

Students' Perceived Learning Outcomes through Writing Activities in an EFL University Writing Course*

Seongwon Yun
Hanyang University

Yun, Seongwon. (2012). Students' perceived learning outcomes through writing activities in an EFL university writing course. *Modern English Education*, 13(3), 21-38.

Most sociocultural researchers have not paid full attention to what classroom writing activities really mean to L2 learners and how these activities relate to learning outcomes from learners' perspectives. This study explores students' perceptions of writing activities and learning outcomes and the relationships between the activities and the outcomes in an EFL university writing course. A case study methodology was used on the basis of the data collection of students' semester ending learning stories. The data were analyzed with qualitative content analysis. The findings reveal that the peer review activity and the assignment writing practice regarded as the two most representative activities outweighed the importance of teacher feedback and tutorial. These two meaningful activities enabled the participants to gain sense of improvement and change their negative attitudes toward English writing. While the weekly writing assignment helped students to discover the significance of writing processes and to regulate their writing practices, the peer review activity motivated the students to develop a sense of authorship with substantial audience and to have realistic purposes for writing. Therefore, a better awareness of these students' perceptions enables EFL researchers and teachers to develop a more integrated approach to teaching writing responding to students' various perspectives.

[students' perceptions/writing activities/learning outcomes/
학생관점/글쓰기활동/학습성과]

I. INTRODUCTION

Most attention in writing classroom research has been paid too much to the public

* This work was supported by the research fund of Hanyang University (HY-2012-G).

transcripts documenting various aspects of L2 writing studies such as students writing processes, their revision practices, or analyses of students' writing products (Atkinson, 2003; Badger & White, 2000; Leki, 2001). As a result, many studies have lacked hearing students' hidden voices talking about their inner problems and successes that they went through in L2 writing classes as well as what all writing activities meant to them at the end of a writing course. As Leki investigated students' voices in L1 and L2 writing to examine the gains students got from learning to write, she found that there was a big communication gap between L2 writing students and their teachers. For example, in her reviews of five case studies, sometimes neither teachers nor students did recognize students' hidden needs while in other cases there was a mismatch between what teachers thought students needed and what students thought they needed.

Although most of the writing teachers' instructions are based on needs analyses, it seems difficult to find students' unrecognizable needs and moreover hidden needs do not seem to be made explicit. In many cases students are not able to articulate their unrecognizable needs until they get involved in complex reflective and analytical processes of their own learning. Then two questions need to be solved: how teachers may be able to help students voice their needs and how they respond to the needs to interpret unheard voices or unperceived needs related to students' expectations and needs in learning EFL (English as a foreign language) writing. For one of the solutions to these questions, Tran (2007) found that students in EFL writing classes are concerned more significantly with their intrinsic motivations such as their interest, passion and inspiration than extrinsic motivations such as getting good grades and learning well how to write English essays. Thus, he suggests that decisions about teaching methods and materials for EFL writing classes need to be focused on unrecognized students' needs and rights relating to what is deep inside students' act of writing.

Following the sociocultural framework (Hyland, 2003, 2009; Swales & Feak, 2000; Wenger, 1998; Wertsch, 1991), writing is increasingly regarded as socially situated communicative and rhetorical action through which writers are socialized into a target discourse community. The sociocultural researchers have placed the emphasis on the importance of L2 writers' understanding of the audience, the purpose and the situation of writing. But, they have not paid full attention to which writing activities motivate L2 learners to discover the importance of writing processes and develop a sense of authorship with audience and purposeful writing based on situated writing conventions. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the following research questions: 1) What are university students' perceptions of writing activities and learning outcomes from an EFL academic writing course over one semester? 2) How did the writing activities relate to their perceived learning outcomes? 3) How should teachers respond to their voices?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Situated Learning

Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) propose a theory of situated learning, arguing that learning is situated and embedded within activities and contexts through members' participation in communities of practice. According to them, learning takes place when people get engaged in the mutual social and interactive processes through regular and shared activities in communities of practice. Similar to Lave and Wenger, Wertsch (1991) proposes a sociocultural approach that considers the ways human cognition and other forms of human mental functioning are socially and culturally situated. This sociocultural approach is heavily grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) socioculturally oriented theories of learning. A basic tenet of the sociocultural approach is that human learning is inherently situated in social-interactive and cultural and historical contexts, and is mediated by tools (e.g. artifacts, technology) and signs (e.g. language). Vygotsky argues that human language includes any goal-oriented action that mediates a fundamental transformation of higher mental functioning through joint and collective activity between novices and experienced learners. Thus, human beings use psychological tools to transform ourselves combined with practical activity.

Following the theory of situated learning, a writing course at a university, for example, can contribute to building an academic writing community where students are situated for learning by developing membership in the process of writing practice based on collective writing activities. While students are participating in those activities, they may unintentionally experience several changes in their perceptions, statuses and capabilities from "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to full participation at the several levels of social engagement. As novice writers move from the periphery to the center of a writing community, they may become more active writers and develop their expertise in academic writing. Social interaction, participation, and context are significant elements of situated learning. With respect to research, the theory of situated learning such as communities of practice and social learning theory provides a flexible framework for analytic tools because it is based on routines and activities within groups of people who regularly participate in the practices in a community. Therefore, the theory of situated learning can serve as the basis for understanding the meaning of a potential academic writing community based on various writing activities.

2. Writing Activities

Levinson (1992) develops a notion of *activity types*. According to him, an activity type refers to “a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded, events with *constraints* on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions” (p. 69). Levinson argues that activity types play an important role in understanding the meanings and functions of utterances as well as the intentions of participants because the meanings and functions are dependent on the nature of the activity and the goals that the activity assigns participants. In other words, structural properties of an activity constrain the meanings and functions of utterances in an activity. Thus it is important for participants in an activity to know what the constraints are and what they are allowed to say in order to successfully participate in an activity.

Levinson (1992) further argues that an utterance invokes inference schemata “by virtue of the expectations governing activity types” (p. 74). In other words, meanings are contextually driven in different types of activities rather than by the goals of speech acts themselves. For this reason, Levinson emphasizes activity types that allow analysts to fully understand how language is used and understood in locally situated contexts. At the same time, he warns that analysts should not limit their analysis to sequential turns because meanings are only understood through the main purpose of an activity type. Levinson, therefore, leaves open the possibility of a multiplicity of dynamic meaning constructions in different locally situated activities and by different participants.

The studies (Berg, 1999; H. Min, 2006; Tribble, 1996) on the effects of different types of writing activities in university settings are limited by the fact that relatively few studies have focused on students’ writing achievements integrated by various stages of writing activities and practices. Writing activities are similar to writing processes as Tribble (1996) identified the different stages of writing activities, including prewriting, composing and drafting, revising, and editing activities. These stages of writing activities are cyclical processes in which writers may come back to prewriting activities after doing drafting or revising. Among these writing activities, peer review activities during revising and editing processes (S. Cho, 2011; D. Kang, 2008; H. Kim, 2009; Rollison, 2005) have been paid much more attention than other writing activities. For example, Rollinson (2005) pointed out several benefits of using peer feedback in the ESL writing classroom in relation that peer reviewers can provide useful feedback and authentic audience as well as enhance students’ positive attitudes toward writing. Because peer feedback is commonly used in writing classrooms, there is a need to increase our understanding of the nature of the activity with respect to

other writing activities so that we can figure out what exactly goes on during various writing activities in relation to their learning outcomes.

3. Learning Outcomes

According to Perpignan, Rubin and Katznelson (2007), there are two different types of learning outcomes of academic writing courses, the predicted and unpredicted outcomes. They argue that researchers have not fully been aware of the importance of the unpredicted learning outcomes of academic writing courses: there are outcomes other than learning to write and most students have discovered these unpredicted outcomes on their own (Perpignan et al., 2007). Earlier than that, Katznelson, Perpignan & Rubin (2001) defined the 'by-products' of academic writing instruction as "affective and social changes perceived by students, *along with* changes in their writing, reflected in interpersonal and intrapersonal behaviors carried over into other spheres of their lives" (p. 141). In other words, 'by-products' of writing courses include products of the courses that are not seen in the writing product of the students-their perception (Perpignan et al., 2007). Based on wide range of survey from both students and teachers, they found out that several categories of by-products can be linked to the highest goals of education such as the development of critical thinking, accessibility and accountability, lifelong learning and learning skills.

Although their findings have useful implications for both research and teaching, their studies have some limits. The researchers asked the students to separate their products from by-products. This method can be problematic because although they wanted to obtain students' perceptions of by-products which are often acquired unwittingly as they mentioned, students might have difficulties to recognize which outcomes can be unwitting by-products from their academic writing experiences. The students' perceptions of by-products may not really separate from their perceptions of their writing products because for example, their development of critical thinking skills can be part of their writing products. In addition, they ignored how non-writing outcomes which range from other cognitive skills to social and affective changes are related to the process of their writing products. Thus, integrated students' learning outcomes needed to be reexamined, which encompass students' writing products and other aspects of products of writing activities.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is a case study based on the collection of students' semester ending

learning stories of an EFL writing course at a Korean university. The data were collected through 22 students' learning stories in which each student wrote one-paragraph-long semester ending learning story in English. The data were analyzed qualitatively because the qualitative approach was useful to gain collective insights into student perceptions. Other documents were also referred to when interpreting students' own learning stories. They include: 1) semester beginning need survey and diagnostic paragraph writing; 2) individual student' semester writing collection including peer review comments; and 3) students' official class evaluation online.

1. Participants and Context

The participants, students in the writing course were 22 college students majoring in English communication for their secondary majors, who enrolled in the college of humanities at a university in South Korea. The English proficiency levels of the students vary. About one third of the students are advanced English learners whose average TOEIC score was 906 and their ranges are 850 and 980. Two of them also got the highest scores, level 7 at their TOEIC speaking tests and two other students got advanced low levels at OPIc tests. On the other hand, there were four Chinese students in the class who did not submit their English scores and their English skills were similar to the several lowest English leveled Korean students in the class, who have never taken any official English proficiency tests. In relation to their English writing experience, only two out of the whole students had taken English writing courses before this course but other than the two, the rest of the students had never taken any academic English writing course. It was surprising because almost one third of the students had relatively high TOEIC scores but never practiced their academic writing skills. There was a huge discrepancy between the students' English skills in terms that their English studies were mostly based on raising their TOEIC scores, two receptive skills, listening and reading comprehension skills rather than productive skills, speaking and writing.

The general goal of the writing course was to help students develop English paragraph writing skills in addition to enhancing their critical, logical, and creative thinking skills necessary for academic writing. The researcher tried out alternative various modes of writing, in particular, several types of English paragraphs which are fundamental for English academic essays. Various interactive classroom activities were also designed and expected to stimulate social learning environment in order for the students to build up academic writing community in the class. The semester started with needs survey and collecting students' diagnostic English paragraphs. The specific objectives of the course were to enable the student to: 1) understand patterns of

English paragraphs, 2) write well-organized and various English paragraphs, 3) develop reading skills and expand academic vocabulary, and 4) understand and practice academic oral presentations based on text samples or their own written paragraphs. The instructional materials and sample paragraphs were selected from Conlin's (2010) textbook, *Patterns plus: a short prose reader with argumentation*, including nine paragraph patterns: narration, description, examples, classification, comparison and contrast, process, cause and effect, definition, and argumentation. These nine rhetorical paragraph patterns were taught separately in accompany with various classroom routine activity types in the following time order: 1) general instruction, 2) textbook instruction, 3) textbook sample analysis, 4) selecting writing topics, 5) individual take-home writing assignment involving students' own research and process of writing, 6) group activity: peer review, 7) whole class discussion along with the presentation of the best example, 8) tutorial, and 9) teacher review. The students in this course wrote their assignments in a flexible space and timeframe out of class and were evaluated based on their paragraphs as well as their participation and discussion in the class. Each student wrote two separate paragraphs per each paragraph pattern and thus 18 paragraphs during the whole semester. Each student's writing collection was collected and evaluated for their course grading.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

At the end of the semester, the researcher collected individual student' semester writing collection including students' original pieces of writing practice with peer review comments as well as students' one-paragraph-long learning stories written in English. The students' semester ending learning stories were part of students' final take-home exam. The students were asked to write and submit five paragraphs for their final exam, including 1) a comparison/contrast paragraph, 2) a process paragraph, 3) a cause and effect paragraph, 4) an argumentative paragraph, and 5) a narrative paragraph. The collection of the fifth narrative paragraph is used as the data for this research. The instruction for students' semester ending learning stories was given as follows: "*Were there any happy/exciting/learning moments in which you thought you learned something invaluable/special in this class? What was your most important learning in the course? Which parts/aspects/concepts are the most interesting to you? Tell your own learning stories. Follow your inner voice.*" The format of the paragraph is the same as other paragraphs for the final exam, following the academic writing conventions such as APA style, a paragraph length: 150-225 words per paragraph, and suggested writing time: 30 minutes / paragraph (to plan and complete your paragraph).

Collected data, students' semester ending learning stories, were analyzed based on

content analysis according to appropriate categories and response units. The categories and response units emerged from the data through the content analysis on the basis of the writing activities and learning outcomes that the students illustrated in their learning stories. First, individual student's learning story was categorized into descriptions of either writing activities or learning outcomes. Second, each description of writing activities was labeled following the nature of writing activities: 1) learning how to write different types of paragraphs, 2) sample paragraph analysis, 3) assignment writing and practice, 4) peer review, and 5) teacher feedback and tutorial. Third, each student's narration of learning outcomes was named according to themes: 1) sense of improvement, 2) building friendships, and 3) changing attitudes. Then, other response units not directly related to the research questions focusing on the writing activities and learning outcomes are grouped into other voices: 1) background writing experience, 2) students' needs, 3) classroom atmosphere, and 4) dinner party. These additional other voices also provide some insights based on the students' experiences and thus will be briefly discussed. Finally, responses were coded and tallied based on total unique responses for each category to help us better understand how many students used those concepts to tell their own learning stories. Therefore, the discussion section will place much more emphasis on the representative writing activities and learning outcomes and their relationships in addition to the analysis of less frequently told ones.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Perceptions of Writing Activities and Learning Outcomes

1) Students' Perceptions of Writing Activities

Five writing activities as presented in Table 1 emerged from the students' learning stories. Table 1 shows the categories of students' perceptions of their writing activities, number of response units and samples of student responses. First three activities including learning how to write different types of paragraphs, sample paragraph analysis and assignment writing practice relate to cognitive factors such as the what of writing (learning to write) and the how of writing (writing to learn and writing process). These activities guide students how to develop academic writing skills encompassing writing processes and products. Contrastingly, the last two writing activities such as peer review and teacher feedback and tutorial are associated with social and affective factors including the how of writing (ways of learning to write)

and the why of writing (meanings of writing to individual students).

Among these five writing activities, the most representative activity that 64% students pointed out is the peer review activity guiding students to change their perceptions about writing itself, their classroom behaviors, and writing behaviors. Although the sample of a student's response for teacher feedback and tutorial displays very positive aspects of teacher's guidance, interestingly, the peer review activity outweighed the importance of teacher feedback and tutorial more than three times (64% vs. 18%) in terms of the frequency of the response unit. This ratio may tell us many things because all students wrote their learning stories wholly based upon their own perceptions without any guiding framework for how to write their learning stories or what to write about. They were just asked, "*Tell your semester long learning stories within a paragraph in English.*" Thus, the students made the choices on their own about what to include which may have the most impact on their learning that they thought. The following excerpt from one of the students' learning stories obviously represents her changed thoughts about the peer review activity. The italicized parts in an excerpt hereinafter were highlighted by the researcher and the student's response is original, meaning grammatical errors not being corrected.

I liked writing but I didn't like the idea of showing it to other people. To me writing was something private and showing it to other students to peer review was just embarrassing. But as we learned and write and read other student's writings, I begin to realize that writing is actually more than that. Of course some writing could be private, but I learned that *writing* is about sharing my idea, not hiding my idea. After writing about various subjects and getting peer reviews, I knew how to express my idea. Now I feel fewer burdens about writing a paper. This class taught me how to overcome my inner fear of revealing writing, myself.

Clearly, the student's response above reveals that she has come to realize that writing, especially academic writing practice is a social act rather than a private act and thus it has a social communicative function. This is an important re-conceptualization because it reflects a view of academic writing with implications for important purposes of academic writing. The self-realization of the social meaning of academic writing contributes to the capacity of university students to begin their engagement with collaborative and collective learning. That helps students develop the sense of belonging, their membership as a part of situated learning in an academic community. Moreover, the peer review activity enabled her to change her attitude by understanding writing activity as a social activity and thus getting over with her fear of sharing her writing materials with others.

TABLE 1
Students' Perceptions of Writing Activities and Sample Student Responses

Categories and no. of response units	Samples of Student Responses
Learning how to write different types of paragraphs 6 (27%)	It was my first time to learn about English writing systematically. Categorizing each different types of writing enabled me to focus one at a time and it was very helpful to understand more deeply.
Sample paragraph analysis 4 (18%)	The sample paragraphs from the book were difficult to understand at the first place but individual student presentations helped me to understand those examples and presenting in front of the class was very good experience to me.
Assignment writing and practice 4 (18%)	It was the class with the largest amount of assignments, but with the biggest fun. Even though it was the class with assignments every week, it was what I needed.
Peer review 14 (64%)	Reading and commenting classmates' writings gave me motivation, ideas and feedback. I had never seen writings or assignments by others in English. It was quite weird at first, but brought the progressive effect in the end. I feel thankful to my classmates.
Teacher feedback and tutorial 4 (18%)	Professor's personal guidance is the best part of this class. I had dreamed class that I can communicate with professor, but realized that there almost never professors who communicate with students. But professor Yoon gave us lively feedback, and through feedback, I recovered my confidence and keep up the steam.

* Total no. of students = 22

* Total number of response units = 76

* Percentages refer to the percent value of ratio (no. of students responding per category out of total no. of students)

2) Students' Perceptions of Learning Outcomes

Students' learning stories included the three themes of their learning outcomes shown in Table 2: 1) sense of improvement, 2) building friendships, and 3) changing attitudes. Sense of improvement is connected to cognitive and social factors as displayed in the sample student response in Table 2. Whereas building friendships is directly associated with social factors, changing attitudes is closely related to affective factors. The most representative learning outcome that the 64% students pointed out was changing attitudes from negative to positive feelings toward English writing. Gaining confidence is the most noticeable inner force that contributed to the positive feelings.

TABLE 2**Student-Perceived Learning Outcomes and Sample Student Responses**

Categories and no. of response units	Samples of Student Responses
Sense of improvement 8 (36%)	For the semester, we have learned how to write a paragraph in nine ways, practiced many times, and gave feedback each other. The course improved my ability to write paragraphs for different purposes and I feel my writing skills have been improved a lot."
Building friendships 2 (9%)	To me, the most interesting thing is I can know lots of new guys, and to be friend with them.
Changing attitudes 14 (64%)	Writing was the weakest point of my English language ability. Because of the lack of experience, I was not confident on writing at all. However, through this course, I could have a chance to write and get revised my English composition. As I wrote more English, my confidence grew more and more. It was a great and valuable change for me.

2. Relationships between the Learning Outcomes and the Writing Activities

This section discusses the relationships between the learning outcomes and the writing activities by exemplifying the specific response units more in detail. In particular, the analysis focuses on the two representative learning outcomes, 1) sense of improvement and 2) changing attitudes in relation to the writing activities.

1) Relationship between the Sense of Improvement and the Activities

The writing activities that enabled the students to gain the sense of improvement include peer review activity and assignment writing and practice activity. Six students addressed peer review activity and five students mentioned assignment writing and practice as a source of their sense of improvement. Meanwhile, two students illustrated not writing activities but some other aspects, considering interactive and communicative teaching approaches and free classroom atmosphere as the contributors of their sense of improvement.

Peer review activity directed several students to make great progress in their paragraph writing because they were highly motivated to write, by showing their paragraphs to others and getting comments from others. Table 3 displays some examples of students' perceptions about the relationship between the sense of improvement and the peer review activity. Students pointed out several benefits of peer review activity such as sharing different opinions about their own writing, being stimulated by other students' writing, correcting grammatical errors through peer editing, etc.

TABLE 3

Relationship between the Sense of Improvement and the Peer Review Activity	
Student	Samples of Student Responses
Student 1	It was refreshing to share opinions with others about my writing and get to see others writing, too. To see a good writing was very stimulating for me and <i>makes me want to do better.</i>
Student 2	I loved to read all of their writings but especially my favorite type is narration because it is like they are telling their stories to me in person. Therefore, the other way around, <i>I really wanted to share my stories to others and made a great process in my writing thanks to peer review.</i>
Student 3	<i>Reviewing peers' writing has major positive effects on my studying, because they pointed out my mistakes in writing that I didn't think that far.</i> When I take this course at first, I just want to improve my grammatical error, but <i>I get more and more knowledge in this class and have improved my English writing very much.</i>
Student4	<i>I learned a lot from others during peer review, and compared to the first class, I have made a great process.</i>

In addition, five students described that the assignment writing and practice activity gave the sense of improvement. Those students addressed the importance of developing writing habits through regular writing assignments. Simple but regular writing assignment every week enabled them to practice writing each rhetorical paragraph pattern at least twice, applying what they learned into their own writing. As a result, they felt that they did get the sense of improvement and having confidence by writing systematically, being less dependent on using dictionary, having synergy effects between learning to write and writing practice, researching and reading more to write better paragraphs, and practicing different paragraph patterns many times using different themes and structures.

From the findings above, writing activities most necessary for developing the sense of improvement of students' writing skill are peer review activity and various writing exercises. First, peer review activity enhanced students' motivation to write, the sense of authorship by sharing their original writing with other student audience, and thus building friendship. Second, weekly assignment writing and practice had great influence on students' gaining sense of improvement in various aspects. Students had experienced extensive writing practice through using various topics and rhetorical strategies and self-research based simplified and regular writing assignments. Not only those writing activities but also relaxed and flexible classroom atmosphere contributed to students' developing sense of improvement on their writing because they felt it easy to communicate with other students and teachers.

2) Relationship between Changing Attitudes and the Activities

The findings of this study also shows how writing activities in an EFL university writing

course encourage students to change their attitudes from being passive learners who simply reproduce texts from a textbook to being active learners who think and write creatively and critically as well as gain confidence in English writing. The students in this study listed the two same representative writing activities as the ones in the previous section such as peer review and assignment writing as driving forces of their changing attitudes. Nine students addressed the importance of peer review and assignment writing activities for changing their negative attitudes toward English writing. One of the learning stories highlights her experience in her changing attitudes as follows:

Writing was the weakest point of my English language ability. Because of the lack of experience, I was not confident on writing at all. However, through this course, I could have a chance to write and get revised my English composition. As I wrote more English, my confidence grew more and more. It was a great and valuable change for me. This course also made me find and read more English texts in the range from thesis to colloquial essay. As I exposed to it more frequently, my backward English ability was getting better. Besides, writings of classmates gave me motivation, ideas, and feedback. I had never seen writings or assignments by others in English. It was quite weird at first, but brought the progressive effect in the end.

Several students addressed that while completing their assignment writing and participating in the peer review activity, they realized they changed their negative attitudes toward English writing by getting engaged in several writing processes: 1) reading as a pre-writing activity and making connections between reading and writing, 2) choosing appropriate topics, 3) researching materials, 4) making an outline, 5) writing drafts, 6) getting feedback from other students and the teacher, and 7) revising and finalizing drafts. The bridge between individual take-home writing practices and in-class peer review activity made it possible for the students to discover and regulate their self-directed writing processes and apply what they learned on their own and in class into their writing practices. This finding implies that teachers are able to avoid focusing only on either writing processes or writing products in a writing course when laying out teaching a writing course (Matsuda, 2003; H. Ryu, 2003). If teachers place an emphasis on writing process too much, students may follow several stages of writing processes systematically; however they may neither figure out those processes on their own nor understand why writing processes matter in writing. In contrast, if teachers only apply product-based teaching writing, students may lose opportunities to figure out various writing processes on their own. Thus, making a good balance between these two activities enable students to develop their awareness of the importance of the what and the how of writing as they write and comment each other.

In addition to the importance of writing activities, several students indicated the significance of other aspects for their learning outcomes such as background writing experience, needs, classroom atmosphere, and dinner party. Although this study focuses on the relationships between writing activities and learning outcomes, the other points the students made are also valuable to consider how teachers respond to students' voices. For example, three students indicated the significance of affective factors such as getting praise or encouraging feedback from others or teachers while two students alluded the impact of teaching methods on their changing attitudes toward English writing, including teacher's easy and clear explanation and free classroom atmosphere, which are not directly related to writing activities but important for students' changing their attitudes. Moreover, extracurricular activities like socializing with other students at a dinner party mattered to some students. Table 4 presents other categories of students' learning stories which are not related to writing activities but influential to the students. These voices are also necessary to develop effective writing courses based on students' learning stories.

TABLE 4
Other Categories of Students' Learning Stories and Sample Student Responses

Categories and no. of response units	Samples of student responses
Background writing experience 8 (36%)	It was my first time to take writing class and in a writing class, you have to write to improve yourself. I haven't had many opportunities to write in English, but this class gave me enough opportunities to write in English and to strengthen the basis of it.
Needs 4 (18%)	I wanted to improve my writing skills to show my ideas more efficiently and effectively. In order to achieve the goal, I registered two English writing classes this semester.
Classroom atmosphere 4 (18%)	I was surprised at the class being taught in a free atmosphere. So it was easier to approach the English writing.
Dinner party 4 (18%)	Also, it was the class with the biggest fun. Never had I had any opportunities to hang out with classmates and professor and to get to know them outside class. But the professor organized the dinner with all classmates and we were able to get to know each other more so that the class every week could be much more fun.

3. Responding to Students' Voices

The findings of this study lead us to consider in what ways teachers need to respond to students' voices in order to facilitate student's learning. First of all, many classroom writing activities involve teachers' technical expertise not out of context but in context in which teachers attempt to provide an appropriate framework which facilitates student's learning. In this study, the reason why the students are creative and able to express

their voices in their writing may relate to the degrees of teachers' control vs. students' freedom. The students had freedom to select writing topics that interest them and to give peer feedback without teacher's detailed suggestions for comments. It may not always be true to give explicit and specific writing prompts or topics because by doing so, students may fail to develop their creativity or lose their interests. Teachers should be aware of the significance of giving students opportunities to explore new ideas in their writing. Second, teachers should be able to design a responsive writing course and provide a stimulating learning environment before, during, and after the course. For example, this course began with students' needs survey and diagnostic paragraph writing activities to identify students' interests, motivation and concerns in addition to their current levels of writing. Then various writing activities were designed, implemented, and evaluated by collaboration between the teacher and the students. Finally, teachers should understand students' needs and motivation more realistically. The findings of students' perceptions of various writing activities and learning outcomes present that students are highly motivated and are able to change their negative views toward writing while understanding, learning about and getting to know each student through their writing and writing activities. A most difficult challenge for teachers teaching writing at a university might involve how to change students' negative attitudes toward English writing: students generally think English writing difficult and unrewarding and thus lack interests and motivations in writing. This is one of the biggest problems to be overcome and a great challenge for teachers. Keys for making a difference pertain to ways of having students voice their various needs without any limitations and teachers responding to their voices based on students' perceptions of their learning activities and outcomes.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study give some insights into why students construct their meaning-making the way they do. In other words, students' inner voices from their own learning stories imply what classroom writing activities mean to them and how these relate to learning outcomes from their perspectives in an EFL university writing course. The peer review activity and the assignment writing practice as the two most representative meaningful writing activities selected by the students ironically outweighed the importance of teacher feedback and tutorial more than three times. The bottom line here is that the role of the teacher was to provide an appropriate framework which facilitates student's learning. While the weekly writing assignment helped students to discover the significance of writing processes and to regulate their writing practices, the peer review activity motivated

the students to develop a sense of authorship with substantial audience and to have realistic purposes for writing. Furthermore, the students themselves through the peer review activity made it happen to get to realize that writing is a social activity as a part of situated learning practices and thus they can become active learners in an academic writing community. Participating in these two activities in an EFL university writing course mostly made it possible for the students to address two important learning outcomes, gaining sense of improvement and changing their negative attitudes.

Although the findings of this study due to the relatively small number of participants and some drawbacks of case studies may have limitations in being generalized to broader populations, acknowledging the perceived learning outcomes through the writing activities has implications for both research and teaching. First, understanding students' perceptions of learning outcomes from a writing course can shed light on what writing activities really mean to students and in what ways students' learning of writing can be enhanced with different writing activities. Second, it can lead teachers to better plan and deliver an EFL university writing course. Thus, a better awareness of students' perceptions about their participation in different writing activities and learning outcomes may bring EFL researchers and teachers up to a more integrated writing approach responding to students' various inner voices.

REFERENCES

- Atkinson, D. (2003). L2 writing in the post-process era: Introduction. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 12*, 3-15.
- Badger, R., & White, G. (2000). A process genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal, 54*, 153-160.
- Berg, C. E. (1999). The effects of trained peer response on ESL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 8*(3), 215-241.
- Cho, Sookyung. (2011). The effects of giving peer feedback: Case studies of Korean learners of English. *English Language and Linguistics, 17*(2), 101-125.
- Conlin, M. (2010). *Patterns plus: A short prose reader with argumentation*. (10th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Hyland, K. (2003). Genre-based pedagogies: A social response to process. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 12*, 17-29.
- Hyland, K. (2009). *Teaching and researching writing* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Longman.
- Kang, Dong-Ho. (2008). Feedback on EFL writing: Teacher, peer, and self-review. *Foreign Languages Education, 15*(1), 1-22.
- Katznelson, H., Perpignan, H., & Rubin, B. (2001). What develops along with the

- development of second language writing? Exploring the 'by-products'. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10(3), 141-159.
- Kim, Hyunwoo. (2009). The perception change toward feedback in L2 writing: An analysis of graduate students' writing processes. *English Teaching*, 64(3), 79-105.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leki, I. (2001). Hearing voices: L2 students' experiences in L2 writing courses. In T. Silva, & P. K. Matsuda (Eds.), *On second language writing* (pp. 17-28). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Levinson, S. (1992). Activity types and language. In P. Drew & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Talk at work* (pp.66-100). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Matsuda, P. K. (2003). Process and post-process: A discursive history. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 65-83.
- Min, H. (2006). The effects of trained peer review on EFL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15(2), 118-141.
- Perpignan, H., Rubin, B., & Katznelson, H. (2007). 'By-products': The added value of academic writing instruction for higher education. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 6, 163-181.
- Rollinson, P. (2005). Using peer feedback in the ESL writing class. *ELT Journal*, 59(1), 23-30.
- Ryu, Hoyeol. (2003). Process approach to writing in the post-process era: A case study of two college students' writing processes. *English Teaching*, 58(3), 123-142.
- Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2000). *English in today's research world: A writing guide*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Tran, L. T. (2007). Learners' motivation and identity in the Vietnamese EFL writing classroom. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 6(1), 151-163
- Tribble, C. (1996). *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Tertiary

Seongwon Yun
English Communication, College of Humanities
Hanyang University
17 Hangdang-dong, Seongdong-gu,
Seoul, 133-791, Korea.
Tel: (02) 2220-2474
Email: seongwony@hanyang.ac.kr

Received 13 June 2012
Revised 15 August 2012
Accepted 20 August 2012