2nd drafts of your essay along with the final draft in order to receive full marks.

For your essay ensure that you:
- type all drafts
- use Times New Roman font 12
- apply 1.5 spacing
- write at least 1,500 words
- use a spell and grammar check
- use the correct in-text APA referencing format
- use academic writing style (formal and appropriate language)
- convey clear structure of the essay
- demonstrate unity and coherence
- submit your final draft to turnitin.com

The first draft of your essay must be typed and is due at the beginning of class on Monday, October 3rd. The second draft of your essay must be typed and is due at the beginning of class on Friday, October 7th. The final draft of your essay must be typed and is due at the beginning of class on Monday, October 10th. No late papers will be accepted!
### Drafting Process
- 1st and 2nd drafts turned in
- Change in drafts show work on organisation and content

### Introduction
- Introduces topic
- Presents key background information
- Suggests points for discussion
- Gives a clear thesis and direction for the paper

### Body/Discussion
- Logical flow of argument
- Provides evidence to support key points
- Analyses information rather than just presents it
- Clear paragraphs with one main focus
- Appropriate content

### Conclusion
- Gives the reader a sense of closure

### Referencing & Bibliography
- At least 5 relevant references included
- References from a variety of source types (e.g. books, magazines, newspapers, internet, etc.)
- References cited in body of text and in reference list
- Correct APA format

### Grammar & Spelling

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### Appendix B – Interview questions for the first interview

**Background Information**
1) How old are you?
2) How many semesters have you been studying at AIS?
3) What is your native country?
4) What is your native language?
5) How long have you lived in New Zealand?
6) What is the latest English proficiency test you have taken?
7) When did you take the test?
8) What was your score?

**Native Language Experiences With Reading and Writing**
9) How did you learn to write in your native language?
10) What kinds of writing did you do for high school in your native language? Please describe the assignments.
11) During high school, how often did you write for school in your native language?
12) Did you write anything in your native language that was not for school? If yes, please explain what you wrote.
13) What are your strengths as a writer in your native language?
14) What are your weaknesses as a writer in your native language?
15) What kinds of reading for school did you do during high school in your native language?
16) Did you read other books or magazines that were not for school in your native language? If yes, please explain what you read.

17) What are your strengths as a reader in your native language for school?

18) What are your weaknesses as a reader in your native language for school?

**Reading and Writing Experiences in English**

19) How did you learn to write in English?

20) What kinds of writing did you do for high school in English? Please describe the assignments.

21) During high school, how often did you write for school in English?

22) Did you write anything in English that was not for school? If yes, please explain what you wrote.

23) What are your strengths as a writer in English?

24) What are your weaknesses as a writer in English?

25) What kinds of reading for school did you do during high school in English?

26) Did you read other books or magazines in English that were not for school? If yes, please explain what you read.

27) What are your strengths as a reader in English?

28) What are your weaknesses as a reader in English?

**Expectations for Study Writing**

29) What do you think you will learn in Study Writing?

30) What skills do you want to develop in Study Writing? In other words, what are your plans for learning in the class?

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**Appendix C – Interview questions for the writing process interviews**

**For Pre-First Draft Interviews**

**Process**

1) After receiving the assignment in class, what is the first thing you did to work on it? Second? Third? Why did you do these things?

2) (Had you read the assigned articles before you took the reading quiz in class?)

**Reading Texts**

3) What texts have you read? Do you have any of them here so that I can copy them?

4) What was your reaction to this text? What did you think about it?

5) Why did you read this text? What motivated you to read it?

6) Did you learn anything from reading it? If yes, what?

7) What sections of each text did you read? Why did you read these?

8) How many times did you read each text? Why did you read them this many times?

9) What did you do while you read these texts?
   a. If there are notes in the margins:
      i. When did you write these notes? On the first reading, second?
      ii. Why did you write down this information? [I need to know how they use writing to make connections with the reading text.]
   b. If there is highlighting in the text:
      i. When did you highlight this text? On the first reading, second?
      ii. Why did you highlight this text?
   c. Did you take notes on a separate piece of paper?
      i. If yes:
         1. May I copy your notes?
         2. When did you write these notes? On the first reading, second?
         3. Why did you write down this information? [I need to know how they use writing to make connections with the reading text.]

**Writing Plan**

10) Have you generated a plan for your paper yet?
   a. If no:
      i. Why not?
   b. If yes:
      i. Can you describe it to me?
      ii. When did you think of your plan?
iii. Where did you get the ideas for your plan?
iv. Are you happy with your plan? Why or why not?
v. Did you write down any ideas when you created your plan?
   1. If yes:
      a. May I make a copy of them?
      b. Can you explain your written plan to me?

Task Representation
11) Describe the assignment. What are you supposed to do?
12) Why are you writing this paper? What is your purpose for writing?
13) How do you know you are doing the right things for the assignment? (This should indicate what factors are influencing their task representation.)

For Intermediate Draft Interviews

Process
1) When did you start your first draft?
2) What did you do? Can you describe your writing session(s)? Why did you do these things?
3) Did you revise or edit your writing?
   a. If no:
      i. Why not?
   b. If yes:
      i. When? At what point in your writing? (Have them indicate on the draft if possible)
      ii. Why did you revise at this point?
      iii. Are there any other times when you revised or edited?

If Applicable:
4) When did you start your second draft?
5) What did you do? Can you describe your writing session(s)? Why did you do these things?
6) What changes did you make between the first and second drafts? Why did you make those changes?

Reading-Writing Interaction
7) Have you read any new texts since our last interview? (If yes, ask reading questions from previous interview.)
8) What sections texts have you read since our last interview?
9) Why did you read them?
10) Did you learn anything from reading them? If yes, what?
11) What things from the reading texts have you used in your paper?
12) How do you feel about your paper at this point?
13) Did you ever go back to your reading texts while writing your first (or second) draft?
   a. If no:
      i. Why not?
   b. If yes:
      i. When? At what point in your writing? (Have them indicate on the draft if possible)
      ii. What did you read?
      iii. Why did you read again?
      iv. What did you do while or after you read? [I need to know if and how they use writing to make connections with the reading text.]
      v. Are there any other times when you read again?
14) While you were writing, did you use any notes you made while you read?
   a. If no:
      i. Why not?
   b. If yes:
      i. What notes did you use?
      ii. When? At what point in your writing? (Have them indicate on the draft if possible)
      iii. Why did you use them?
      iv. Are there any other times when you used your reading notes?

Task Representation
15) Describe the assignment as you understand it. What does your teacher want you to do for this assignment? What are you supposed to do?
16) How well do you think you are doing with this assignment?
17) How do you know you are doing the right things for the assignment?

For Post-Final Draft Interviews

At the very beginning, give the participant five minutes to create a process drawing.

**Process**
1) Tell me about your process drawing. Can you explain it to me? [As the participant talks, label the parts on the drawing and talk about them so that I can identify what we are talking about from the transcript. Remember, I can’t see what you are pointing at in the interview!]
2) When did you start your final draft?
3) What did you do? Can you describe your writing session(s)? Why did you do these things?
4) What changes did you make between the second and final drafts? Why did you make those changes?
5) When did you find that ideas for writing best came to your mind?

**Reading-Writing Interaction**
6) Have you read any new texts since our last interview? (If yes, ask reading questions from previous interview.)
7) What sections texts have you read since our last interview?
8) Did you learn anything from reading it? If yes, what?
9) What things from the reading texts did you use in your paper?
10) How do you feel about your paper?
11) How much did you know about this topic before you started the assignment?
12) Did you ever go back to your reading texts after you started writing your final draft?
   a. If no:
      i. Why not?
   b. If yes:
      i. When? At what point in your writing? (Have them indicate on the draft if possible)
      ii. Why?
      iii. Are there any other times when you read again?
13) How did use the things you read in your final draft?

**Task Representation**
14) Describe the assignment as you understand it. What did your teacher want you to do for this assignment? What were you supposed to do?
15) How well do you think you did on this assignment?
16) What grade do you expect from this assignment?
17) How do you know you did the right things for the assignment?

**Appendix E – Summary of class articles distributed with essay assignment**

**Mother Teresa Goes to Washington**

By Mother Teresa
Journal Title: *Crisis*  Volume: 16
Date: March 1994  Pages: 16-18

**Breaking the Peace**

Love and peace must begin by loving our children, but often in the West, father and mother are so busy they have no time for their children and consequently the children get involved in drugs breaking the peace. However, the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion because it is a war against the innocent child murdered by the mother herself. And if we allow mothers to kill their own children, we cannot tell other people not to kill one another. With love, we can persuade a woman to not have an abortion and teach her to give until it hurts. This means to sacrifice plans and free time to show respect and love for the child.

**Abortion Leads to Violence**

By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And, by abortion, the father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world. That father is likely to put other women into the same trouble. So abortion just leads to more abortion.

Many people are very, very concerned with children that die of hunger. Many people are also concerned about all the violence in the United States. These concerns are very good. But often these same people are not
concerned with the millions who are being killed by the deliberate decision of their own mother. And this is what is the greatest destroyer of peace today—abortion which brings people to such blindness. And for this I appeal in India and I appeal everywhere—"Let us bring the child back." We must bring the child back to the center of our care and concern.

Adoption, Not Abortion

We are fighting abortion by adoption. We have saved thousands of lives. We have sent word to the clinics, to the hospitals and police stations: "Please don't destroy the child; we will take the child." And we have a tremendous demand from couples who cannot have a child. I am willing to accept any child who would be aborted and to give that child to a married couple who will love the child and be loved by the child. From our children's home in Calcutta alone, we have saved over 3000 children from abortion. These children have brought such love and joy to their adopting parents and have grown up so full of love and joy.

Couples should use natural family planning, not contraception, to plan for their families. In destroying the power of giving life, through contraception, a husband or wife turns the attention to self and so destroys the gift of love in him or her. Once that living love is destroyed by contraception, abortion follows very easily. When I pick up a person from the street, hungry, I give him a plate of rice, a piece of bread. But a person who is shut out, who feels unwanted, unloved, terrified, the person who has been thrown out of society—that spiritual poverty is much harder to overcome. And abortion, which often follows from contraception, brings a people to be spiritually poor, and that is the worst poverty and the most difficult to overcome.
Zoo animals are usually kept in very cramped enclosures and do not behave like their wild counterparts. Polar bears, for example, are given about 10 metres of walking space whereas in their Arctic home they roam for many hundreds of kilometres. Similarly, primates, big cats and birds are often confined in cages where they lack exercise and stimulation. Many animals develop unnatural habits such as pacing back and forth or swaying from side to side.

Supporters of zoos argue that they help to conserve endangered species, but in fact they are not very good at this. Even the world famous panda breeding programme has been very costly and unsuccessful. Also, zoo life does not prepare animals for the challenges of life in the wild. For example, two rare lynxes released into the wild in Colorado died from starvation even though the area was full of hares, which are a lynx’s natural prey.

The zoo is an unnatural environment that exposes animals to numerous dangers. Diseases often spread between species that would never live together naturally. For example, many Asian elephants have died in US zoos after catching herpes from African elephants. Furthermore, zoo animals are often exposed to chemicals, solvents and other toxic substances. Finally, it is common for visitors to tease and provoke caged animals.

In conclusion, therefore, it is not true to say that zoos are educational or that they help to protect endangered species. In reality, they only teach us how wild animals behave when they are confined in small spaces. Breeding programmes provide zoos with good publicity, but in fact most of them are failures. Finally, zoo animals are probably more at risk of dying from disease or poisoning than their wild counterparts. It is time that we abolished these cruel institutions!

Appendix G – Class handout: Purposes of an argument essay

The Purpose
1. What is the purpose of an argumentative essay?

2. Read the example about abolishing zoos and decide its main features?

3. How is a research-based argumentative essay different to the example you have read in class?

The Challenges
What are the challenges of writing a research based essay?

Do you agree or disagree with any of the following?
• The readings can be difficult to understand
• Identifying the thesis, main arguments and evidence of the readings is a real challenge
• It is hard to know how to convince the reader of your point of view
• It is easy to misrepresent the findings or arguments from the readings
• How to begin writing
• How to put all our ideas together with those you have found in the readings
• How to include the ideas from the readings; whether you quote, summarise or paraphrase

The Process
• Analyze the assignment
• Annotate and critique the readings
• Formulate a thesis and organizational plan
• Write your rough draft

Appendix H – Class handout: Reading questions for class articles

Study Writing
Week 4 The Argument Essay

A Revolutionary Communist Viewpoint on Abortion and Women's Liberation

Part One
Critical Reading

In order to be able to write an effective research based argumentative essay you must fully understand your articles, in fact you need to critique them.

These questions, along with others can be found on the summary page of reading strategies in your textbook.

1. What audience is the author trying to reach?
2. What type of reader would be attracted?
3. What is the author's thesis? How is it different to Sloan’s?
4. Focus on one of the main points and decide whether the author provides enough evidence in order to be convincing.

Part Two

Comparing and Contrasting

Comparing and Contrasting across your sources will help you develop your argument.

a. Abortion is not murder because the fetus is not human. (Revolutionary Worker: 1995). What does Sloan have to say about this issue?

b. The Revolutionary Worker asserts that the issue of control is at the heart of why the state sometimes denies women their right to choose whether they have an abortion or not. Does Sloan think that control is an issue in the abortion debate?

c. Mother Teresa believes that it is selfish to have an abortion. Why?

d. What kind of response would the Revolutionary Worker have to Mother Teresa's argument?

e. "We are at a very strange place in history where the people most opposed to abortions are also most opposed to the one thing that would stop them (Sloan: 1992:2) Why is Mother Teresa opposed to contraception?

f. "Banning abortion's like rape...It is institutionalized violence against women" (Revolutionary Worker: 1995:3) What would Mother Teresa say to this?

The Process

1. What is the process for writing an argument essay?
2. Decide whether the following would be a suitable thesis statement in response to assignment #2.

If a woman chooses to have an abortion then she is exercising a basic human right which defies being labeled as either selfish or selfless.

3. Are any of these main points suitable for an essay based on this thesis?
   
a. Abortion is without exception a selfish choice as it is breaking the peace, creating violence at the heart of the family. (Teresa) Rather a woman, like Jesus should give until it hurts. A religious ideal that fails to acknowledge that every person is entitled to exercise their free will....

b. She is trying to force her morals onto other people - something which the Sloan article exposes "Against Abortion_ Don't have One"

c. It is a personal right and the govt. if they try to deny this to a woman is trying to control them. (Sloan and Revolutionary Worker)

d. Government tries to deny them sometimes on the grounds that it is murder. The fetus is not a human.. (Sloan and Revolutionary Worker) and murder is a value judgment.

e. Women are told that abortion is selfish-but a baby may prevent a woman from achieving her goals/or dreams which could in the long term be of benefit to society.

4. Can you think of any other main ideas which would help to support this thesis.
5. Write your own thesis statement.
Appendix I – Class handout: Student’s first draft of argument essay

First draft

Introduction
People is different, because they have own culture, belief and personal judgments. The same thing can be acceptable for some people, but may not for others such as the issue of abortion. Many pro-life people believe that abortion is a selfish choice made by the mother. It just looks like murder and kill the life of body. However, in my opinion, I think that an abortion is not a selfish choice for the mother. She can choose to do it nor not on her own right and judgment. Also, abortion can not be considered murder or break the peace. Legalizing abortion helps to reduce the numbers of its.

Fetus is not human, abortion is nor murder
In the first place, the fetus may not belong to a human life. Then, the abortion is not murder, too. It takes about nine months for a fetus to grow become to a baby. During this period of time, the fetus gets all the nutrition from the inside of mother and it can not live without that. The fetus has no own mind and he or she can not perceive any pain. According to the Doctor Don, he has given an analogy to explain that a fetus is not a baby yet. The analogy is about acorns and oak trees. The acorn is the fertilized egg of the oak. It is not an oak tree. It is the same with fetal growth. Even the fetus will grow to a human later, it has not belong to a baby life yet. (Sloan; 1992) Moreover, abortion is not murder since the fetus is not yet fully human. The mother may have own reasons to decide do the abortion. Most of times the destroying the fetus is solving the problems. These problems may be the parents’ or the fetuses. For example, if the mother is a young aged drug taker. It can be very dangerous for the fetus born to a baby. Because he or she may has the healthy problem or can not be growing in a good environment. In addition, murder is killing of the life with terrible purpose and trying to hurt others. But here doing the abortion can solve these questions and not belong to murder.

Reducing the numbers of abortions
Secondly, there are more and more people who are giving own ideas about the abortion. Whatever which different positions they standing are, I surely believe that all of them want to reduce the numbers of women’s abortions. We all hope there is a fewer numbers of abortions in the world. How can we achieve that?

I think we should not to blame the mothers for doing the abortions. We had better be nice and tolerant with them by providing more access and information of abortions. The society should to provide a relax environment for the women. It makes people feel more stressful for saying the abortion is killing human life by mother. We need to teach people to do something for avoiding the problems happened. For instance, we can try to decline teenage pregnancies with some activities such as making more access to view the knowledge about pregnancy and abortion, holding frequently class during the school time, or providing widespread use of contraception. (Sullivan; 2005)

Right and choice
Next, choices are made by using the right. In our society, people has right to adopt some children with enough economic and good environment. It is same as people also has right to choose give up a fetus if they neither can nor ensure the enough resources for a child’s living. Furthermore, the women have right to not give births if they have not get ready. For example, if the mother’s health is not well, she can not afford the physical suffering. It is possible to cause the death of mother. Therefore, the decision of abortion is right choice for her. Moreover, “abortion is a common and significant part of women’s having control over their own lives.” (Revolutionary Worker; 1995) People should control own life by self. Abortion is a way and choice of women controlling their lives which should be decided by each individual.

Against the “abortion leads to violence”
Finally, in Mother Teresa’s article, she was saying that abortion can lead to violence. It does not teach the parents to love and take the responsibilities of own child. Abortion is a kind of violence which used by them to get what they want. However, I am opposite with the opinion. Abortion can not considered violence. All the parents love their children and do not want to use any violence to hurt them. They choose to do the abortion may be good for the fetus and ensure it will not have a terrible life in the future. Otherwise, “banning abortion is like rape-the violent assertion of male domination and male supremacist society over women.” (Revolutionary Worker; 1995) The women who has raped already suffered the physical violence. If she can not use the abortion to control her life, she and the child will have more violent such as emotional trauma in the whole lives. Comparing with the former one, it is more fearful.

In summary, abortion is not selfish choice for the parents. They have own reasons and rights for doing that. People has different opinion about abortion, my opinion is abortion is a way for solving the problems and not
murder or violence. Even that, it does not mean that I am advocating more abortions. We should try to reduce the numbers of abortion by controlling of unnecessary pregnancies.

Reference list:

**Appendix J – Example turnitin.com report**

**Turnitin Originality Report**

Abortion is not a selfish choice by Lin
Processed on 10-10-05 08:37 NZDT   ID: 19785304   Word Count: 1208

Overall Similarity Index: 30%

19% match (internet)

- [http://fwhc.org/abortion/1000ab.htm](http://fwhc.org/abortion/1000ab.htm)

5% match (student papers from 09/19/05)

- Submitted to Auckland Institute of Studies at St. Helens on 2005-09-19

3% match (student papers from 09/29/05)

- Submitted to Lee's Summit West High School on 2005-09-29

2% match (student papers from 10/10/05)

- Submitted to Auckland Institute of Studies at St. Helens on 2005-10-10

Abortion is not selfish choice Nowadays, abortion is becoming a serious problem in the world. The number of abortion is getting many more, because having a sex is easy way especially for teenage in USA. When they face on pregnancy, abortion is the one way to solve the problem. Abortion is not a selfish choice to women, argues that the fundamental issue in the abortion debate is the right of women to make their own decisions about reproduction, because it is women's right. Firstly abortion is not a murder because a fetus is not a child; secondly, adoption is not better than abortion; thirdly, abortion is a common and significant part of women's control way to their own lives. Finally, love need to pass, don't do abortion without thinking carefully.

Firstly, abortion is not murder, because fetus which was three months is not a child. As we know, a pregnancy is a nine-month process such as a fertilized egg grows, develops and goes through a series of transformations before it can finally become a baby. Before a baby, it is not a child, because they do not have their mind, action and thinking. As Dr Don said murder is not killing, it is different with each other because all killing is morally wrong. Since the fetus is not yet fully human, doing abortion is not mean that kill the baby. (Don Sloan, 1992) Actually some people against this option such as pro-life activists, they believe that abortion kills innocent human life and it makes no sense for a woman and most of people think abortion is a selfish choice because of killing. In the fact, this statement does not distinguish between different levels of life. A fetus is the beginning of human life, also it has not mind, not breath, so it is not really human life. (Rory Osbrink, 2005) To us, parents give me a whole life, we would pass the life to our baby, as this, human can pass. But if we find our baby is disable person such as blind, not intelligence and so on, the best way is choose abortion, because of to these children; living in the world is not a better way.

Secondly, adoption is not better than abortion. Mother Teresa advice people chose adoptions don't do abortion. She thought that please don't destroy the child, they can take the child. (Mother Teresa, 1994) To this reason her thinking was wrong sometimes. Mother have a baby after her nine month pregnancy, it is hard to her if we take her baby. It is too cruel way to take their baby, as they have problem to support their child. Most couples whom choose adoption are not able to have pregnancy. It is better way to have a child. To the pregnancy women, at the most of time, women have abortions because they are young, poor, single, a drug user, or simply cannot support a baby. My friend Christina told me a real story about adoption. When she live in American, she knew the nun whom is disable person in the church, after the nun had a baby, people whom work in the government service, they took her baby. Although she can not against to let them take her baby, she cried in the rainy. Christina thought that it is a cruel way to take her baby, and destroy her felling. To children, it is their own life, if they grow up, they would miss their real parents, adoption is break their own life in the another way.

Thirdly, abortion is a common and significant part of women's control way to their own life. (Revolutionary Worker, 1995) A woman can control her own right and own life and decide whether have abortion. In USA, the right to abortion is legal. Governments want to control women by controlling women's reproduction. Women can choose their own life style to live. To women, if they decide to have a baby, they would take better care of their child, because before they have a baby, they think carefully about their baby's future. It is a meticulous decision to them. Sometimes having abortion is very important to those women, as they meet some problems, such as promotion, study, age and so on. Sometimes they think careful about their children, since they are poor, older, can not support them to grow up. For other women, the choice to have an
abortion is clearer, as some simply do not want to be pregnant or have a baby and others find those other circumstances of their lives, such as career and finances, much less easily changed than being pregnant and so, for these women, the decision can be very straightforward. Some of these women would not choose abortion, if they were able change any of these other life parameters. The women make clarity the decisions which are not heartless, selfish, inhumane, un- womanly, devoid of "maternal instincts" or anything else. Women are clear about their options and the choice they make. These women have a strong support network behind them and they appear to me to have a good sense of their own capabilities and limitations at the most of time. For these women, the decisions usually need to take more than simply the options of parenthood, abortion or adoption. The other parameters of their lives are jobs, money, living situation, and relationship status, among others. For some women, an abortion is the lesser of two evils, the choice they can live easily more than before when confronted with the difficult dilemma of an unintended pregnancy. As if women would line up around the block to end their pregnancies just for the fun of it, it is seem to think legalized abortion. They don't realize that many women, if it were possible to change some other life circumstances to make having a baby a realistic option. They don't see the genuine regret these women feel because having a baby is not possible. (Bruce A Robinson, 2004)

Finally, love need to pass so don’t do abortion without thinking. As we know, human history has nearly ten thousand years, how to pass the life? New born is the key word to the human history. My parents past love to me, I will pass my love to my child, so human will pass in the future. We can image that if we always do abortion, no baby would born, how to pass the life! Human history would stop by abortion. Although abortion is not a selfish choice, doing aborting fluently is absolutely selfish. Before abortion, think carefully whether it is necessary to you because your decision may affect human history.

In collusion, abortion is not murder, because an embryo is not a baby; choosing adoption is not better than abortion, it is a curl way to the mother, also abortion is women's right and choice, but in the fact, doing aborting must think carefully. As these reason, abortion is not a selfish choice.


Appendix K – Example event listing

Jenny – Argument Essay Event Listing
1) Received assignment in class – Wednesday, September 21st.
   a. See observation #1 for details
2) Read the task sheet
   a. Found the topic, abortion, and that the choices were selfish or not selfish [JE3.6, 4.2]
   b. Read to find out number of words, essay format, due date, and number of references. [JE3.18]
   c. Used information to make general plan of when to work on essay. [JE3.20]
3) Read MT, RW, and Sloan articles
   a. Confused about parts of the articles when initially read them. [JE3.22]
   b. Had read Sloan article before [JE3.28], but unclear if she reread it here.
   c. Read MT and RW articles two times, but maybe not both at this point. [JE3.82, 4.2]
   d. Spent about 40 minutes reading the MT and RW articles the first time. [JE3.164]
   e. Wrote down translations for selected words as she read. [JE3.142, 162]
   f. She uses the headings in the articles to help her understand the structure of the articles. [JE3.144-48]
   g. Underlined sections that she felt would help her write her essay. [JE3.148]
   h. Wrote notes in the margin of the MT article about her reactions to the text. [JE3.52]
   i. Circled keywords in the text that represented main ideas. [JE3.158]
4) Searched for sources on Proquest [JE3.66]
   a. Searched for 20 minutes. [JE3.220]
   b. Selected articles to use in her paper that were easy to understand [JE3.90]
   c. While searching initially, believed she would write that abortion was selfish. [JE4.2]
5) Reading Internet articles
   a. During first reading of article, underlined information that she felt was important and could possibly use in her essay. [JE3.114]
   b. At the top of one article, she wrote a word in Chinese that she wanted to translate and use in her essay. [JE3.120]
   c. Read one article because it supported position that abortion is selfish and Jenny initially had decided to argue for this position. [JE3.130]
6) Decided to write that abortion is not selfish [JE3.6-8] – about Monday, September 26th
   a. Used three class articles to make decision [JE3.12]
i. Two articles said not selfish, only one selfish. So there was more information for not selfish side. [JE4.2]

b. For the first assignment, Jenny wrote that abortion was selfish. She wanted to change sides and write something different. [JE3.8, 4.2]

c. Wanted to write that abortion is selfish, but found it boring because it was too much like the first assignment. [JE3.14]

7) Class on Wednesday, September 21st

a. [see observation #2]

8) Made an outline with thesis and main points. [JE3.44-48, 4.2]

9) Wrote first draft

a. Spent 1 1/2 to 2 hours writing first draft. [JE3.172]

b. Wrote on the computer [JE3.54]

c. Thought about the topic and information. From this formed a personal opinion and wrote it down. [JE3.56]

d. Followed her outline. Used outline to put headings on page, then wrote first draft by filling in information under the headings. [JE3.168-70, 4.2]

e. Repeatedly reread “useful” parts of the articles [JE3.72]. Reread them 5 or 6 times [JE3.76]

f. Got idea for first body paragraph from the class articles. She thought they made a good point that she agreed with and she felt she had a lot to say about that point. [JE3.72]. The 1st draft analysis confirms this. She drew ideas from the RW and Sloan to make the point that the fetus is not human so abortion is not murder. While the first half of this paragraph copies, paraphrases, and summarizes these two articles, the second half is such an expansion of these ideas and integration with her own ideas that it is very difficult to identify the source of the ideas. [see 1st draft analysis]

g. Jenny took the idea for the second paragraph from the Sullivan article. Her idea was that we should “reduce the numbers of women’s abortions.” This too was a combination of paraphrasing, some textual borrowing, reformulating the ideas and combining them with her own to form a paragraph that was her own. In fact, it seems that some of Jenny’s ideas were spawned by the article, yet they were clearly distinct from it. [see 1st draft analysis, comment 13]

h. The third body paragraph does not seem to have a connection with any particular text, but is probably more attached to the discussions in class about abortion being a woman’s right. She uses a quote from RW in this paragraph, but that seems to be the only connection to other texts. [see 1st draft analysis]

i. The fourth body paragraph is a counterargument to MT. She paraphrased MT’s opinion that “abortion is a kind of violence.” And then explained why she disagreed. She used a quote from RW to support her opinion.

j. The conclusion summarizes the main arguments presented in the body.

10) Handed in first draft – Monday, October 3rd

11) Received 1st draft back in class – Wednesday, October 5th

a. Whole class reviewed Jenny’s first draft [JE4.2, observation #3]

b. She learned from this class:
   i. She didn’t like second paragraph in body because it didn’t relate to her thesis [JE3.64]

12) Reread the diagnostic articles – Sometime between handing in the first draft and writing the second draft

a. Her second draft contains a summarized story from the Church article for the diagnostic test. She probably read the story sometime during this week and included it because she needed a fifth reference.

13) Wrote second draft on Thursday, October 6th and Friday, October 7th [JE3.190, 194, 176]

a. Revised on Thursday night. [JE3.192-96]

b. Spent 40-60 minutes working on 2nd draft. [JE3.198]

c. Used Louise’s written comments to revise. [JE3.178]

d. Tried to change the second body paragraph so that it related to her thesis [JE3.70, 178-80]

e. Did not reread articles while revising. [JE3.200]

f. Added a reference list. [JE3.184, 4.2]
   i. Wrote reference list on Thursday night. [JE3.190]
   ii. Used the textbook to understand the correct format for the reference list. [JE3.188, 4.4]

14) Worked on final draft in class on Friday, October 7th

a. Instruction on grammar correction
   i. Corrected her grammar on the first page of her second draft after teacher’s instruction in class on using good grammar. [JE3.202, 2nd draft]

b. Peer review
   i. Peer (Elsa) wrote some reactions, questions, and corrections on 2nd and third page of essay. [JE3.206, 4.4]
ii. Peer wrote comments about Jenny’s essay on Peer review sheet. [JE3.208]

15) Writing final draft
   a. Reviewed peer review comments – Friday, October 7th [JE4.4]
   b. Made revisions to 2nd draft – Sunday, October 9th [JE4.6]
      i. Spent 30 minutes making revisions for final draft. [JE4.34]
      ii. Combined sentences to make them more formal and complex. [JE4.12]
      iii. Fixed the grammar. [JE4.12]
      iv. Used peer review comments to make some changes. [JE4.12]
         - Removed use of first person pronouns. [JE4.16]
         - Revised a confusing sentence so that it would be easier to understand. [JE4.18]
         - Didn’t make another suggested change (changing the word fetus to child)
           because the change would conflict with the argument she was making. [JE4.16, 22-24]
   v. Did not read anything while working on final draft. [JE4.32]

16) Submitted final draft on-line – Monday, October 10th [JE4.8]

Appendix L – Source use analysis coding scheme

Definitions for Source Use Coding Scheme

Black Text
Definition = Participant’s words and ideas or text with an unidentifiable source. This is text that does not fall into any of the following color categories. It is assumed, then, that this text falls into at least one of several possible categories: 1) it is such a complex synthesis of sources that no particular passage is identifiable as the source; 2) it contains words and ideas derived from unidentifiable written texts, oral texts, and oral interactions; 3) it is functional text such as citations, references, and linking words; or 4) it represents the participant’s original thinking and language use.

Meaning/Significance of Black Text = Black text has three possible interpretations. First, it could represent completely synthesized ideas and language of source passages, oral texts, and oral interactions, thus demonstrating the concept of intertextuality to its fullest extent. Second, it could represent the original ideas of the participant. Third, it could represent the amount of functional language used to create a text.

Red Text
Definition = copied from a source, but not quoted. This is text that is taken exactly from a source passage but not enclosed in quotation marks. Red text must be a string of two or more exactly copied consecutive words easily identifiable within a source passage. It can be easily identified because of one or more of the following factors: 1) the red text is an extended phrase of at least five words of text from a source passage (and the likelihood of writing the exact same five-word string as another author is insignificantly small), 2) in the essay the red text is flanked on either side by blue text that paraphrases ideas from the source passage immediately around the copied text, and 3) in the essay the red text is flanked by green text that explains the main idea from a paragraph or section of a source passage within which the copied text is located.

Meaning/Significance of Red Text = Red text shows places where the participant used another author’s words and the ideas they express without acknowledging the source. Although some instances of red text could be identified as plagiarism, red text does not discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable uses of sources. Rather, red text simply shows how closely the sources were followed.

Example A
   Essay text: As we know, a pregnancy is a nine-month process such as a fertilized egg grows, develops and goes through a series of transformations before it can finally become a baby.

   Source passage: A pregnancy is a nine-month process during which a fertilized egg grows, develops and goes through a series of transformations before it can finally become a baby—a new human being—at the time of its birth.

Example B
   Essay text: But the old people always looking toward the door, because he wants his son or daughter come to see him.
I turned to Sister and I asked: “Why do these people who have every comfort here, why are they all looking toward the door? Why are they not smiling?” … And Sister said: “This is the way it is nearly every day. They are expecting, they are hoping that a son or daughter will come to visit them.”

Example C

**Essay text:** We call it not murder, but “collateral-damage”. So some action are not murder, some killing are not avoided. Abortion like these examples, it has same meaning, so abortion is not killing.

**Source passage:**

ABORTION IS NOT MURDER

Jessica sighed. “The thing is, I don’t want to kill the frog, but I don’t really want to give up graduation and stuff for a frog, either. I’m stuck. I’ve got two choices, and they’re both bad. Either I murder my frog, or I flunk my course.” There was no gray area for Jessica at this point.

“Even if you kill the frog, Jess, it wouldn’t be murder.”

“Murder, kill. What’s the difference? Isn’t it wrong, all the same?”

“Wrong” is a value judgment. Lots of things that are wrong to some are not to others, and they’re not against the law. It would be wrong, I think, to torture the frog, but it’s not a crime. Murder is a loaded word. It makes things sound a lot worse than they are. You’re putting a value judgment on your actions when you use such terms.

“A lot of people call abortion murder, don’t they?”

Is abortion murder? All killing isn’t murder. A cop shoots a teenager who “appeared to be going for a gun,” and we call it “justifiable homicide”—a tragedy for all concerned, but not murder if the gun was there and the cop was acting in the line of duty. And then there’s war. In theory, soldiers shoot only at each other. But in practice, lots and lots of other folks get killed. We drop bombs where there are noncombatants—women and children and old people—and when they die, we call it not murder but “collateral damage.” Our soldiers get killed by “friendly fire”—often by people who aimed directly at them. Is that murder? All killing like that, to me, is morally wrong. But murder?

Calling abortion “murder” doesn’t make it murder. We are hearing someone’s value judgment placed on what others do.

**Blue Text**

**Definition** = clearly paraphrased from a source passage. This text expresses the same idea as the source passage using different words. Blue text could be a word, phrase, or whole sentence as long as the words vary from the source passage and the ideas being expressed in the paraphrase can be located within the source passage. There are several ways in which blue text can be located within a source passage: 1) the blue text expresses at least two sentence elements—such as subject, verb, object—that are the same as a sentence in the source passage; and 2) in the essay, the blue text is flanked by red text and is a synonym or paraphrase of the words found around the copied portion of the source passage.

**Meaning/Significance of Blue Text** = Blue text shows places where the participant used another author’s ideas but not the author’s words to express those ideas. Blue text represents a participant’s attempt to linguistically transform specific source passages. The quality and extent of this transformation provides insight into how much the participant understood specific source passages and the extent of his or her language ability to express the ideas understood. Although some instances of blue text could be defined as plagiarism of ideas, blue text does not discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable use of sources.

**Example D**

**Essay text:** People call it a sprouted or a seeding of an acorn. It is not a really tree.

**Source passage:** You call it an acorn that’s sprouted or a seedling. It’s a potential tree, but it’s not a tree yet.

**Example E**

**Essay text:** In the fact, this statement does not distinguish between different levels of life.

**Source passage:** This statement does not discriminate between different stages of life.

**Green Text**

**Definition** = summary of a main idea from a source passage. This text expresses the main idea of a paragraph or section of a source passage or the gist of the whole source passage. Green text (summary) is distinguished from
blue text (paraphrase) because green text expresses the main idea in at least 75% fewer words than the source passage.

**Meaning/Significance of Green Text** = Green text shows places where the participant used another author’s ideas but not the author’s words to express those ideas. Green text represents a participant’s attempt to express the gist of larger source passages. It provides insight into the participant’s global understanding of the source passages he or she used. It also shows to what extent the participant was able to engage with the source passages on a more global level. Although some instances of green text may possibly be defined as plagiarism of ideas, green text does not discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable use of sources.

**Example F**
(see example C under Red Text above)

**Brown Text**
**Definition** = properly quoted from a source passage. This is text that is taken exactly from a source passage and is enclosed in quotation marks. There may or may not be a reference to the source passage. If a citation is present, it is not coded brown because brown represents only words, phrases, and sentences acknowledged as taken from another source passage through the use of quotation marks; citations are coded black.

**Meaning/Significance of Brown Text** = Brown text shows places where the participant used another author’s words and the ideas they express while acknowledging that they came from another source.

**Example G**
*Essay text:* Revolutionary worker (1995) have another opinion said: “before birth, it is not a child or a person with an independent existence.”

*Source passage:* Before birth, it is not a child or a person with an independent existence.

**Violet Text**
**Definition** = Additions to the second draft that are the participant’s words and ideas or have no clearly identifiable source. Violet text uses the same definition as black text with the additional stipulation that it represents text in the second draft that was not present in the first draft. Violet text is only used in the analysis of the second drafts.

**Meaning/Significance of Violet Text** = Using violet text allows me to see how much of the second draft was changed form the first draft. All colored text in the second draft analyses represents a change from the first draft: black text is unchanged text, and consequently, the source of the black text remains the same as analyzed in the first draft analysis. Violet text allows me to see what text was changed from the first draft yet had no identifiable source or was the participant’s own words and ideas.

**Example H**
*2nd draft text:* Who violence who? The mother should think about the whole family. It is not selfish choice. They should have and need abortion, if a family cannot take care the child and may make the child die.

*1st draft text:* Who violence who? They should have and need abortion, if a family cannot take care the child and may make the child die.

**Underlined Text**
**Definition** = copied from a previously written paper. This is text that was copied from a student paper during a previous semester. This text is identified by the database turnitin.com, which stores all previously submitted student papers and compares new papers against text in previously submitted papers in order to identify text that is taken from previously written papers.

**Meaning/Significance of Underlined Text** = Underlined text shows how a participant used his previously submitted paper as a source for writing.

**Example I**
*Essay text:* By the way, if the children will engage in violent and criminal activity, After police catch them, they will say they do not likely to engage it, they done it because the social deterioration. When the things happen like this. Also, it is still a fact in our life.