Rhetoric, syntax, and evaluative styles in the assessment of nonnative speakers' texts

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Rhetoric, syntax, and evaluative styles in the assessment of nonnative speakers' texts

by

Heather Lynne Rudolph

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Department: English

Major: English (Teaching English as a Second Language/Linguistics)
Major Professors: Barbara Matthies and Dan Douglas

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Heather Lynne Rudolph

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to the following people:

My parents, who raised me to enjoy libraries, appreciate learning for the sake of learning, and get great energy from teaching others.

My mother, who volunteered a tremendous amount of time and motivation in helping me rate the TAs' comments and made certain that I had the essentials (like soup, toilet paper, fruit, soap, etc.) when I was immersed in my studies. Without her, I am certain I would still be writing up my research.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the few courses required of all Iowa State University undergraduate (UG) students, whether American or international, is English 104, otherwise known as Freshman English. Students must enroll in this course unless they test out and move on to English 105, the second part of the two-part freshman composition program. In English 104, students learn the basic essentials of academic writing, such as how to focus a topic, create a thesis, and obtain supporting evidence for topic sentences. The five English 104 goals outlined in the "Instructor's Manual for English 104-105" (Graham, 1995, pp. 3-4) consist of the following:

1. Develop and describe [a student's] own writing process in language understandable to other students and [his/her] instructor

2. Make rhetorical choices based on the purpose and readers of a piece of writing

3. Use different kinds of appropriate evidence, including observation and print sources

4. Discover and use a variety of writing conventions, including sentence patterns, paragraph arrangement, and organizational strategies

5. Avoid sentence-level errors that are distracting or confusing to the reader

These goals are explored in a variety of writing assignments ranging from observation to summary to analysis. By the end of the semester, students should be proficient in all five areas.

The majority of teaching staff members responsible for helping UGs achieve these goals are relatively new to the field. Out of a total of 71 English 104 sections taught in the fall semester of 1995 at Iowa State University, 44 were taught by 25 teaching assistants (TAs) enrolled in M.A. courses and eight sections were taught by five TAs in a Ph.D. program. The remaining 19 sections were taught by either temporary instructors or tenure-track faculty members. During the spring semester of 1996 at ISU, six out of eight sections of freshman
English were taught by M.A. TAs while the remaining two were taught by a temporary instructor. Teaching assistants are students themselves, attending graduate-level courses while teaching composition, some for the first time. Few of them have received pedagogical or linguistic training before they begin their assistantships.

The mandatory training program for freshman English TAs at Iowa State University comprises two parts: a week-long introduction and a semester-long teaching seminar called Proseminar (English 500). The introduction takes place for a week in August before university classes begin. Activities include a university-wide TA workshop for TAs of all disciplines, several sessions on teaching with computers, a university tour, discussions about social concerns (to increase awareness of student suicide and sexual harassment), and a briefing on the general guidelines of freshman English (including course goals, suggested assignments, and a course syllabus). One hour is devoted to the issue of grading in which TAs rank four student essays in order of quality and later compare the ranking order with the entire group's. The result of this grading exercise was an acknowledgement of inconsistency among the raters.

English 500, a three-credit course for new TAs, is taught by several professors or adjunct faculty members who serve as mentors to the TAs. Each instructor designs his/her own approach to the course. While one may choose to emphasize a theoretical base, another may favor applied pedagogy. The instructors are responsible for teaching TAs three hours a week, observing the TAs' classrooms twice in a semester, and collecting six freshman English papers from the TAs twice a semester to critique their grading/correcting style.

For some TAs, this is the first time they will consider the issue of assessment. In addition to this experience, they will be presented with information regarding departmental grading procedures. First, before they begin teaching, they are told about grade inflation and the necessity to balance out the freshman English students' grades so that the majority will
receive Cs. Second, the TAs receive a list of basic criteria to use in grading student essays. The four categories outlined in the Instructor's Manual (p. 17) are:

1. **Material**: topic focus; sufficient support, evidence, and details; use of source material (primary or secondary); logical construction of an argument.
2. **Organization**: global arrangement of ideas; a thesis or controlling idea; paragraphing, cueing strategies; topic sentences and forecasting statements; transitions.
3. **Expression**: level of language, informal or formal; diction, absence of clichés; sentence variety, tone.
4. **Correctness**: conventional grammar and punctuation.

Correctness deserves special mention because the freshman English program has established standards for this particular area. Only one error is allowed for every 100 words. This guideline implies that if a student makes more than five errors per five hundred words, then his/her grade will be lowered. Yet, only a tiny portion of the manual deals with the problematic issue of correctness and nonnative speakers (NNSs) of English:

   For some students the persistence of certain types of errors -- such as misuse of articles and prepositions -- is to be expected. The same might be said of problems in expression, particularly in diction and sentence variety. We feel that acknowledging these problems does not create a double standard [between native speakers (NSs) and NNSs] but rather accommodates realistically the persistent language problems of some non-native speakers of English. (p. 15)

This quote leaves a lot of room open for each TA’s interpretation. For instance, one TA might view an error of a missing article as an issue of grammaticality whereas another TA may view it as an issue of awkward expression. Depending on each teacher’s view of the error, the student could either lose points or the error could be ignored. In other words, for NNSs, the four categories and correctness rules are not so clearly drawn as they are for NSs.
For my thesis research, I wanted to examine two questions concerning how first-year TAs assess undergraduate NNSs' writing. First, when correcting international students' texts, which aspect are English 104 TAs more concerned about: syntax or rhetoric? By “syntax,” I am referring to language on a local level. For instance, syntax could consist of preposition errors, which while they may serve to irritate the reader would not affect the reader’s understanding of the meaning of the sentence or text. “Rhetoric,” however, for our purposes, represents language on a global level. Errors made in this realm detract from the meaning of a text. For example, if the writer describes the same point over and over again, then the reader could become confused about whether the point is the same or whether new points are being addressed. Therefore, in this study, syntax will refer to the local level of language and rhetoric will refer to the global level.

Second, what style does each TA adopt when responding to international students’ texts? Vaughan’s study (1991) raised similar questions. She sought to explore what goes on in trained raters’ minds as they are assessing essays holistically. (See the Literature Review section of this thesis for further discussion of holistic assessment.) On one hand, Vaughan wanted to discover which aspects of syntax and rhetoric, such as verb errors and content, the raters were the most focused on. She did this by tabulating the frequency of each rater’s comments. Next, she examined which characteristic strategies the raters assumed when responding to a student’s text. For instance, did the raters trust their first impression in evaluating the text or did they concentrate on two categories like organization and grammar? She termed these strategies “style.” Style represents various modes of response. For the purpose of the present study, evaluative style was interpreted to mean the ways in which TAs respond to students’ texts, including their attitudes and methods of correction. Evaluative style is significant because from it researchers can increase their understanding of not only what teachers are responding to but also how particular attitudes are elicited from their responses. Like Vaughan, I believe that by measuring the frequency of the raters’ comments and by
examining the personal habits of style each assumes in the evaluation of a text, researchers will gain more insight into the evaluative process of individual teachers. More specifically, researchers will come to understand the logic behind each teacher's assessment of students' texts. This could, in turn, lead to a more consistent statement of criteria for evaluating such texts.

Regarding the first question above, there is quite a bit of debate about syntax and rhetoric and how much each should account for in a composition course's grading criteria. Kroll (1990) cites Connors (1985) as leading the side to promote a balance between syntax and rhetoric. He proposes devoting one's pedagogical life to improving the connection between rhetoric and correctness. Kroll (1990), on the other hand, believes that this balancing act confuses NNS students. Instead, she proposes to approach the two separately. In establishing her methodology, she describes "rhetorical competence" as demonstrated in a student's paper that (1) has a clear focus throughout, (2) contains effective paragraphs, (3) maintains consistency, (4) constructs ideas using logical organization, and (5) stresses the use of coherence and cohesion devices. Unlike her explanation of rhetoric, her explanation of syntactic problems is not detailed. She refers to them as "frequent, elementary, and/or distracting errors at the level of sentence grammar and sentence construction" (p. 44). In applying her model of the rhetoric/syntax split to the freshman English criteria, material and organization would be categorized under rhetoric while syntax would consist of expression and correctness.

My second question concerns style: How do the TAs convey their responses verbally and nonverbally when assessing a NNS's text? What attitudinal factors affect their interaction with each student's text? When they correct the students' papers, do they favor formal correction styles, merely stating the rule with the correction, or do they provide modeling, in which they place the correction in its original context? An example of modeling would be if the student wrote, "Money plays an essential role in people's life" and the teacher corrected it
by replying, "Money plays an essential role in people's lives." In the case of formal
correction, the teacher would respond with "Lives - it should be plural." In the first example,
the teacher was correcting the error by using the context of the actual sentence, whereas in the
second example, the teacher was identifying the error itself. Another consideration within the
topic of style is whether TAs favor the use of personal comments, in which they interact on a
person-to-person level with their students' texts, or nonverbal comments, in which they react
to the texts with a grunt or laughter or a sigh. Nonverbal comments have underlying messages
of judgment, of approval or disapproval. Or are the TAs in such a hurry to end the task that
they skip over the students' words and ideas? These were the main questions I wanted to
consider in identifying each TA's unique evaluative style.

In the second chapter, Literature Review, I will compare and contrast studies regarding
(1) how general faculty members evaluate NNS students' texts, (2) how English and ESL
(English as a second language) faculty members respond to NNS students' texts, and (3) how
new composition teachers assess students' texts in general. Since I was unable to find studies
about how TAs assess international students' writing, I looked for trends in the above-
mentioned areas. For instance, I was hoping to find if professors of general disciplines,
English professors, ESL professors, and new composition faculty members tend to devote
more of their evaluative responses to the area of syntax or the area of rhetoric. From such
studies, I wanted to find other pieces of research which described the impression students
would have from those responses in terms of revision and the writing process. Additionally, I
was interested in what the teachers' responses displayed about their personal philosophies
about academic literacy and error hierarchies. Also, included in the Literature Review chapter
is a description of the think-aloud protocol, the method selected for the current study, using
previous studies from the areas of psychology, reading, and writing.

The third chapter, Method, consists of a discussion of the preparation involved in
organizing the participants, the process of transcribing and coding, the process of training raters
to ensure interrater reliability, and a complete description of how the think-aloud method was used.

In Chapter 4, Results and Discussion, I will present the results of the study, answering the questions concerning the rhetoric/syntax split and the individual TAs’ styles of assessment. In particular, I will examine both aspects from each individual TA’s perspective then compare and contrast the results for the group of TAs. As a result of examining the group as a whole, I hope to establish plausible reasons for similarities and differences between individuals. In addition, a critique will be given of the training process and the reliability of the raters for this study.

Finally, in Chapter 5, Conclusion, I will summarize the limitations of my study which may have influenced my findings; summarize the conclusions I reached for the two research questions, one about the rhetoric/syntax split and the other about evaluative style; and suggest ideas for future research and TA training.
A great challenge arises when a teacher and/or researcher wants to study teachers’ responses to NNS student writing. Zamel maintains that studies examining how teachers respond to ESL students’ texts are “practically nonexistent” (1985, p. 83). In addition, Carlson and Bridgeman observe that “[r]esearch data provide very little information about the perception and evaluation of errors by native speakers of English in the communication of ESL students” (1986, p. 129). A motivation behind my research was to compile previous studies and administer more research which examines how faculty who are native speakers (NSs) of English -- in particular teaching assistants (TAs) teaching composition -- assess and perceive nonnative speakers’ (NNSs’) texts. Three approaches to this concept focus on: (1) how NS faculties across the disciplines assess NNSs’ writing skills, (2) how English TAs assess undergraduates’ (UGs’) texts, and (3) how ESL and English faculties compare in their assessments of NNSs’ texts. I will begin with a review of the studies on those approaches. Second, the effects of ESL writing skills on the scoring method will be considered. Third, I will introduce the method I used for my research, called the think-aloud protocol or verbal reporting, by describing the studies which have adopted this methodology.

Native-Speaker Faculties Across the Disciplines

Studies devoted to the topic of how native speakers evaluate nonnative speakers’ writing have evolved over the past twenty years. Ludwig (1982) outlined the change of theme from the late 1960s through the early 1980s. The initial research described in the study by Vann et al. (1984) focused on counting how often certain errors appeared (Richards, 1971; Burt and Kiparsky, 1975). Later, researchers sought to describe the effect NNSs’ errors had on NSs (Olsson, 1973; Johannson, 1978; Politzer, 1980; Albrechtsen, Henriksen, and Faerch, 1980; Tomiyana, 1980; Vann, Meyer, and Lorenz, 1984; Green and Hecht, 1985; and Santos,
However, the majority of these latter studies involved languages other than English (Piazza 1980, Chastain 1981, and Delisle 1982). Vann, Lorenz, and Meyer outline the following language studies (1991, p.182): German (Politzer, 1978; Delisle, 1982), Spanish (Guntermann, 1978; Chastain, 1980), and French (Piazza, 1980).

One theme that has emerged from such studies is that of error hierarchy. Unlike Albrechtsen et al. (1980), who debate the point that frequency of error is more important than type of error, Vann et al. (1984) speculate that a hierarchy of errors exists. The purpose of their study was to identify the sentence-level errors that members of the general university faculty found to be most irritating. They believed that if they were able to pinpoint the errors viewed most serious by the academic community, then they in turn would be able to plan a more effective ESL composition program. However, their study was criticized because, when they created a survey for the faculty, they removed sentences from their contexts. Therefore, when they were rating the errors according to irritability, the faculty members were reading only one line of information. To repair this oversight, the researchers conducted another study in 1988, in which they selected three of the original twelve errors to embed in actual discourse. The error types (articles, spelling, and verb forms) were placed throughout two essays which were accompanied by questionnaires. Four hundred ninety professors from numerous disciplines participated. A tentative hierarchy was formed from the data produced by their ratings of the level of irritability caused by the errors. According to the results, erroneous verb forms were found to be the most irritating, then misused articles, and finally misspelling. Although this study had been revised, complications regarding criteria did arise. As a result, the authors warned future researchers to be specific about the criteria used in establishing hierarchies.

Used in this way, “criteria” means the type of evaluation a researcher asks of a participant. Three types of criteria are comprehensibility, irritation, and acceptability. Comprehensibility is to what extent the reader is able to understand the writer’s message. For
some researchers, comprehensibility and irritation are inseparable. Irritation, according to Ludwig (1982, p. 275), is "the result of the form of the message intruding upon the interlocutor's perception of the communication . . . . The irritation continuum ranges from unconcerned, undistracted awareness of a communicative error to a conscious preoccupation with form." Thus, one reader could notice an occasional missing article and not be affected while another reader might, as a result of locating one missing article, examine every successive sentence for the same type of error.

In terms of irritation, tolerance is the overriding theme of such research. How tolerant is the general faculty of NNSs' errors? One finding was that humanities/social sciences professors were more tolerant of NNSs' errors than professors in physical sciences (Santos, 1988; Vann et al., 1991). In addition, these two studies found that older professors were less affected by NNSs' errors than younger professors. Finally, women were found to be more lenient than men (Vann et al., 1991).

However, the question which most influences the current study is, What writing components most affected the faculty's judgments? For instance, did faculty members spend more time responding to content or grammar? Reid (1993) and Freedman (1979) found that faculty place greater weight upon critical thinking skills than language accuracy in writing, and they asserted that professors will either ignore or minimize errors if the paper's content and form are impressive. Moreover, Santos (1988) claims that professors tend to judge content and correctness as independent elements. In his study, 178 professors were asked to respond to two compositions, one written by a Chinese student and the other written by a Korean student. Of the errors judged, lexical ones were considered the most serious because they influenced the reader's understanding of the content. From this result, Santos recommended the need to teach vocabulary-building skills. The above-mentioned studies suggest that the general faculty members place greater emphasis upon content or grammar which influences comprehension of the content than upon sentence-level grammatical skills.
However, in West’s study of 33 engineering faculty members, he discovered a contradiction to the previous finding (Carlson and Bridgeman, 1986). For the study, he sent engineering faculty members surveys which consisted of eight variables to rate American and NNS student papers on. These were correctness of punctuation, quality of sentence structure, vocabulary size, correctness of vocabulary usage, quality of paragraph organization, quality of overall paper organization, quality of content, and overall writing ability. In every aspect other than content, the ESL students received lower scores (Carlson and Bridgeman, 1986). Therefore, their sentence-level skills affected their overall score even though the quality of content was equal to that of their American peers. This finding proves that, in this particular case, content was not the main determining factor behind the evaluation.

While many of the previous studies concentrated on sentence-level errors or content, present research is examining more of the overall impact of NNSs’ writing on NSs. In particular, issues such as audience, tone, content, organization, and correctness are being considered. Additionally, the concept of academic literacy has reached the forefront of research on NNS writing (Johns, 1993). Since this concept is relatively new to the field, research findings cannot yet be generalized to the mass population. In her study, Johns wrote a descriptive report based upon interviews she conducted with two faculty members from political science. Based on information taken from the interviews, Johns (p. 168) arrived at a definition of academic illiteracy, which consists of “(a) a lack of background knowledge, (b) problems interpreting and producing the macropurposes of texts, (c) lack of planning in approaching reading or writing, (d) a ‘lack of conceptual imagination,’ (e) a lack of essential vocabulary, and (f) the students’ ‘unwillingness’ to be objective about their value systems.” Points (a), (b), and (c) address the lack of organization and meaning behind NNSs’ texts. These attributes are easily observed in a paper which contains no clear focus and lists information without analyzing the connection between pieces of information. The two political science professors Johns interviewed found this problem to be especially apparent in essay
exams. Points (d) and (f) show a clear disregard for a paper's audience. In (d), the student is lacking the ability to describe concepts, and in (f) the student's belief system is affecting the tone of the paper. Finally, Point (e) reemphasizes the point formerly made by Santos, which stresses the problem with lexical selection. While identifying points of academic illiteracy may help teachers reach a more common ground of expectations, especially in terms of the humanities and social science/physical science distinction, one of the goals of this study will be to see if English teaching assistants devote time in their comments to identifying which points are missing from NNSs' academic literacy. If they do, then which points of academic literacy does each TA tend to emphasize and are their views of academic literacy consistent as a group?

**English Teaching Assistants**

To date, a limited number of studies have examined the process, emphasis, and/or effectiveness of responses given by new composition faculty, in particular teaching assistants. Often TAs are assigned to teach sections of freshman English. Greenbaum and Taylor describe typical college instructors of freshman composition as "...being primarily interested in literature or creative writing and having had little or no training in either linguistics or in the teaching of composition" (1981, p. 169). The purpose of their study was to observe and analyze the attention which 27 freshman composition instructors gave to formal errors or issues of correctness. What they found was that these instructors often made mistakes in identifying the errors. In fact, more than "35% of the identifications of an error either omitted a label or gave an inappropriate label" (p. 174). They concluded that more attention needed to be paid to training composition teachers in the area of error identification.

Siegel (1982) also emphasizes the need for training new composition teachers to respond more effectively and correctly to students' papers. She claims that new teachers lack the ability to rank the importance of errors. Two types that these instructors tend to focus on are repetition and punctuation. According to her study, the more experienced English teachers
devoted more attention -- almost three times more (p. 304) -- to issues of content, whereas the novice evaluators tended to respond more to aspects of form. Not only did the two groups differ in emphasis, they also differed in how they responded to student papers. For example, experienced English teachers wrote more personal reactions and questions. They wrote in an expository manner whereas the novice evaluators wrote short, general comments like "unclear" which could have been directly transferable to other students' essays rather than comments which could help the student understand what point in particular the teacher was unable to comprehend.

Beyond the issue of form, Ramanathan and Atkinson (1995, p. 548) report that TAs majoring in literature and creative writing at an anonymous university are trained to judge a student's text based upon "a certain implicitness or subtlety." For instance, their guidebook stresses the use of personification, metaphor, and imagery. Therefore, a greater emphasis is placed upon creative use of language. If the report of this particular situation is also representative of other freshman English programs, then a conceivable problem may arise for the international students making the transition between ESL and English writing programs. ESL writing promotes the idea of conciseness and correctness of language. Vocabulary items like clichés and idioms are considered correct and may even be promoted in the ESL classroom because they display a cultural tie to the English language. However, both items may be negatively viewed by TAs who are taught to make judgments based upon creativity. In addition, the coordinators responsible for training the TAs to teach freshman English classes advocate assigning a maximum grade of C immediately if the paper fits a five-paragraph format (consisting of an introduction, three paragraphs of a body, and a conclusion). This denouncement of the five-paragraph format creates a potential problem for international students coming from ESL writing courses, where a standard five-paragraph American model is typically taught. Thus, because of these differences of pedagogical fashion, NNSs are likely
to experience a disjunction in their identification of effective academic writing when moving between programs, which could seriously affect their performance.

**ESL and English Faculties**

At universities where ESL writing courses precede freshman composition and/or ESL and English faculties share one department, there is one question which usually arises: Do the two faculties maintain similar standards? More specifically, when rating student papers, do the two have different criteria, thus leading to different expectations of student performance?

Discussion of these questions as an “ESL problem” motivated James Brown to conduct a study (1991) comparing the rating emphases of both faculties. The two groups were given training in the use of a holistic scoring guide, which explained the scoring process and offered examples for practice. In addition, the faculties were asked to record the best and worst features of NSs’ and NNSs’ texts, those being cohesion, content, mechanics, vocabulary, organization, and syntax (p. 590). Overall, both looked upon content as the main positive characteristic and syntax as the main negative characteristic. However, the English faculty seemed to devote more attention to aspects of syntax and cohesion while the ESL faculty focused on organization. Additionally, English instructors exhibited more interest in mechanics, whereas ESL instructors found content more interesting (p. 601). However, in general the two faculties supported the same outlook.

In contrast to Brown’s results, Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) found the emphases of the two faculties to be distinct from each other. According to them, the ESL teachers “promote workpersonlike prose” unlike the English instructors, who are “said to purvey sophisticated thought and expression” (p. 560). “Workpersonlike prose” denotes a deductive organization and concise expression whereas “sophisticated thought” refers to complex, critical ideas and imagery. Unlike Brown’s interpretation, Atkinson and Ramanathan view only
English instructors as emphasizing content. As discussed on the previous page, the ESL faculty’s use of the five-paragraph model is considered bad writing by English faculty members because it does not appear to promote the kind of creative content that will be expected when the NNSs reach freshman composition.

Supporting this distinction, Griffin (1982, p. 297) points to a study by Freedman (1979), which depicts college English teachers stressing content as the most important criterion, then organization, then mechanics and sentence structure as the least important. Teachers preparing ESL students for mainstream courses, such as those teaching general high school courses or those teaching ESL, instead spend their time on form, according to Searle and Dillon (1980).

Zamel, an ESL researcher, supports this view and takes it even further. In addition to asserting that ESL composition teachers are more occupied with language-specific issues in a paper, she claims that their responses are often irrelevant, too general to comprehend, and basically confusing (p. 79). Furthermore, she states that ESL faculty, unlike English composition faculty, due to their emphasis on correctness, do not appear to expect students to revise anything beyond sentence-level errors. Cumming (Zamel, 1985, p. 84), in addressing this habit of ESL teachers, states that:

> Error-identification appears to be ingrained in the habitual practices of second language teachers who perhaps by reason of perceiving their role solely as instructors of the formal aspects of “language” therefore restrict their activities to operations exclusively within the domain of formal training rather than that of cognitive development. (1983, p. 6)

However, Zamel does recognize that ESL and English faculties do indeed share some characteristics in how they respond. For instance, both misinterpret student writing, react inconsistently, contradict their own comments, write irrelevant corrections, sound vague, impose expectations which remain unknown to the students, treat their responses as if the
papers were the final product, and rarely address particular areas of content in the paper or present the students with helpful revision strategies.

Sommers (1982) warns that responding primarily to correctness errors will confuse the students and remove their motivation toward revision. Gungle and Taylor (1989) found student anxiety to be a major consequence of this confusion. To highlight this point, Gungle and Taylor described a study by Faigley, Daly, and Witte (1981) in which they used the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (DM-WAT) only to discover that students with a high level of anxiety are more likely to write short, simplistic essays containing undeveloped ideas and a minimal amount of information per sentence. If a teacher focuses upon sentence-level errors, the students will come to view the errors as more important than the ideas they are trying to convey (Sommers, p. 149). Additionally, if students observe several comments about capitalization and one comment about the organization of a paragraph, they might consider capitalization to be the priority when revising that and future papers. Likewise, Perl (1980, cited in Zamel, 1982, p. 198) states that students who focus on the mechanics involved in writing will lose the ability to sense their audience’s expectations. Another factor which contributes to the students’ misconception of an audience’s expectations is that “most teachers’ comments are not text-specific and could be interchanged, rubberstamped, from text to text” (Sommers, 1982, p. 152). Examples of such comments are, “Be careful with fragments,” “Unclear meaning,” and “Be concise.” These comments do not help the student to understand how to identify fragments or what was unclear to the audience or what needed to be concise.

However, in fairness to the teachers in her study, Sommers does acknowledge the lack of training they receive in responding to papers.

It is not surprising, though, that both ESL and English instructors focus on form when responding to a NNS’s text. According to Lindstrom (1981), much of the research regarding writing in a second language has been limited to reactions to sentence-level errors (cited in Carlson and Bridgeman, 1986, p. 129). Issues of word order, punctuation, and correctness
were described in studies by Shaughnessy 1977; Santos 1988; Vann et al. 1991; and Connors and Lunsford 1989. Harris and Silva identified the four main error types which advanced ESL students commit involving verbs, nouns, articles, and prepositions (1993, p. 534). In comparing basic writers with L2 writers, Benson et al. noted that L2 writers had more errors in verb tenses, prepositions, articles, and diction (1992, p. 58). In their study, they looked at sentence-level topics like “word count, number of sentences, number of words per sentence, sentence variety, use of transitional expressions, . . . errors in verbs, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, diction, articles, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling” (p. 61). In Silva’s compilation of second language (L2) studies he cited nine studies about morphosyntactic errors, seven about lexicosemantic errors, four about verb errors, four about preposition errors, three about article errors, and two about noun errors as well as eight about errors in general (1993, p. 663).

However, it is encouraging to note that, in addition to evaluating NNSs’ grammatical form, researchers are also considering NNSs’ organizational patterns. In countless books and articles, researchers point to Kaplan as a frontrunner of this trend. He is known for his assertion that cultures favor different patterns of logic which, in turn, affect how the people from a particular culture organize the ideas within their paragraphs. Carlson and Bridgeman cite studies in which Kaplan examined the diverse ways people from Anglo-European, Semitic, Oriental, French and Spanish language backgrounds ordered their ideas (1986, p. 144). For instance, Kaplan noted that Anglo-Europeans favored a linear development of building upon previous ideas whereas Orientals adopted a circular approach promoting indirectness. Also cited by Carlson and Bridgeman was a study done by Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic which depicted the Arabic writing development as “consist[ing] of a series of parallel constructions connected by coordinating conjunctions” (p. 145). From researching these studies and their own, Land and Whitley claim that different organizational patterns are the factor which most negatively affects NS readers of NNS prose (1989, p. 285). However,
there are those researchers who would dispute the emphasis placed on cultural patterns of
organization. Hamp-Lyons (1991a) takes these researchers’ findings to task. For instance, she
points to studies which found some bilingual writers to be deficient as writers in both
languages (Das, 1985; Moragne e Silva, 1986). Additionally, Hamp-Lyons outlines the
limitations for which Mohan and Lo (1985) criticized Kaplan’s depiction of Chinese students.
They stated that Kaplan did not give enough support to his claim; that he needed to include “(a)
contrastive analysis of [the students’ first and second languages], (b) error analysis of the L2
learners’ performance in L2, and (c) clear evidence that the errors found [were] due to transfer”
(p. 58). Research concerning organizational patterns remains controversial because very few
studies have been done.

Overall, although English teachers are said to emphasize content more than ESL
teachers, the majority of studies seem to stress both English and ESL teachers’ focus on form
when assessing NNSs’ texts. Consequently, studies describing NNSs’ reactions to the
teachers’ focus on form portray the students’ confusion in establishing a hierarchy of revision
strategies.

Scoring Method

An essential factor in considering the results of a student’s assessment is what type of
scoring method is used. Vaughan (1991, p. 111) cited studies which found that “[holistic
assessment was] used in almost 90 percent of English departments across the country”
(Purnell, 1982; CCC Committee on Testing, cited in White, 1984). Another scoring method
called analytic scoring is often used in evaluating ESL students’ texts. While other methods do
exist, these are the two which are used most in evaluating NNSs’ academic texts.

Holistic scoring gives one overall score to a composition. Researchers have questioned
the reliability and construct validity of this method. In particular, one concern regards the
consistency of scoring between raters. Despite various criticisms of this method, teachers
continue to use it to evaluate students' writing, perhaps because of the minimal time required to score as well as the freedom to rely upon intuition rather than a strict categorical system.

Analytic scoring, on the other hand, is a system whereby the teacher devises individual scores for one or more characteristics, such as organization or expression.

Unlike analytic scoring, the holistic method has been more prominent in research on the influences of scoring methods upon NNSs' grades. In particular, studies have attempted to determine which traits have the greatest effect on holistic scores. In Carlson and Bridgeman's article, they outlined the following studies which contradicted each other to some extent (1986, p. 143). Freedman found that content and organization influenced the raters' scores the most, while mechanics and sentential organization only had an influence if an essay was already well organized. Similar to Freedman's results, Breland and Jones found discourse traits rather than syntactic or lexicographic ones to be most influential in the scores designated by NSs. However, they also discovered that for NSs rating a group of Hispanic students, syntactic and lexicographic traits played a much more important role in assigning the overall score.

Hamp-Lyons pointed to other studies using holistic scoring (1991a, p. 57). One by Fein compared essays by first language and L2 writers from similar college courses and found that "although ESL students scored significantly lower on a holistic assessment and on an error count, analysis of their content, organization, or style showed little difference from the first language writers." This implies that syntactic features may have a greater influence on a student's holistic score than discourse traits.

Finally, in studies compiled by Silva (1993), NSs were found to have given NNSs' texts lower holistic scores than NSs' (Campbell, 1987a, 1987b, 1990; Carlson, 1988; Connor, 1984; Hafemik, 1990; Park, 1988; Reid, 1988; Santiago, 1970; Xu, 1990; Yu & Atkinson, 1988).

A consistent theme throughout holistic scoring studies is that NNSs receive lower grades than NSs. This deserves special attention due to the fact that holistic assessment has
been found to be used in the majority of English departments in the United States (Vaughan, 1991). Studies mentioned in this section depicted an evaluative hierarchy which emphasizes content and organization and minimizes the importance of mechanics and sentence structure. From these three pieces of information, a question arises: If the NNSs are said to be equivalent to the NSs in terms of quality of content and organization, then why do they consistently receive lower grades than NSs based upon mechanics and sentence structure, which are identified as the lowest level of the evaluative hierarchy?

Think-Aloud Protocol

Think-Aloud Protocol, otherwise referred to as thinking-out-loud (TOL) or verbal reporting, is a method whereby “a subject is asked to talk about cognitive processes that have occurred at an earlier time [which is known as retrospective verbalization], [or a subject is asked to produce utterances] simultaneously with the performance of the task [otherwise known as concurrent verbalization or direct reports]” (Smagorinsky, 1989).

Much criticism is associated with the concept of retrospective verbalization because many researchers believe, like Olson, Duffy and Mack, that a TOL task “should get subjects to report the content of their immediate awareness rather than to report explanations of their behavior” (1984, p. 254). Some plausible reasons include the supposition that a subject may have neglected to store some of his/her initial responses to the original task in his/her long-term memory or that a subject might be more inclined to shape his/her response to the perceived needs of the researcher. Although the latter criticism could be made of concurrent verbalization, the former one could not. Under concurrent verbalization, the subject would be verbally responding to the task while it was occurring, thereby allowing for the short-term memory to be expressed.

Ericsson and Simon (1980) suggest that concurrent verbalization be implemented in the following three situations: (1) when the subjects are performing a task they would
normally verbalize; (2) when the subjects are reporting information they would normally consider during the task, even though the information would not already be verbalized but would instead assume a different form like visual imagery; and (3) when the subjects are asked to respond unnaturally to a task, such as describing or justifying decisions made during the task.

Simon and Ericsson, who are considered to be the main developers of the guidelines for this methodology, do note that three points of TOL continue to be criticized. First, concurrent verbalizations are reactions to the initial thoughts and may, as a result, change the subject's normal thought process. Second, the verbalized thought process might be limited by what information the subject chooses to pass through his/her short-term memory. Third, the subject may select less important thoughts to comment on because of the range of thoughts he/she is experiencing during a given task. Regarding using TOL in composition studies in particular, Zamel (1983) cites the following two pieces of criticism (1983). Perl (1980) warns that composing aloud is not equivalent to silent composing, and Faigley and Witte also support this assertion by stating that verbal protocols require writers to do two things at once -- they must write and they must attempt to verbalize what they are thinking as they pause. Perhaps some subjects can be trained to do both tasks with facility, but many writers find that analyzing orally what they are doing as they write interferes with their normal composing processes, interrupting their trains of thought (1981, p. 169).

Despite the above-mentioned criticisms, TOL continues to be used by many researchers for various reasons. Arndt states that “think-aloud procedures are... acknowledged to be a useful means of tracing cognitive processes” (1987, p. 259), especially when using concurrent verbalization. In the area of writing, Hayes and Flower (1983) discuss the advantages of process-tracing methods over input-output methods in terms of better understanding students’ errors and difficulties. Whereas input-output methods evaluate the effects of various conditions upon a situation, process-tracing methods examine the entire
process which leads up to the effects. Under input-output methods, a subject is asked to retrieve information from his/her memory. Under process-training methods, a subject is asked to voice information, like impressions, as it occurs. Among the advantages of process-tracing methods are the following:

(1) They provide direct evidence about processes.

(2) They yield rich data and thus promote exploration.

(3) They can detect processes that are invisible to other methods. (p. 218)

Swarts, Flower, and Hayes refer to previous studies done by Ericsson and Simon in which they found that writers verbalizing composing processes did not lose the focus of their attention, even though the process naturally moved along more slowly (1984, p. 55). In the area of reading, Afflerbach and Johnston point out five advantages to TOL procedures: (1) As a result of the different set of assumptions attached to TOL's validity, TOL is viewed as a valuable extra data source to use in studies which require more than one method; (2) under certain situations, they can provide more realistic depictions of cognitive processes which normally could only be indirectly evaluated; (3) TOL allows the researcher to gain access into processes which underlie a higher level of cognitive activity; (4) TOL takes into account the affective traits involved in reading processes; and (5) retrospective reports are particularly useful when one needs to retrace a historical or genetic process for medical purposes (1984, p. 308). In the area of psychology, self-reports may be the best techniques used in comprehending a client's idiosyncratic perceptions (Genest and Turk, 1981, p. 242). In terms of collecting a subject's verbalizations, audiotape recordings often used in TOL are considered especially effective means of getting rich data. With these recordings, one can obtain an enormous amount of data and capture the spontaneous expressions of the subject while remaining somewhat unobtrusive. Raimes (1985) asserts that TOL is "too good a tool not to be used" (p. 234).
Think-aloud protocols are still relatively new to the field of English as a Second Language. I was able to locate seven studies. One was an empirical study which measured how well NNSs comprehended and retained various story structures (Carrell, 1984a). Arndt (1987) did an exploratory study, examining the similarities and differences among six Chinese postgraduate students in their L1 and L2 composing processes. Johns (1985) researched the summarizing skills of “underprepared” or remedial university students who were both NSs and NNSs and attempted to develop a coding scale so that future studies could be replicated. Three studies compared the writing processes of NSs and NNSs. Raimes (1987) described the strategies NNSs used in writing at different proficiency levels and compared the behavior behind those strategies with that of NSs. Zamel cites a similar study done by Jones in which a videotape was used to investigate NNSs’ writing strategies (1983, p. 168). The third study, which was referred to by Carlson and Bridgeman (1986), consists of Lay’s composing-aloud research. This research suggested that adult NNSs need more time in the composing process to make native-language switches, or translations from their first language to English.

The final type of ESL study which adopts TOL as its method concerns teachers’ responses to students’ texts. Zamel (1985) quotes a study performed by Cumming (1983) in which three ESL teachers were asked to respond to the same student’s paper. The findings suggested that the teachers focused mainly on error identification and assessed the text with different styles. One limitation to the study was that the researcher created the context in which the teachers responded, thereby creating an unnatural setting (p. 85). Another limitation was the small number of raters involved. This is also a limitation of the study completed by Vaughan (1991), who used only nine raters in the TOL. The purpose of this study was to investigate not only the product of the raters’ evaluations but also the process they used in making their decisions. In particular, the researcher considered the evaluative processing that raters experienced in holistic assessment of texts. The researcher allowed the raters to fulfill the TOL task in any way they desired, from commenting while reading the text aloud to
referring back to particular lines after silently reading. The raters were given six essays to assess holistically and were instructed to devote only the amount of time to each paper they normally would. To rate each essay, a six-point scale was used in which scores of four through six were considered passing while one through three were considered failing. Transcriptions were complete, including expressions like “ahs” and laughter. Every meaningful unit, including the laughter, was placed under a category. The category receiving the most attention from the raters was content while morphological errors were farther down on the list in frequency (p. 114). In order to depict each rater’s style, Vaughan looked for patterns of the categories each focused upon, then created categories of style, such as “the single-focus approach” where a rater would make his/her decisions based upon one personal belief; for example, “Rater 9: Essay A: The first thing I do is look for things that would make it not a passing essay” (p. 118). Other categories of style included the “first impression dominates” approach, the “two-category” strategy (where a rater chooses two categories, such as organization and expression, to focus on), the laughing rater (who interacts on a personal and psychological level with texts), and the grammar-oriented rater. Vaughan’s study was unique in that it looked both at the product as well as the process of the evaluation. I will refer to this particular study in the next section on methodology.

In conclusion, while some researchers still debate the validity of TOL, many other researchers who are interested in process-tracing methods are choosing to use TOL in areas of psychology, reading, and writing. Vaughan’s study introduces a new use for TOL -- that of examining evaluative processes.

Because few studies have been done regarding how TAs assess NNSs’ texts, it was necessary to compile studies about the impressions general, ESL, and English faculty members have of such texts. Overall, all three express concern about form. For general faculty, irritability is an effect of errors in form. Additionally, the general faculty members are concerned about whether NNSs meet the requirements of academic literacy. Much
comparison has been made concerning whether the evaluation standards of ESL and English teachers are equivalent. Some findings prove that the two faculties stress the same qualities when evaluating a NNS's text, whereas other findings prove that English teachers devote more time to content and sophisticated prose while ESL teachers devote more time to sentence-level structure, conciseness, and a five-paragraph format. Studies concerning English TAs find that they are trained to grade according to quality of content and sophisticated expression. However, studies also depict an inadequacy in how TAs respond to students' texts. For instance, TAs do not know how to rank the importance of errors, so they are prone to addressing comments about form rather than content. This emphasis on form confuses the NNSs about the revision process; they, too, grow to view maintaining a correct form as more important than expressing thoughts. The current study will consider all of these aspects while examining how TAs holistically evaluate NNSs' texts using the think-aloud method.
METHOD

The present study was designed to explore how five English 104 teaching assistants at Iowa State University assess their international students' texts in terms of:

(1) the emphasis each TA places upon syntax and rhetoric, and
(2) the characteristics each TA assumes when responding verbally to an international student’s text, thereby developing a particular evaluative style.

The basic goals of this study are similar to Vaughan’s research (1991) which examined what kind of comments nine raters most frequently made as well as the reading styles of each rater.

Subjects

Five English 104 teaching assistants from Iowa State University were selected to participate in the study. Originally, the study comprised five TAs and one temporary instructor, but due to previous time commitments the temporary instructor resigned from the study. In order to determine which TAs had nonnative speakers (NNSs) of English enrolled in their classes, I compiled the previous semester’s English 101C (an academic writing course designed for international students who need more writing instruction before entering English 104) class lists and the present semester’s English 104 class lists, then identified the former 101C students currently enrolled in English 104. Seven out of eight sections enrolled NNSs and the temporary instructor taught two of the sections, which left only five sections and teachers to involve in the study.

All of the five TAs were in their second semester of teaching in the English 104 program. Four TAs were females in their first year of graduate school while one TA, a male, was in his second year of the Master’s degree program. Regarding majors, two subjects were in creative writing, three were in rhetoric, composition and professional communication (RCPC), and one was in literature.
Three subjects taught in the regular English 104 course while two taught in the English 104 50/50 sections, which consist of a student ratio of 50% American students and 50% international students. Twenty-six students make up both types of English 104 section. Differences between the two types of English 104 course occur in terms of the textbooks which are selected and some of the papers which are assigned. Despite the differences, though, the goals outlined in the manual (see discussion in the first chapter, Introduction) remain the same for both courses.

**Materials**

The method chosen for this study was the think-aloud protocol. The subjects were given instructions, outlining the procedure of the method (see Appendix A). The instructions had been modified from those designed by Geisler (1994, pp. 260-61). For Geisler’s study, the topic was medical paternalism and the four subjects involved consisted of two experts, PhD candidates studying philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh, and two novices, second-semester first-year female students who were studying engineering and design at Carnegie Mellon University. Geisler’s directions appeared to be written for a different audience than mine. Since she was addressing two different levels of audience, her directions were very detailed and assumed a simple tone. My audience consisted of TAs who had taught for the same amount of time and were all at a similar level of graduate school. Therefore, my instructions could assume a more advanced tone and remain concise. One major aspect I chose to adopt from Geisler’s instructions, though, was the overriding theme of authenticity. Thus, the subjects in my study were asked to respond to the NNSs’ papers in the setting where they would normally perform this task, such as their living room or study. Additionally, a suggestion was made to limit themselves to the amount of time it regularly took each to assess a student’s text.
The specific task consisted of reading every word of a student’s text aloud, making additional comments in the process. Comments could include any statement that was going through the raters’ minds, such as “She’s got a comma where she needs a period,” “I don’t think he was wrong for lying to his friend,” or “I’m taking the dog outside.” The first case is a comment about an error, the second is a response to the student’s content, and the third is an acknowledgment of another task occupying the rater’s mind. In addition, each rater’s utterances, such as “um” and “aargh,” were recorded.

All of the think-aloud information was recorded on audio tapes. The tapes and recorders were supplied by the researcher. One subject used a dictaphone, two used microcassettes, and two used regular cassettes.

For the think-aloud, the subjects were asked to comment on the initial paper (termed as the diagnostic) they collected from the NNSs. However, a complication with time arose since they were already into the fourth week of instruction. Additionally, a few misinterpreted or disregarded this section of the directions. Several subjects responded instead to the second or third assigned paper. Therefore, the focus of the research changed. Originally, the goal of the research was to focus specifically on the transition between the ESL writing course (English 101C) and the freshman English course (English 104) in order to (1) observe the English 104 TAs’ expectations of the incoming NNSs and (2) discover what aspects of the English 101C curriculum needed improvement. Instead of being able to acquire these two pieces of information, though, I was limited to examining the TAs’ general impressions of the NNSs’ writing skills because some of them had not followed instructions in assessing only the students’ first paper. Thus, the theme of my study evolved to focus on how TAs respond to NNSs’ writing.
**Raters**

Individuals were needed to categorize the transcriptions which were written down from the audio tapes. One rater (Rater 1) was responsible for doing the transcriptions, arranging them for coding, and determining the coding categories. The categories were compiled from several studies (Vann et al, 1984; Silva, 1993; Santos, 1988; Harris and Silva, 1993) and a composition rating scale designed by Myers and Douglas (1986). In addition, examples were taken from a couple of the studies in order to help the raters identify each category. The four studies were selected because they had all attempted to establish an error hierarchy based upon what errors faculty members tend to find most irritating and most confusing. Therefore, these studies took “syntax” (or local language errors) and “rhetoric” (or global language errors) into consideration. In addition, their findings were consistent, which led me to believe that a compilation of the studies would serve as an effective model. The composition rating scale by Myers and Douglas was especially helpful because it not only identified several issues of rhetoric - content, organization, and expression in terms of audience and tone - but also defined them with examples and based on levels of language proficiency.

A second rater (Rater 2) volunteered to review the coding categories and code the transcriptions. Rater 2 had been separated from issues of rhetoric and syntax for some years. To ensure reliability between the two, both raters went through training which consisted of (1) going over each category to develop common guideposts, and (2) comparing scores after four pages of TAs’ comments were coded. The latter step was especially helpful in establishing common ground and determining how to handle exceptions.

**Procedure**

Upon obtaining approval from the Iowa State University Human Subjects Review Committee and receiving the teaching assistants’ signed consent to participate in the think-aloud protocol and be recorded and the TAs’ students’ signed consent to use their papers
anonymously for assessment means, materials were designed and given to the five teaching assistants. The materials consisted of instructions, recorders, and tapes. Each TA was responsible for collecting the NNSs’ papers and making extra copies which would be used in transcribing.

Once the TAs completed the think-aloud task, they returned the tapes, recorders, and copies of the papers. Rater 1 transcribed the think-alouds verbatim, separating the comments and corrections from the students’ texts by inserting parentheses around the TAs’ statements. Then Rater 1 arranged the statements on separate lines, so they could be easily coded.

Next, coding categories were compiled from previous studies and a grading criteria sheet. A numerical system corresponded with individual categories, so the raters could quickly code when moving through the transcriptions and the data could later be entered into a database efficiently. After training and coding the think-alouds individually, the raters returned to compare their interpretations of the data.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results from this study signify how Iowa State University English 104 TAs evaluate NNSs’ texts and what the TA training program emphasizes in assessment of a student’s text. This chapter first addresses the issues of rhetoric, syntax, and evaluative style of the individual teaching assistants. The data for each TA are provided separately and discussed. Following this information is a section regarding perceived commonalities and differences found between TAs. The final section consists of a retrospective report critiquing the training process of the raters as well as comments on interrater reliability.

Individual TA Assessment

TA 1

The first TA was a female majoring in Rhetoric, Composition and Professional Communication (RCPC). Her classroom was a 50/50 section which included seven former English 101C (Academic Writing for International Students) students. Of those seven students, six allowed their texts to be used for the study. The seventh student had dropped out of the course. As Table 1 shows, during the think-aloud, the TA made 219 comments about syntax/rhetoric on six papers totaling 4,804 words.

She devoted the most comments (28) to ones grouped under a miscellaneous category. One comment was about superlatives, four about spacing, three about general grammar, two about demonstratives, eight about antecedents (lack of clarity regarding what is being referred to), two about sentence length, three about agreement (such as “Bushman” and “he” referring to the same entity), three possessives, and two about parallelism. In this particular case, it would have been beneficial to create a separate category entitled “antecedent” due to its frequency.
Table 1: Think-Aloud Comments -- TA 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th># of Comments</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Content</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Organization</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Audience/Tone</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Redundancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntax</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Verbs - Inflectional morphology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Verbal forms &amp; aspects/tenses</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Verb complementation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Noun inflection</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Noun derivation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Use of wrong article</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Missing article</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Unnecessary/Inappropriate article use</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Prepositions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Fragment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Run-on sentence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Punctuation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Sentence structure</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Spelling</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) Conjunctions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) Word choice</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) Relative clauses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) Miscellaneous</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td>219</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th># of Comments</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23) Modeling</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24) Formal</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25) Nonverbal attitude</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26) Personal comments</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27) Skip</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28) Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td>290</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of papers read: 6
However, in terms of comments about sole categories, she focused on noun inflection, which made up 11.9 percent of her overall comments. Nearly as many were on verbal forms and aspects/tenses, which accounted for 11.4 percent of the total comments. The reason for the frequency of this particular category may coincide with the study by Vann et al. (1991), which determined verb forms to be the most irritating error to professors of various disciplines. Other categories which deserve mention are word choice (7.8%), missing articles (7.3%), prepositions (7.3%), spelling (7.3%), content (7.3%), and punctuation (5.9%). Interestingly, prepositions, articles, and spelling are given the same amount of attention as content. Granted, there are cases when a misspelling could affect one’s understanding of the content like knowing that “hurting” should be “hunting.” However, generally this TA commented on spelling errors which were easily decipherable, such as the there/their distinction. Moreover, the manual for TAs specifically suggests that certain errors like an inappropriate preposition or a misplaced article be low on the hierarchy of assessing international students’ texts.

TA 1 had a cold, which might have had an impact on her attitude toward the texts and what categories she chose to comment on. For instance, she had three distinct cases of skipping over the students’ material, predicting what was to come. This gave the appearance of haste, especially when her predictions were incorrect and she needed to return to previous material for clarity. Additionally, out of a sum of 290 comments concerning style, she devoted 18.3 percent to nonverbal attitude. For example, she sighed often and the sighs increased in frequency as she moved along in the task. Rater 2 felt that when TA 1 made comments like “sentence fragment again” that the ‘again’ represented a growing irritation with the students’ syntactical errors. Her cold might have affected her preference for formal over modeling styles of correction as well. If she wanted to finish the think-aloud quickly, she might have favored pointing out the correction (formal) to establishing a context for the correction (modeling). The former would require less of a time commitment. In a follow-up interview, TA 1 agreed that part of the reason for her preference for the formal style of correction was due to her cold. The
other half was due to her personal philosophy of assessment. She asserted that students learn more when a teacher acknowledges an error but allows the student to correct it on his/her own, thereby establishing a personal context for the error.

**TA 2**

The second TA was a male majoring in Creative Writing. He taught a regular section of English 104, which included nine former English 101C students. Five of those nine participated in the study. As Table 2 shows, during the think-aloud, the TA made 248 comments about rhetoric/syntax on five papers totaling 3,249 words.

Regarding syntax and rhetoric, he was most concerned with the following categories: 
- Verbal forms & aspects/tenses (19%), word choice (15.7%), noun inflection (10.1%), and punctuation (8.9%). Once again, verbal forms & aspects/tenses seems to be the highest point of the error irritation hierarchy. He tended to be especially concerned by word choice, perhaps because he was majoring in Creative Writing. In his think-aloud, he stated, “I think about most of the international student writing is that the word choice is often just kind of ordinary and I guess that’s to be expected when it’s - when it’s second language - they’re just not very fun to read.” Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) asserted that Creative Writing and Literature majors are trained to stress personification, metaphor, and imagery when judging a student’s text. Often in his end comments, TA 2 said “I would suggest working for stronger verbs and nouns - using figurative language - perhaps get some metaphors and similes in there.” TA 2 also responded to clichés, like “burned the midnight oil” and “spoon feed,” by pointing them out as impediments to the text. Nothing was incorrect about the terms the students had chosen to use; rather, TA 2 stressed using creative terminology. TA 2, outside of the task, made the comment that he prefers to devote his responses to items other than spelling and punctuation. He referred to them as unimportant. However, he responded more to punctuation (8.9%) than he did to content (8.5%). According to Siegel (1982), new composition teachers tend to focus
Table 2: Think-Aloud Comments -- TA 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th># of Comments</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Content</td>
<td>21</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Organization</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>3) Audience/Tone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>4) Redundancy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th># of Comments</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>5) Verbs - Inflectional morphology</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Verbal forms &amp; aspects/tenses</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>8) Noun inflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>9) Noun derivation</td>
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<td>10) Use of wrong article</td>
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<tr>
<td>11) Missing article</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Unnecessary/appropriate article use</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>13) Prepositions</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Fragment</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Run-on sentence</td>
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<td>16) Punctuation</td>
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<td>5.6</td>
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<td>18) Spelling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>19) Conjunctions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>20) Word choice</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) Relative clauses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
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<td>SUM</td>
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<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>24) Formal</td>
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<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25) Nonverbal attitude</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26) Personal comments</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>23.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>27) Skip</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28) Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of papers read: 5
on punctuation and repetition due to their inability to rank the importance of errors. Regarding repetition (redundancy), TA 2 made eight comments (3.2%) such as “maybe work for economy - it felt like there was a lot of repetition here.”

Out of 326 style responses, TA 2’s correction style promoted a balance between formal (31%) and modeling (27%) types of correction. Generally, he used both methods when correcting each error. He also made 23.9% personal comments, such as referring to “she/he/I” throughout his responses. In addition, he seemed to express doubt in his interpretation of the students’ texts by making comments like “I don’t know,” “I guess” and “Was it plurality?”. The farther he got into the task, the more he used questions rather than statements.

**TA 3**

The third TA was a female majoring in Creative Writing. She taught a regular section of English 104, which included two former English 101C students. Both students submitted their papers to the study. As Table 3 shows, during the think-aloud, the TA made 50 comments about rhetoric/syntax on two papers totaling 1,809 words.

Regarding syntax and rhetoric, she was most concerned with word choice (18%), verbal forms & aspects/tenses (14%), content (10%), audience/tone (8%), missing articles (8%), and prepositions (8%). Similar to TA 2, who was also a Creative Writing major, TA 3 emphasized word choice. Once again verbal forms & aspects/tenses carried its weight, most likely as an irritation factor. She spent time addressing audience/tone through comments like “the tone’s a bit sentimental” and “he’s doing a good job of using present tense, bringing the reader right into the situation.” Through such comments, she seems to be supporting Johns’ (1993) idea of academic literacy. In the first case, the student’s sentimental tone is imposing a certain value system upon the audience. In the second case, the student has effectively planned his writing to include the audience. Both examples comprised Johns’ overall definition of what professors consider to be an academically literate paper. In contrast to the manual’s
Table 3: Think-Aloud Comments -- TA 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th># of Comments</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Content</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Organization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Audience/Tone</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Redundancy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Syntax**

- 5) Verbs - Inflectional morphology: 1, 2.0%
- 6) Verbal forms & aspects/tenses: 7, 14.0%
- 7) Verb complementation: 0, 0.0%
- 8) Noun inflection: 3, 6.0%
- 9) Noun derivation: 1, 2.0%
- 10) Use of wrong article: 0, 0.0%
- 11) Missing article: 4, 8.0%
- 12) Unnecessary/Inappropriate article use: 0, 0.0%
- 13) Prepositions: 4, 8.0%
- 14) Fragment: 0, 0.0%
- 15) Run-on sentence: 1, 2.0%
- 16) Punctuation: 1, 2.0%
- 17) Sentence structure: 1, 2.0%
- 18) Spelling: 1, 2.0%
- 19) Conjunctions: 2, 4.0%
- 20) Word choice: 9, 18.0%
- 21) Relative clauses: 0, 0.0%
- 22) Miscellaneous: 3, 6.0%

**SUM** 50 100.0%

**Style**

- 23) Modeling: 11, 19.3%
- 24) Formal: 20, 35.1%
- 25) Nonverbal attitude: 3, 5.3%
- 26) Personal comments: 14, 24.6%
- 27) Skip: 6, 10.5%
- 28) Unknown: 3, 5.3%

**SUM** 57 100.0%

Number of papers read: 2
suggestion, TA 3 spent time focusing on articles and prepositions. However, for this TA, content was important, more important than articles or prepositions. A reason for this emphasis might be the style in which she responded.

In Vaughan’s study (1991), she depicted a rater as “the laughing rater.” This rater appeared to have a psychological tie to the writers of the paper, “chuckl[ing] through several of the papers, reacting strongly to content, and [getting] quite annoyed” (p. 118). Similar to this rater, TA 3 laughed at students’ content and seemed to be annoyed by the first student’s sentimentality and length of paper while being openly complimentary of the second student: “Good kid - I like this kid.” She even asked questions of him (“but did he know you were lying?”) while reading through his text. This personal interest in the individual students may have caused her to devote more time to content.

**TA 4**

The fourth TA was a female majoring in Rhetoric, Composition and Professional Communication. She taught a regular section of English 104 which included three former English 101C students. All three students submitted their papers for research. As Table 4 shows, during the think-aloud, the TA made 41 comments about rhetoric/syntax on three papers totaling 1,607 words.

In terms of rhetoric and syntax, TA 4 focused on content (31.7%), organization (17.1%), and verbal forms & aspects/tenses (7.3%). This ranking supports Freedman’s study (1979), which found that college English teachers tend to emphasize content first, then organization, then mechanics & sentence structure. Additionally, TA 4’s focus on content and organization could be a result of her RCPC major, which would focus more on using writing for technical/business means. For such purposes, it may be more important to convey an idea as clearly and concisely as possible. Therefore, content and organization would have a major impact on the means for conveying ideas.
### Table 4: Think-Aloud Comments -- TA 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th># of Comments</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Content</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Organization</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Audience/Tone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Redundancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntax</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Verbs - Inflectional morphology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Verbal forms &amp; aspects/tenses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Verb complementation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Noun inflection</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Noun derivation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Use of wrong article</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Missing article</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Unnecessary/Inappropriate article use</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Prepositions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Fragment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Run-on sentence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Punctuation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Sentence structure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Spelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) Conjunctions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) Word choice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) Relative clauses</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th># of Comments</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23) Modeling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24) Formal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25) Nonverbal attitude</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26) Personal comments</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27) Skip</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28) Unknown</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of papers read: 3
Regarding what styles she incorporated into the comments, TA 4 mainly used nonverbal attitude (45.5%) and personal comments (42.4%) whereas formal (6.1%) and modeling (6.1%) forms of correction were barely implemented. Most likely the reason for this distinction is due to her emphasis on content and organization rather than syntax. Her goal in responding to her students' texts did not appear to be correction; rather, she interacted personally with the text through the categories of content and organization. For instance, she stated, "I don't really follow his logic at all in this thing," and "I thought it was a really interesting illustration of her thought process in selecting a major and a school." In two instances she did make a suggestion, modeling a revision of the organization: "And then I think she should start a new paragraph after her comment about the English 101C class where she said . . ." and "I told her to focus on the organization of that good paragraph - look at that good paragraph that she wrote that was well-organized and maybe model her other paragraphs on that." However, this modeling technique is general in that it tells the student to model that context but does not actually set up the context (i.e., what the specific format was that the teacher liked in that particular paragraph). Therefore, she devotes the majority of her comments to reactions rather than concrete ideas for revision.

**TA 5**

The fifth TA was a female majoring in Literature. She taught a 50/50 section of English 104 which included eight students. All of the students except for one were Malaysian; the other student came from Mainland China. Every student agreed to participate, but the instructor turned in papers for only three. Therefore, I only discuss those three due to the lack of complete data for the remaining students. As Table 5 shows, during the think-aloud, the TA made 97 comments about rhetoric/syntax on three papers totaling 841 words.

Concerning syntax and rhetoric, TA 5 focused an enormous amount of her time on verbal forms & aspects/tenses (28.9%). Farther behind were the categories of word choice
Table 5: Think-Aloud Comments -- TA 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th># of Comments</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1) Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Organization</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Audience/Tone</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Redundancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntax</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Verbs - Inflectional morphology</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Verbal forms &amp; aspects/tenses</td>
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<td>7) Verb complementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9) Noun derivation</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) Use of wrong article</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>13) Prepositions</td>
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<th>Percentages</th>
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<td>23) Modeling</td>
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<td>24) Formal</td>
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<td>25) Nonverbal attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>26) Personal comments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Number of papers read: 3
(11.3%), prepositions (10.3%), organization (8.2%), and missing articles (7.2%). Similar to the two previous TAs majoring in creative writing, TA 5, a literature major, stressed the need for vocabulary building in comments like “even though his vocabulary is limited and that he definitely doesn’t sound like a native speaker, he still manages to get the jokes across” and “she has very profound thoughts - it looks like her vocabulary is going to limit her a bit as far as getting across.” Prepositions and articles appear to play a major role in her responses with prepositions even surpassing organization. Once again these two types of error were mentioned in the manual as being relatively unimportant in terms of assessing international students’ texts. What is of particular interest, though, is the weight she places upon verbal forms & aspects/tenses. Two factors come to mind when considering this emphasis. First, majoring in literature may promote the need for coherence of tense. For instance, if one is used to reading texts at a quick pace and has to slow down to figure out if the writer intends to write in the present or past, then the resulting irritation could influence that person’s judgment of the text. Second, TA 5 is teaching a 50/50 section in which nearly half of the class would likely have problems with tense. As a result, she may view verb errors at the top of the hierarchy of students’ needs.

Out of a total of 130 comments about style, TA 5 devoted the most attention to personal comments (42.3%) and modeling (30%). Since she is teaching a class comprised of 50% international students, she may favor modeling over formal when addressing their errors. By setting up the correction in the context, the teacher may think that the students will learn how to make a similar correction during the revision of a future text. Similar to TA 2’s use of personal comments, TA 5 uses “he/she” to refer to what the students is doing in the text. For instance, TA 5 states, “and he goes on to list those - um - so far I’m kind of wondering what exactly his hometown is - I’m glad that he’s giving a geography lesson, but I’m kind of hoping he goes on to describe his town after this,” “he may have misunderstood the assignment,” and “um again she’s gonna take a little bit more work, I think - and will probably
need the writing center.” Such comments show the TA interacting with the student on a more personal level, attempting to evaluate the students’ level of understanding as well as their needs in the course.

Commonalities and Differences

All five TAs shared common approaches when responding to the NNSs' texts. For instance, they tended to cover categories like content and organization in the end comments whereas comments within the texts focused on syntax. As a result, there tended to be a greater frequency of comments made about syntax. In his research, Brown (1991) depicted English instructors as being interested in mechanics when responding to ESL students' texts. In Freedman's study (1979), it was found that college English teachers devote a greater frequency of comments to content than mechanics and sentence structure, though. Part of the reason for this perceived contradiction could be that these college English teachers are beginning instructors and might fit more into Freedman's description of intermediate level teachers. She classifies these teachers as high school or ESL teachers and asserts that they focus on form when reviewing a student's text. Another reason could be that frequency of comments about a particular error does not necessarily denote the importance of that error. A greater frequency of comments about issues of syntax may just represent the number of syntactic errors within a text.

All five TAs stressed verbal forms & aspects/tenses in their top two categories under syntax. This result supports the findings of Vann et al. (1991) that between the errors of verb forms, misused articles, and misspellings, erroneous verb forms are the most irritating to professors. The results from the current study display a consistency between the TAs in terms of how important and possibly how irritating erroneous verb forms & aspects/tenses are.

TAs 1, 2, 3, and 5 emphasized errors in articles and prepositions. These two aspects were specifically highlighted in the manual for TAs as not deserving as much attention as other
aspects of writing and errors. Clearly, an inconsistency exists between what is advised in the manual and what is followed in error identification. Siegel (1982) claims that new composition teachers lack the ability to rank the importance of errors. For instance, she states that they tend to devote more attention to punctuation. Raters 1 and 2 devoted 7.3% and 8.9%, respectively, of their total comments to the aspect of punctuation. The emphasis upon punctuation, articles, and prepositions is representative of novice English instructors.

However, research does point out that the four main error types which advanced ESL students, like these TAs' international students, commit involve verbs, nouns, articles, and prepositions (Harris and Silva, 1993). Therefore, a greater frequency of errors involving articles and prepositions most likely exists in their students' papers, which, in turn, may cause the TAs to interpret the two types of error as significant. Albrechtsen et al. (1980) assert that frequency of error is more important than the type of error. As a result, errors which seem less important, like articles and prepositions, may be overemphasized. Additionally, when comparing the L1 and L2 texts, the TAs may observe these two aspects as a great difference between the qualities of the papers. When Benson et al. (1992) were comparing basic writers with L2 writers, they found that L2 writers had more errors in verb tenses, prepositions, articles, and diction. Therefore, in defining the level of the criteria for their L1 and L2 students, the TAs may be establishing a level based upon L1 standards, regardless of the consideration that prepositions and articles are the last aspects to be acquired by second language learners.

Interestingly, TAs 1, 2, 3, and 5 placed word choice as one of the highest categories under syntax. TA 1 is majoring in Rhetoric, Composition and Professional Communication while TA 5 is a literature major and TAs 2 and 3 are Creative Writing majors. Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) suggested that TAs majoring in literature and creative writing receive training to evaluate students' texts based upon "a certain implicitness or subtlety" (p. 548). By this, they mean that the training emphasizes the use of personification, metaphor, and imagery.
in students' writing. In the particular case of these four TAs, the reason for their focus on word choice could be a combination of their majors and their TA training.

Overall, the majority of the five TAs devoted a similar percentage of their comments to both correction styles, modeling and formal. Of the two, formal correction seemed to be the preferred style. Since formal correction merely entails identifying a specific error, their preference for this style may have been due to a sense of urgency to complete the task. Or possibly the TAs have been trained to point out an error rather than create a context around it in order to explain it.

There was great variation in terms of the nonverbal attitude which was expressed by all five. TA 1 had a cold so contributed more sighs of irritation to the task. TA 2 contributed many “ums,” “ahs,” and “ohs” to the task because he was trying to sound out his thoughts as well as determine what needed to be improved in the NNSs' texts. TA 3 interacted on a personal level with the students’ stories through her laughter. TA 4 turned her tape in past the deadline and felt a need to hurry through the task, thereby contributing fewer “ums” and “ohs” than TA 2. Similar to TA 2's nonverbal style, TA 5 contributed “ums” and “well” to sound out thoughts and locate the places for improvement. In addition, she expressed “hmms” when she found the NNSs’ information interesting. Basically, difference of personality and individual circumstances created the TAs’ varied nonverbal attitudes.

All five TAs gave many personal comments when responding to their students’ texts. For instance, they referred to the particular writer by stating “We,” “She,” or “He” while reading through the papers. Many also stated when they liked something in the writing or when they felt some error was attributable to second language acquisition. In addition, they occasionally tried to understand the logic behind what their students were expressing. Overall, the five TAs displayed an interest in their students as individual writers through the frequency of personal comments.
The Rating Experience

Training

When it came time for retrospection of the rating experience, both raters offered suggestions for ways to improve the training of the raters. First, since Rater 1 had transcribed the think-alouds from audio tapes, she was familiar with the contexts of the data. Rater 2, however, did not have this same access to the data. For a future study, it would be helpful for each rater to transcribe the think-alouds separately then compare them to ensure reliability of the information which is described. Moreover, this opportunity would allow both raters to better understand the context rather than attempt to understand it by reading over the packet of transcriptions.

Second, although both raters agreed upon the various coding categories after reviewing a couple of their results from the transcriptions, the transition to that common understanding could have been better organized. Rater 1 supplied examples for many of the categories but not for all. In those instances where no example was available, Rater 1 defined the specific category. It would be more beneficial in future research to supply a complete sheet with definitions and at least several examples for each category. Then a rater is able to refer back to a written sheet whereas a rater’s short-term memory is likely to forget oral instructions comprising 28 distinct categories.

Finally, reliability is questionable when the raters use a couple of sheets of an actual student’s paper to help them initially compare scores. This is inadvisable because categorizing the TAs’ comments about the NNSs’ papers should be done when the categories are completely understood and agreed upon by the raters. For this, a practice packet should be provided so that inconsistencies in categorization can be resolved at that juncture.
Reliability

The raters agreed on the majority of their categorical identifications. And, later upon closer inspection and discussion, both agreed upon all identifications. The four areas which posed slight difficulty to the reliability of their scores were content, organization, personal comments, and modeling. Rater 1 tended to notice a higher frequency of modeling style while Rater 2 noticed (and helped more clearly define) personal comments. When the raters compared these incidents, though, there was complete agreement and an acknowledgment that the other rater had just overlooked that particular identification. Content and organization raised a problem for the raters due to the ambiguity of these two categories. As a result, in some cases, both are mentioned as identifications.

In several cases, when the TA’s error identifications were not well-defined, the raters selected some categories which could have applied. However, generally, a minimal amount of interpretation was needed to decipher the category the TA was commenting on. Additionally, there were a few blatant examples of incorrect error identification by the TAs. The raters both felt that, since the primary purpose of the study was to examine what categories the TAs devoted their attention to in the NNSs’ texts, correcting the TAs’ corrections was of secondary importance. Finally, in a few places the raters were tempted to record an implied meaning, but due to the lack of information decided against it.

Implications of the Results

The results suggest that the TAs in Iowa State University’s English TA training program are not prepared to comment upon issues of rhetoric (the global level of language). There was very little mention of audience, tone, content, and organization, which are the defining principles of academic writing. There was substantial attention given to preposition and punctuation errors. This would lead one to suspect that these TAs need to be trained to assess students’ texts and that this type of training needs to occupy a significant amount of the
overall training program. The TAs also need to learn that even though they may understand
that frequency of comment may not signify importance of error to themselves, it may in fact
signify importance to a NNS. Therefore, these TAs need to construct an effective and
consistent error hierarchy model which incorporates issues of syntax and rhetoric in order to
determine the significance of the local and global levels of language. Additionally, the TAs
need to learn how the use of particular evaluative styles will affect their students' understanding
and performance. And they need to be trained to do both during their semester of pedagogical
training at Iowa State University.
CONCLUSION

Several aspects not covered in the previous chapters deserve mention in the conclusion. First of all, I will address the limitations of the study and explain the reasoning behind them. Second, I will summarize the answers to the two research questions. Following will be a section on ideas for future studies and the current English 104 TA training program at Iowa State University. Finally, I will demonstrate the importance and applicability of this particular study.

Limitations

The main limitations of this study came in several forms -- in the form of purpose, literature review studies, interrater reliability, the sole use of the TOL, and personal experience. First, the purpose of the study itself could be criticized by other researchers. From my results, I am unable to make generalizations about what the majority of TA training programs tend to emphasize or how the majority of TAs assess NNSs’ texts. The current research was an exploratory study of how five English 104 TAs from Iowa State University assess their NNSs’ texts. My purpose was not to state the tendencies of a population of English TAs; rather, it was to examine the present situation of English 104 TAs at Iowa State University in order to determine the current needs of the English TA training program.

Second, in conducting research for the literature review section, I was able to find only three studies which dealt with the issue of TA training and assessment. As a result, I decided to structure the study more upon the findings from research about general, ESL, and English faculty members. Since these members tend to be tenure-track faculty who have had many years of experience in terms of evaluating students’ writing, their circumstances may not be
applicable to a TA’s. The majority of English TAs are considered novices due to their minimal experience with instruction, test development, and assessment. Therefore, perhaps the research I compiled about faculty members is not representative of the TA experience.

Third, there was no consideration of the interrater reliability between the TAs. They did not receive the same papers to score nor did they receive the same number of papers. Two were responsible for assessing six papers while the other three assessed only a couple or a few. None of them were assessing the papers during the same period of time or in the same place. As a result of the above-mentioned inconsistencies, I was unable to test for interrater reliability. If a similar future study were to be performed, I would suggest assigning the same number and type of papers to each TA. Other recommendations would be to assign papers at two or three different periods of time in order to test for each rater’s individual consistency, conduct initial interviews in order to establish each TA’s pedagogical philosophy, and conduct follow-up interviews in order to decipher possible reasons for a TA’s responses and to observe the TAs’ reactions to their own system of assessment.

Fourth, the sole use of the TOL as the method of research created a certain lack of confidence when interpreting the results. Through using the TOL to assess their students’ papers, the TAs might have felt pressured or encouraged to focus on local errors. A TA may look for more details, such as syntactic errors, when reading a paper aloud and verbalizing comments than when reading a paper silently and writing comments. Therefore, in a future study, it would be helpful to compare a teacher’s written comments and verbal comments in order to observe how he/she might react to the different modes of response. Such an observation would aid the researcher in determining the consistency of a teacher’s particular evaluative style.
Fifth, and possibly the most important limitation of all, is my personal experience with this program. Naturally, having a personal tie to Iowa State University's TA training program could lead to bias. I was trained through this program nearly two years ago, and I left it contemplating how it could be improved. When I had completed the training program and had taught English 104, I proceeded to teach English 101C, which is an academic writing course to help some NNSs' prior to enrollment in English 104. What I discovered, through observing the English 101C and 104 TAs, was that they were not being trained to work together. The NNSs making the transition between the two courses were confused about the standards of both courses as well as the contrasting expectations of the 101C and 104 TAs. This would seem like a reasonable dilemma had both sets of TAs been trained in separate programs with different emphases; however, both were receiving training in the English 104 TA training program. It would seem logical that the two would come out of the program understanding one another's expectations as well as departmental writing standards -- that is, unless the two groups did not receive adequate pedagogical training. From my experience and observations of both sets of TAs and the training program, it is my conclusion that the TAs do not receive sufficient training in how to assess students' texts, in particular NNSs' texts. To improve the situation of the current training program, I will highlight some potential solutions for the program in the recommendations section.

**The Research Questions**

The research questions guiding this study, which were previously outlined in the first and third chapters are:

1. When correcting NNSs' texts, which aspect are English 104 TAs at Iowa State University more concerned about: syntax or rhetoric?
What evaluative style does each TA assume when responding verbally to a NNS's text?

The answer to the first question appears to be syntax. The TAs' responses to syntax were found in both marginal and end comments, whereas responses to rhetoric were primarily limited to end comments. There was a greater frequency of responses to syntax overall. Because of the sentence-level nature of the TAs' comments, one could speculate that they view the purpose of assessment as correction of form rather than revision and organization of ideas. And, indeed, Siegel (1982) found that novice evaluators tend to focus more upon form than content. This point becomes especially apparent when TAs, like the ones in the current study, devote more attention to punctuation errors than to content. In addition, very few of the TAs commented on audience or tone. If a purpose of an academic writing course is to prepare students to write for an academic audience, then why are there so few comments about audience? Likewise, if a purpose of an academic writing course is to train the students to support their ideas, then why are there so few comments about content or organization? Overall, each TA approached his/her students' texts more as a proofreader than a true editor who would give feedback. The significance of this realization is that they are devoting more time commenting on issues of syntax, such as sentence-level errors, rather than issues of rhetoric, such as audience and content. In other words, their responses are centered more around the local level of language rather than the global perspective.

The second question, regarding verbal style, produces a diversity of answers. Since each TA has a unique personality and set of circumstances when assessing students' texts, it is natural that they would choose to adopt different styles of response. For instance, TA 1 heaved many sighs of irritation as she evaluated her students' texts due to her cold, whereas TA 3 interacted with the texts by laughing, perhaps because she was in a relaxed setting with her dog.
and only had two papers to assess. Overall, through their types of responses, the TAs tended to favor the use of the formal correction style to modeling. In other words, they identified the error rather than establishing a context for the error. However, in most cases, the difference in frequency between the two was not substantial. In addition, all of the TAs responded to the students as individuals when assessing the texts. Some used the first person plural “we” to establish a relationship between the writer and the reader/teacher. Others used the third person singular “she”/”he” to recognize the writer. In both instances, the TAs were acknowledging a personality behind the words of the text. Styles incorporating both personal comments and corrections were adopted by all TAs when assessing NNSs’ texts. For future studies, I would recommend not only identifying a teacher’s preference between modeling and formal evaluative styles of correction but also observing how that preference affects the teacher’s students, especially in terms of confidence and revision strategies. It is essential to remember that a response moves beyond the speaker to influence the receiver of the message.

Recommendations

My recommendations fall under several categories: the academic writing needs of NNSs, the weight of mechanics, TA training programs, and collaboration between ESL and English faculty members. These areas derive from researching potential solutions in other studies and formulating my own ideas in reflection.

First, concerning the academic writing needs of NNSs, more studies on writing need to be performed in disciplines other than English, disciplines in which students will be enrolled after the preliminary English composition course(s). This will give the composition teachers more of a sense of what the expectations of the academic audience are. In addition, it would be especially helpful to survey the NNSs who have gone through ESL and English composition
courses in order to determine their writing needs in other disciplines and how well their composition courses prepared them for other courses. Leki and Carson (1994) surveyed former ESL students to compare the writing instruction which the students had received in the ESL composition course with the types of writing tasks they performed in other courses. The purpose was to determine how successful the ESL writing curriculum had been in preparing those students for future writing tasks. Since Iowa State University students who take the ESL writing courses are also expected to take English 104, it would be beneficial to survey students to determine the effectiveness of the ESL writing instruction in preparing them for English 104. This knowledge would aid those TAs who have taught ESL but not English 104 in comprehending the expectations of the NNSs’ next academic audience. Additionally, the same type of survey should be applied to measure the effectiveness of the English 104 curriculum in preparing the NNSs for the university’s academic audience. The results from the current study suggest a need for English 104 TAs to expand their sense of the expectations of the university’s academic audience. These TAs gave minimal attention to issues of organization, content, audience, and tone, which seems to suggest that possibly they do not know or have not been trained to prepare their students for an academic level of language.

"When the issue of standards is addressed from the standpoint of functional communicative competences that are essential to writers in academic settings, attention becomes focused on the more realistic standards that all students need to attain in order to be ‘successful’ in the English-speaking educational environment” (Carlson and Bridgeman, 1986, p. 129). The English 104 TAs’ emphases upon punctuation and prepositions rather than content and organization represent a preference for form over functional communicative competency. That is not to say that form should be ignored. However, researchers and teachers should work together at establishing a clear hierarchy of the vital aspects of academic
literacy. Since TAs are generally novices in knowing how to assess a student’s text and since NNSs tend to base their revisions upon teachers’ comments, a hierarchy outlining the importance of rhetorical and syntactic errors needs to be designed. Most likely, a hierarchy designed for the academic audience would consist of content, then organization, then tone as the most important categories, then it would move down toward verb tenses (which can affect one’s understanding of a text and thereby claims a global-level status), then noun inflection, and trailing far behind would be punctuation and prepositions. Such a hierarchy would not only provide guidance for TAs, it would also promote consistency among teachers in assessing a student’s text.

To create a TA program which stresses consistency in assessment and an effective balance between theory and application, I would suggest that faculty members from the Iowa State University English Department research other freshman composition models. For instance, Schlumberger and Clymer (1989) describe the University of Arizona’s model in great detail. The first-year TAs at Arizona receive formal training in holistic scoring of NS essays. During their second year, the TAs learn how to holistically score NNS placement essays and participate in holistic exchange grading of final examinations. The program emphasizes mentorship and collaboration among peers. By researching other university models, Iowa State University could construct a TA program in which Master’s candidates are prepared to assess both NSs’ and NNSs’ texts.

Furthermore, to better understand how to assess NSs’ and NNSs’ texts, there needs to be active collaboration between the curriculum designers, professors, temporary instructors, and TAs of the ESL composition courses (101B and 101C) and English 104. Brown (1991), who involved ESL and English faculty members in a study which compared the importance of various criteria in their holistic evaluations of students’ papers, found that many long-term
benefits resulted from his research. In particular, the two faculties began to consult one another more on testing and policy issues and to organize workshops to improve each group’s understanding of the various expectations and approaches to writing. The various pedagogical groups which comprise the English department at Iowa State University could improve the transition between programs for NNSs as well as gain insight into more effective assessment strategies if they worked collaboratively toward establishing common goals and identifying their specific roles in the writing process. I strongly recommend future research which will promote collaboration among the English Department’s faculty members. That was the purpose of my study, and I hope future researchers will use the knowledge gained from my study to promote stronger working relationships among English and ESL faculty members, in turn providing NNSs with the basis for a more effective writing process.
APPENDIX A: DIRECTIONS FOR THE THINK-ALOUD

TO:

FROM: Heather Rudolph

RE: Directions for the Think-Aloud Protocol

DATE: March 3, 1996

Before you begin, I would like to thank you again for participating in this study. The following items consist of directions and explanations:

(1) Work in the place you would normally choose when assessing students' papers. The purpose is to create as authentic a situation as possible.

(2) When you initially turn on the tape recorder or Dictaphone, state your name and the date. Then, replay the tape in order to make sure it is a clear recording.

(3) Read each student's paper aloud and assess out loud as you move along. Say anything you are thinking, including things which pop into your head that may have nothing to do with the task. Just try to say as much as you are thinking. Naturally, thoughts jump around when people are thinking.

(4) To maintain the flow of your voice in relation to your thoughts, speak as continuously as you can. A goal might be to try to say something at least every five seconds. If you hit a blank, then say something like "I'm drawing a blank."

(5) Speak as you are thinking, whether it is in the form of phrases, sentences, or single words. Because there is no audience, do not concern yourself with sounding eloquent or forming complete sentences.

(6) Analyze the students' texts as you normally would as much as possible. Avoid overexplanation or any shift from your normal analytical behavior.

(7) Devote as much time to the task as you normally would.

(8) If you tire from the task, then state, "I am done for today" followed by your name and the date.

(9) When you have finished with all of your students' papers, then state, "I am completely finished" followed by your name and the date.

I need to have all the tapes on April 1, 1996. Please leave them (along with copies of the papers) in my campus mailbox by 4 p.m. that day. If some complication arises and you are unable to return the tapes at that time, then please contact me at 233-0025 or hrudolph@iastate.edu. After I have all the tapes, I will transcribe then code the verbalizations
and analyze the data. Let me know if you have any questions regarding the process of my research. I plan to hand in my final version of the thesis before summer session begins.

Please contact me if you need any other information or materials.
APPENDIX B: CODING CATEGORIES

RHETORIC

1) Content: evidence/support/relevance to topic, focused thesis, clear purpose (ideas)
2) Organization: transitions; clear relationship of ideas (structure)
3) Audience
4) Redundancy

SYNTAX

Verbs:
5) Inflectional morphology (agreement with nouns in person, number, etc.)
6) Verbal forms (participials, infinitives, gerunds) & aspects/tenses
7) Verb complementation (the types of clauses or constructions that must follow a particular verb)

Nouns:
8) Inflection (especially in terms of singular/plural and count/mass distinctions)
9) Derivation (deriving nouns from other parts of speech), e.g., quick - quickness

Articles:
10) Use of wrong article
11) Missing article
12) Use of an article when none is necessary or appropriate

Prepositions:
13) Knowing which one goes with a particular noun, verb, adjective, or adverb

14) Fragment
15) Run-on Sentence
16) Commas/Punctuation
17) Word Order
18) Spelling
19) Conjunctions
20) Word Choice
21) Relative Clauses
22) Miscellaneous

**STYLE**
23) Modeling
24) Formal
25) Attitude (nonverbal)
26) Personal comments about student, assignment, etc.
27) Skip
28) Unknown (Undecipherable)
APPENDIX C: THE THINK-ALOUDS

#1

"The Value of Money". From the movie, "The Gods Must Be Crazy", I found that the most obvious difference between the Bushman's culture and Chinese culture is in the attitude towards money. It was amazing that at the end of the movie, the Bushmen threw away the money in the field and left to look for the bottle. In contrast to Bushman's behavior, money is one of the important things in today's China. In this paper, I would like to discuss the reason for this difference and would like to suggest that this difference could have resulted from the difference between the societies in which Bushmen and Chinese are living.

Bushmen and Chinese live in two completely different societies. The Bushman's life is isolated from the out. Few people know that there exists such a group of people in our planet. Few people know their language. They still live in - in a primitive society. Bushmen live together in a whole family. Every family member has his/her own duty. For example, man go hunting to provide enough food to the whole family while woman takes care of children and old people. Everything in the family is shared fairly among all members. In Bushman's society there is no production of merchandise. There is no necessity of exchanging products among the people. As a result, there is no any kind of market in the Bushman's life, and there is no money at all in Bushman's society. Therefore, when the Bushman in the film received money, he didn't know what those notes are Money means nothing to Bushman. On the other hand, the situation is totally different in China. China, like any other countries in the world, is a highly civilized society. Money plays an essential role in people's life. Since China opened its hug market to the world, money becomes even more important. People in society are associated with a vast variety of professions. Similar to the Bushman's society, each profession has its own duty, either produces some specific products ((merchandise)), or provides some specific service.

It's pretty good. It's got a pretty good thesis.
However, unlike the Bushman, the members of each profession are not in a single family. They cannot share anything without any payments. People in one profession cannot live alone without other professions. They need products (merchandise), such as food, clothes, houses, cars, daycare, information and many others, provided by other professions. Their needs can be satisfied only if they pay for them. As a result money becomes the sole means of calculating the value of the exchange of products and services among people. In addition, with China's development, the economic relationships between China and other countries are booming.

Money is the major means of calculating the value of goods in the international trading. As long as people want to improve their live they must have money and use money. To certain extent we can say that money means everything in today's China.

In two completely different societies, Bushman and Chinese have totally different lives. It is hard to imagine that they would influence each other. However, I believe that Chinese can learn something from the Bushman. In today's China, people's attitude towards money is a little too extreme. In some cases, people can do nothing without money. As a result, the relationships among people has deteriorated to a kind of relationships of money. In order to obtain money, many people, especially youngsters, even commit crimes, making the society unstable. However, I still believe that love and friendship are superior to money. No matter how much money people have, they still not be happy unless they love others and are be loved reciprocally. In terms of love and friendship, I really prefer to live in Bushman's society. They trust, respect, and help each other. As they have enough food, their life is really peaceful and happy. I hope that Chinese may learn this from the Bushman's culture to make the whole society be a single family.

I admire bushman's life. However, I cannot bear living in a society that is exactly the same as the Bushman's society. I cannot live without the modern civilization. What I hope is that people in the Bushman's society and people in Chinese and other modern societies may all live better.

The Gods Must Be Crazy. For a long time, things have remained much the same for these Bushmen. But something changes their life one day. A gift from the Gods -- an empty Coke bottle dropped from the sky, completely changed the Bushman's life. The bushmen started fighting for the bottle because they discovered a lot of uses of the bottle and they wanted to own the bottle. This already violated their nature. Before the existence of the bottle, they share everything they have...
But now, it seems that people don’t have the tendency of sharing the bottle. Everyone wanted to own it. So a Bushman decided to throw the bottle away. For them, the bottle is an evil thing and it must be gotten rid of as soon as possible.

Why did they think the problem came from the bottle but not themselves? In my culture which practices capitalism, when people fight over something, a bottle, in this case, we would not think that the bottle is our cause for fighting.

However, we would think that if no one wants the bottle, it would not be any fighting at all.

Therefore, the source of the fighting is not the bottle, but the people who wanted the bottle. People in my culture would not give up in fighting for the bottle until the very last minute. We would not come out with a solution or compromise. If someone finally got the bottle, hatred starts emerging in others’ minds, and we would start thinking of some other way to get the bottle back. Why would we do this in such a way? This is the evil thing of capitalism. Capitalism is just like the synonym to greed and power. Sense of ownership is in everyone’s mind. If there is something we are able to own, we will not share it with others.

For those Bushmen, the situation is different. The bushmen are kind of simple-minded. They would think that it was the bottle that made them fight because there is only one bottle which they have never seen before.

If it wasn’t a bottle but something else that they already know, the situation would be different. They thought the bottle - they thought the bottle to have some magical powers (they thought the bottle had some magical power) that could make people lose their minds. So they sat down and discuss and finally came out with a decision which was throwing the bottle away. They have no sense of ownership at all. If there is something they cannot share among them, eliminating the thing is their solution to this problem. In the movie, once the bushmen have settled the problem, they are back into harmony again. There is no such thing like hatred in their minds. This is an obvious difference between the bushmen and us.

The main reason which makes a difference between the bushmen and the capitalistic cultures is the environment that these people in both cultures are surrounded.

People like us have been exposed to this capitalistic world for so long that we seem to have lost our human nature. The warmth, care, harmony among us are no longer in our culture. While the Bushmen still have the so called human nature remained in their culture (remaining in their culture) because their environment does not change or changes very little because the Kalahari desert - the place in which the bushmen are living has been isolated from the capitalistic world of greed and power for a long time until forever.

(I think the main problem with this is that he didn’t quite do the assignment - umm - I wanted them to compare - talk about some difference between the two cultures and give evidence to support it...)

(Shared - should be past tense)

6. 24, 23

But now, it seems that people don’t have the tendency of sharing the bottle. Everyone wanted to own it (he’s shifting tenses - seemed - I’ll write a little note here to be careful of shifting verb tenses). 6. 26, 24

Why did they think the problem came from (the) 11. 24

bottle but not themselves?

In my culture which practices capitalism, when people fight over something, a bottle, in this case, we would not think that the bottle is our cause for fighting (is the cause for our fighting). 10, 23

However, we would think that if no one wants the bottle, it would not be any fighting at all (there would not be any fighting at all). 20 (it/there distinction), 23

Therefore, the source of the fighting is not the bottle, but the people who wanted the bottle. People in my culture would not give up in fighting for the bottle until the very last minute. We would not come out with a solution or compromise. If someone finally got the bottle, hatred starts emerging in others’ mind (others’ minds - sigh - plural) 25, 23, 8

and we would start thinking of some other way to get the bottle back. Why would we do this in such a way? This is the evil thing of capitalism. Capitalism is just like the synonym to greed and power. Sense of ownership is in everyone’s mind. If there is something we are able to own, we will not share it with others.

(there’s an extra space between own and his comma - sigh - yeh, I guess that I was wondering about this paragraph. It didn’t seem to be very coherent, but I think it is. Well, that’s a problem.). 26, 25, 22 (space), 2

(Heh). 25

They would think that it was the bottle that made them fight because there is only one bottle which they have never seen before (Okay, I can see that). 25, 26

If it wasn’t a bottle but something else that they already know, the situation would be different. They thought the bottle - they thought the bottle to have some magical powers (they thought the bottle had some magical power) 6, 8, 23

that could make people lose their mind. So they sat down and discuss (ed) 6, 24 (that’s plural there) 8, 24

and finally came out with a decision which was throwing the bottle away. They have no sense of ownership at all. If there is something they cannot share among them, eliminating the thing is their solution to this problem. In the movie, once the bushmen have settled the problem, they are back into harmony again. There is no such thing like hatred in their minds. This is an obvious difference between the bushmen and us.

(Sigh.) 25

The main reason which makes a difference between the bushmen and the capitalistic cultures is the environment that these people in both cultures are surrounded (he’s got a sentence structure problem there - the main reason which makes a difference - okay). 17, 25, 26

People like us have been exposed to this capitalistic world for so long that we seem to have lost our human nature. The warmth, care, harmony among us are no longer in our culture. While the Bushmen still have the so called human nature remained in their culture (remaining in their culture) 6, 23 because their environment does not change or changes very little because the Kalahari desert - the place in which the bushmen are living has been isolated from the capitalistic world of greed and power for a long time until forever (Hmm - this sentence is kind of long). 25, 22 (sentence length)

(I think the main problem with this is that he didn’t quite do the assignment - umm - I wanted them to compare - talk about some difference between the two cultures and give evidence to support it...)

(Heh). 25
and I wanted them to talk about what it meant and he didn’t really do the second part about what we can learn from this - umm - I think other than that, I mean, he has some grammatical problems, but I think it’s mostly a problem with content that I’m gonna have him focus on my final comments.)

KI AND HIS ADVENTURE THROUGH AFRICA. The movie “The gods must be crazy” is a comedy. It is filmed in the outskirts of Africa in the Kalahari desert. The main purpose of the film is the clash of two cultures - hmm - is to portray the clash of two cultures - to portray the clash of two cultures.

The purpose of the film is the clash of two cultures - hmm - is to portray the clash of two cultures. Throughout the movie I found out about the Bushmen culture. They are a humble and happy group of people. Their society is organized as a tribe. They never have heard about crime, judges, laws, Presidents nor automobiles because of this the Bushmen never speak harshly to their children nor punish them (hmm - I’m not quite sure how that because - because fits in - okay). Even their children are well behaved and help around the chores of the tribe (help with the chores of the tribe).

The Bushmen culture is a spiritual one. For them everything has to do with their gods. They have never seen them, but they sure hear the rumble of their tummies. What they do not know is that the sound that the tribe hears is in fact the noise of passing airplanes. One peculiar thing about the Bushmen culture is the sense of not owning anything. Therefore the tribe likes to share everything between themselves and with others.

One fine day a Coke bottle fell from the sky, thrown by a passing airplane, and fell next to Ki, who is the hunter of the tribe (it’s probably not that the airplane is throwing the bottle). He immediately thought it was a gift from the gods like everything else they get, and took it to his tribe. Not knowing what ownership was he shared it with the tribes’ people. This wonderful gift became a useful tool for smashing, puncturing and many other things. Not knowing what type of material it was made of, they only knew two types of material bone and wood, it became a labor saving device (that sentence has got a problem).

Inexplicably some irrational feelings started brewing within the tribe. Feelings like wanting to own the bottle. These feelings lead to other feelings like jealousy and even violence. Ki, the Bushman that found the bottle, associated these shameful encounters to the bottle and called it the evil thing. The tribe started asking themselves why the gods so careless in giving them something so evil. When all along they had received from them good and useful things (oh, he’s got a problem - antecedents - the antecedent here is unclear - good and useful things), like tubers, roots, berries and animals to eat (spaces - spaces in between his commas). Ki decided to go to the end of the world and return the evil thing to the gods. It is because of this, that Ki leaves his permanent habitat and journeys into the civilized world and finds a whole new (race - a whole new)
world of wonderful and inexplicable things.

After viewing the movie I have seen similarities between Western and Bushmen culture. Like for example, the Bushmen culture has a balanced diet of carbohydrate and protein. The carbohydrates are found in the tubers and roots and the protein in the meat that they eat. The Western civilization has a balanced diet too, composed of carbohydrates and proteins. The only difference between the two cultures is the way to obtaining the food that each other eats. The Westerners shop in the grocery store, with money, their balanced diets and the Bushmen dig and hunt for it. First, the Bushmen do this because they do not know the meaning of money. Something that they do not need. The last scene proves this when Ki got paid for his services and through away the money. Another example would be that the Bushmen talk and reason with the animals. Once Ki went out to hunt a tranquilizer that killed his game. When the animal was dying Ki spoke to it explaining that he did this to feed his tribe. The Bushmen believe that wild animals have a mind of their own just like his and that they make decisions just as he does. There is a scene in the movie where a Baboon monkey took the bottle away from Ki. Instead of killing the animal to regain the bottle Ki talked to it. Explaining that the evil thing would bring shamefulness to it. The westerners talk to animals too. They even call it by names. The westerner’s reason with there pets. They scold them when it did a naughty thing and reward them when it does a good thing. The westerners train their pets by using key words. This is something that the Bushman does not do. Because the Bushmen do not have a sense of ownership and believe that everything has its vital place in the universe. The Bushmen do not tame any animal because these wild animal have a family to take care of too.

I can conclude, after viewing the movie, that because of not knowing what ownership is the Bushman culture prolongs itself in a state of naiveness. This helps them to understand much better their habitat.
and do not break its order. They retrieve everything from the nature that surrounds them. Their houses are made of mud and straw, their utensils are from wood and bones. Therefore they use what is necessary, thus they live in a nomadic state

Furthermore their nomadic lifestyle does not limit the Bushmen to learn from others (uh, does not allow the Bushmen to learn from others - does not let the Bushmen - sigh - does not prevent the Bushmen from learning from others).  

Ki, the little Bushman, left his village as a brave hunter with all the knowledge to survive on his own. But Ki thought the entire world (would) like his habitat, simple, repetitive and innocent. When Ki confronted himself to the vastness of the world with people who are not like him, he thought they were gods, Ki did not feel afraid of them (comma splice there).  

Ki was willing to learn from them.

I can also conclude that between the two cultures there are more similarities than differences. Like for example, when Ki was arrested for theft, Mapudi a westerner, and Mr. Styne (’s) helper did everything he could to liberate Ki from jail, and finally he did so. But earlier in the movie Mapudi told Mr. Styne that when Botswana was a colony of the English, he had to flee to the Kalahari desert and almost died there if not for the Bushmen who revived him and took him in to live with them.  

In another scene (comma - I don’t understand why he has a but here, though - I don’t understand what this is in opposition to - another scene) Mapudi (was almost) eaten by a lion Ki risked his life by scaring the animal away (he needs to have a period between these two sentences).  

I can conclude that when it comes to a matter of emotion, understanding, caring and even sharing the Bushmen culture and the western culture are alike (okay).  

The big difference between these two cultures is that the western culture have rules to obey (has rules to obey), time to follow by (sigh - not sure what that means - time to follow by), nature to destroy and transform to suit society’s needs and technology to invent thus creating labor saving devices to quicken society’s labor (boy - The big difference between these two cultures is that the western culture has rules to obey, time to follow by, nature to destroy and transform to suit society’s needs and technology to invent thus creating labor saving devices to quicken society’s labor - I’d say that’s really long - the sentence is a bit long - long and hard to read - sigh).  

All of these things the Bushmen culture lacks and does not need (okay).  

Just because they do not have the sense of ownership that the Western culture craves for (that’s another sentence fragment).  

But the advances in the western society do not prevent the Bushmen culture to learn from them and survive through them (from learning - surviving).  
As a scene in the movie reveals when Ki learn
(s) 5, 24
how to drive an automobile, an animal that Ki had never seen before.

(Hmm - I'm a little confused about what his overall thesis is - he seems to be jumping around
between a lot of different things - I think that's the main, the main thing he needs to work on - his
paragraph structure isn't great, but I think he needs to work first on making sure that his essay as a whole
is coherent and that he has one, one thing that he's talking about instead of trying to run around to a lot of
different things.)

25, 1, 2, 26

#4

Technologies: Is it important in our life?
(it and technologies don't agree). 22 (agreement), 24

Could a person live with no computer, television, and microwave? Most of us can't survive
without them. Surprisingly, according to the movie The Gods Must Be Crazy, the Bushman
(e) 8, 24

n do they live with no televisions or computers
(need to have a period there and a new sentence break). 16, 24, 15

It is remarkable that the Bushman
(e) 8, 24

n can survive in the desert without any technologies that resemble us
(it should be that resemble ours). 9, 23

As a result, the Bushman culture has a significant difference compared to my culture since
technology is not used
(in their - it should be in their culture - in their culture). 20, 23, 24

Unlike the Bushman
(e) 8, 24

n, we deliberately change our environment to suit us. (Break in Tape) Even they barely have clothes on
them and foods are extremely limited
(get rid of the even). 20, 24

As for my culture, it is quite similar to the American culture. We depend most on technologies, we barely
depend on ourselves
(it's a semi-colon instead of a comma). 16, 24

For instance, we prefer to drive
(rather - she forgot the rather) 20, 24, 26

than walk even though it is within walking distance
(antecedent here - it's not clear). 22 (antecedent), 24, 26

Consequently, these technologies have become significant in our life.

In addition, the Bushman
(e) 8, 24

n culture has a simpler life than we do as they have no sophisticated technologies. In their culture,
everyone is assigned a specific job. Men hunt and collect food while women take care of the children.
Children does
(it should be do - do) 5, 24

not have any specific jobs. They play and sometimes collect foods. They live in different communities
and sometimes gather together to meet each other and have fun. They even have a simple language
which words are limited
(sigh - with - with words). 25, 13, 23

In fact, there are no words for the word 'guilty'. This evidently showed that they rarely fight with anyone
or I should say they do not punish. If a boy hits a girl with a stick, the Bushman
(e) 8, 24

n will blame the stick instead of the boy. They consider the stick an "evil thing" as it creates conflict
among them. This showed that they put a lot of emphasis on harmony and have less emphasis on
modifying the nature. They believe nature is given by God and therefore they do not intend to modify any
of those
Though technologies give us convenience and increase our efficiency, however it can create a lot of problems. An increase in technologies does not always give us a promising future. Also, it creates an extreme dependence and ownership which become important in our life as ownership show status. Consequently, this creates greed that will lead us to do anything even commit crimes to fulfill our satisfactions. Unlike the Bushmen, they do not own any, instead they share whatever they have. It is funny though, that the Bushmen can survive without help with any technologies while we depend so much on them. As a result, I would prefer my culture similar to the Bushmen where no wars or killing occurring. However, it will not be exactly like theirs, we can still have houses, and clothes, but not to the extreme that will lead to war and killing. War and killing are the consequences of greed, and status. Most importantly, we should emphasize more on the importance of harmony like the Bushmen.

Water in the Kalahari Desert

Everybody who is living all over the world knows that water is significant for surviving. However, have you ever thought about no water in your life? It is difficult to imagine because Western people who live in Europe and American can get water very easily. Nevertheless, Bushmen are living almost no water in their life. There are different concepts about water between Bushmen and Western people because of not only weather but also their own culture; however, there are some similarities between them.
Kalahari desert. There is hot and dry weather all year. A rainy season is only for three months a year. After the rainy season, Bushmen are living without water. However they know how to get water such on a dry ground (she wants to say they know how to get water on such a dry ground). 17, 23, 26

For example, Bushmen drink a drop water from leaves in early morning (drink drops of water from leaves in early morning). 8, 13, 23

The drop water is too little to drink; however, it is important for their living. I do not need to get water from leaves because I can drink fresh water, wherever and whenever I want. Therefore, how to get water is difference between Bushmen and Western people (is different - that paragraph doesn't have a topic sentence). 9, 1, 2, 23, 24

However, both Bushmen and Western people have two same concepts about water (two similar concepts). 20, 23

One is that God gives us water for living. Bushmen think that everything is from God, and God always gives them good things. Therefore, when they got the Coke bottle, it made them bother (I don’t know what she means by that - it’s also not clear how this relates to water). 26, 1, 2

Western people also think that water is from God; however, they do not think everything is from God because they know the difference between natural resources and human resources. Another concept is that both Bushmen and Western people think water is important. Not only Bushmen and Western people but also all human beings know about it (okay). 25

In addition, there are some different concepts about water between Bushmen and Western people. Western people know that sometimes water makes havoc to us (is havoc for us). 20, 13, 23

For example, people are struck by a disaster that is flood. The flood destroys buildings, bridges and farms; moreover, it occurs death of people and animals (be it causes). 23, 20

However, Bushmen never imagine that water could bring such terrible things. They believe that water is a very good thing (is a very good thing) 11, 23 because they are lack of water (they have a lack of water). 20, 11, 23

It must be a dream to swim in a big pool for them. Even rain is for drinking and washing body for them; however, we do not drink rain and we do not wash our bodies by rain. There are different ways of using rain. Therefore there are two situations that Bushmen need water in the desert, and people want to avoid water in a flood disaster (not exactly sure what she means by this - meaning is unclear). 26, 1

Bushmen are telling us how much water is important. Even though we know that water is a necessity for our livelihood, we do not pay attention to water so much. As a result, we often forget that water is (a) 11, 24

limited resource and how much water is important (okay). 25

Because water is available everywhere in our living, we do not know how we can survive without water. For instance, if there are no water at every ocean, how do you survive (there is no water in every river and ocean, how do you survive)? 5, 13, 23

What can you do? There will be no fish, no planets, and no animals (I think she means plants, not planets). 18, 24, 26

We might be dead soon because we need food and water for surviving. In fact, it is clear that we know just one world that has full of water (that is full of water). 20, 23

How much do you use water everyday, even though Bushmen are suffering without water?

Two different cultures that are Bushmen’s life and Western people’s life have some differences and similarities. Even though Bushmen are living almost without water, Western people are living with enough water. The way of Bushmen's living teaches us how much water is necessary and how human beings can live without water. Moreover, we have to think about the limited resource, water.
The movie "The Gods Must Be Crazy" is a very entertaining comedy. It features on a Bushman who has never been to the outside world. Isn't he living in the same world as everyone? What is "outside world" then? Practically, he is staying in dessert with his family (a desert - he wrote it as dessert rather than desert - with his family). Approximately twenty people. Their life is very much like an uncivilized tribe. Property is shared among themselves. And, they have no law and regulations (sigh).

In general, I can say that they know nothing about the development of the world and isolated from others (should be are isolated from others). Six hundred miles away from the desert there is a fully developed city with high rises and busy traffic. People in that city are living in a typical city life, namely nine to five working hours, traffic jams around the town and competing for employment, (sigh - she's got problems with parallelism, but I - I might not mark that because of what she has other problems with in here - seems kind of minor). Intuitively, there are great differences between the Bushmen's world and the developed city. Besides the lifestyle differences, they have a great difference in their philosophy too. The obvious one in this movie is their philosophy of life. For instance, the Bushmen explain to the animal he hunted that he had no choice other than sacrificing it in order to cure his hunger. This is not a familiar thing in current society. From this incident, I can judge that the Bushmen have much more appreciation of life than in contemporary city people (okay - yes, I guess that's a good introduction - she's got a thesis here). For the Bushmen, all lives are almost equally important to this world. There was a scene where the Bushmen had tried to communicate with a monkey and pursue the monkey to do something too (she doesn't mean pursue - I think she means persuade). From the scene, it showed that he had treated the monkey very much like a human being. Nevertheless, they believe that the stronger species get to survive and possess a promising existence. As mentioned before, the Bushman had to kill a goat in order to supply food to himself - she had an extra word in there - to himself and his family. After he killed the goat, he pleaded the goat for forgiveness (pleaded to the goat for forgiveness). Indeed, they (she's got a they there again with no - the antecedent isn't clear - indeed, they)
believe that God has created the world which has nothing bad or evil. That is the reason why the Bushmen language has no such word as evil. This may be one of the reason (reasons) why they value the nature and life so much.

Relatively, Westerners have different attitude towards lives from the Bushmen. For Westerners, human being is the top among all the species. As a result, they have been changing the world to suit themselves instead of fitting themselves into the natural world. In the city that had been shown in that movie, there are many people and vehicles around the town. There is no more natural habitat in that diverse city to accommodate animals. In fact, human being have taken over the animals' natural habitats. Animal will be kept in the houses as pets. Wild animals will be caged in zoos. These animals have no freedom as they in the jungle.

Sometimes, people may adore particular creatures and treat them as pets with a very good treatment. Though, they will not treat common animals like goat and monkey as the Bushmen do. In general, people view animals vary by the values of the animals.

In my own culture, Malaysian culture, people seem to have a different philosophy of life from the Bushmen. In our society, people do appreciate lives very much. However, the level of appreciation towards various kinds of things is differed according to their value. Generally, I can say that the most valuable life is the life of a human being. As a result, government has law to protect people's lives. If happened that one had endanger others lives, the person may get into deep trouble. He or she could get himself or herself a death penalty sentence. From the other hand, penalties for those who have threat or killed creatures are much less severe as human beings. In fact, not every type of animal is protected by the law. The law will only protect rare animals. From the degree of punishment, it shows how much of our appreciation towards those lives as a matter of fact, protection against common animals does not draw any attention from the people.
The Bushmen philosophy of life plays an important role in our society. As I mentioned so much on animals, I should emphasize here that it does concern with the appreciation of human life too.

As we grade animals according to their value, it reflects that we will class people into categories too.

Some people think that they treat everyone the same. In other words, they are certain that they are not sexist or racist. However, this seems impossible in today's complex world. Somehow, on will unconsciously class people according to others' capability, social standing, gender, nationality, race,... As a result, contemporary people cannot expect equal treatment from the society. To acquire good treatment and high respect, one must put some effort to upgrade their category.

In my opinion, the Bushmen cannot accept our attitude toward animals and human beings as well. They will neither understand nor forgive us who slaughter animals as granted. In fact, we are not killing animals for food only. For instance, street dogs have been killed because they disgraced the beauty of cities. Thinking by the side of Bushmen, the dogs have the right to live and hang around anyway they like. In Malaysia, licenses are necessary to own pets. I think the Bushmen will never believe that animals need to possess licenses to live.

In general, my culture is very similar to the Western culture. We grade lives according to their current and future value. From the other hand, the Bushmen value lives because they are equally created by the God. And, they believe God has created nothing evil in this world. Even though it is impossible to be exactly like the Bushmen society, it will more or less improve our society harmony if we follow part of their philosophy.

(Oh, good job - I think there's really nothing - um - a need that she needs to work on is her grammar - I think there are - don't see any problem with any of the paragraphs with the paragraph structure - she's got what the Bushmen think and what the Westerners think - what her own culture thinks - an idea about humans instead of animals - yeh, I think she did a good job).
"There is no more beautiful time than the time I spent in High School."

Almost everyone spends his youth as a student. From studying, he gets knowledge and experiences. For me, school is very important because that is the place where I come to know who I am and how smart I am. Of all the years that I have spent as a student, junior high was the most beautiful (year) in my academic life because I made many friends and I liked the teachers.

Of all my teachers, my favorite teacher was Christ de Kock. He taught the Math class of my third year in junior high school and he was also the principal of the high school. I liked him because he helped me to improve my math. I remember his kindness when I was sick. In August 1991 I got chicken pox and for two weeks I couldn’t go to school. Because of being absent for a long time, I found that I was far behind in math and did not understand anything. To solve my problem, I went to Christ’s office for help and he offered to give me extra math course on every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The course started at 1:00 pm after my class finished. He taught me the formulas and methods; then he asked me to do several problems. The way he taught me was very useful because it made me remember the formulas. I took this course very seriously because I realized how important math was for my future, and I did not want to disappoint him (um - I like the sentence structure so far - ah - he’s pretty clear in his syntax - ah - and not as many verb tense problems as I would’ve thought - um - I’ll get back to this - um).

As the result of this course, I caught up with the subject and I was one of the five students that always got the highest grade in Math.

Every day I used to study about 3-4 hours I spent one hour studying math and the other 2-3 hours taking notes for other subjects. I spent more time in Math because for me Math is a difficult course and needs more practice. To prepare myself for math test I spent 2-3 hours studying and practicing. At first I would read through the materials and do the example problems. After I understood them well, I would do the other harder problems. I also used this method in studying Physics and Chemistry. For the other subject (I think he means subjects - ah - he seems to have a problem with plurality here) I spent more time reading and preparing notes (ah - I think that’s a little inverted - maybe it should be I generally spent more time).

I liked to do Math exams carefully and honestly. But, in other subjects like Geography and History which I had no credits (I guess he means in which I had no credits, so insert an in), I turned 180 degrees and cheated each other with my friends (ah - I think we can just cross out each other - cheated with my friends). I never took notes or paid attention to these subjects. Because of this bad attitude, I had to spend much time studying these subjects for the final exam, because as we know it was hard to cheat at that time.

I still remember the hard time I had preparing for the final exams, especially the History and Geography tests.

I had to spend my nights until about 3:00 am to finish reading the materials. Sometimes, I had to drink coffee so I could resist not being fallen asleep during studying. I could resist not falling asleep during studying - ah - we’ll just change that to falling.

But all my effort was useful because I got good
Now I realize that what I did in Geography and History courses was really bad. What I have done for my Math course should have been done in other subjects. I should have taken more attention to my Geography, History and other subjects no matter how important the subject is to me because there is no single subject that is less important.

For me, life as a student was wonderful because that was the time I could know other people, get experiences about friendship, love, and lab-experiences. There is nothing that we can not find in school. Times will make me older, but I will never forget those days because they were the most memorable days of my life.

(Ah - I think the material here is a bit sparse - ah - lacking in descriptive detail - ah - perhaps a focus on a single - on one single experience would have allowed - ah - for a more telling narrative here - I get no physical sense of your teacher - ah - What did he look like, dress like, talk like, etcetera? - um - I think the expression here is - is - ah - just - I don’t know - fair - ah - there’s no really - ah - surprising sort of word choice - ah - but then again there’s nothing really bad about it either - um - syntax is good as I said - ah - organization I said is - ah - I would say it’s probably just fair also - um - there didn’t seem to be any kind of order around topic sentences per se - I would suggest working for stronger verbs and nouns - using figurative language - perhaps get some metaphors and similies in there - and maybe work for economy - it felt like there was a lot of repetition here - um - the main thing clarify what that epigram is at the beginning - There’s no time more beautiful - There is no more beautiful time than the time I spent in High School - it seems to just be a quote from himself - so I guess I would give this - ah - this paper - ah - a good C overall passing for the correctness cause there are hardly an - there really are no correctness errors - ah - so I say this is a fair paper).

#8

(Ah - Sweet memories is the next one).

I have spent about thirteen years of my life as a student and spent three years from those in high school (that from should probably be of).  My high school years were the greatest time in my academic life, because I have many friends (had many friends) and I experienced my first date (looks like we have a tense problem here).  The classes I took were also great. Well... not all of them, but most of them were fine to me.  My favorite class was Geography because I had no credits on that subject (should be in that subject).  What made it even better was the teacher. He was so young, and I think he still is (ah - I guess I don’t really get the logic of that, but).

He got no charisma in front of all of his students (he had, maybe - he should change the got to a had).  He also couldn’t teach well, so my friends and I just talked to each other, laughed and played games instead of taking notes and paying attention to him (ah - it’s not parallel because of the past tense paid - taking notes and paying - let’s change paid to paying - taking and paying)
There was a time when he taught in front of the class and class was so noisy, and he got angry and yelled at one of my friends. Do you know what happened? My friend yelled back at him and he just left the class, then everyone in my class laughed. The next day, the principal came to my class and told us not to do that again, and the teacher came back.

When I got an exam, I cheated on others who had taken a note, because like I said, I didn’t take notes in geography class.

I didn’t cheat alone, everybody in the class did. When the results came out, all of us had the same grade, and they were all good. For three years I had geography classes and they all went the same way. But in other classes I took them seriously and I copied down notes.

Now I realize that what I did in Geography class was not good. I didn’t respect my teacher, and I played jokes on him. I also realized that I only saw things from my view, not from his view.

He taught because he needs to feed his family, and I made it hard for him. That was the past time, and now I try to give more attention to the teacher when I’m in class.

Well, I remember that I had another experience in math. At first time, I didn’t really like math because it was very boring and the teacher couldn’t teach well.

But later, without any explanation from the principal, my math teacher had been replaced by a new teacher. She is very attractive and young.

At that time, I became like math until now. What I heard from my friends in other classes is that people who had a bad habit like sleeping at class, not doing their homework became conscious and changed their attitude.

People always paid attention to her when she was trying to give some lectures in class. No wonder my friends and I always got a good grade in math because of paying attention to her lecture.

Being a student is not as simple as I think. I always nervous in taking the tests all the time even I am ready for it.

Paying attention to the lectures is also not my habit so I hope that in my future I try to pay attention to all of my teachers in order to get knowledge which I think is important in my education life.

(Ah - as with the last paper, I would say the material is a bit sparse, lacking in detail - ah - not very surprising - ah - in its use of language in my opinion - um - I guess the I like the tone of this one a
little more, though - the writer here adopts sort of a conversational tone pretty effectively I think - I think maybe the problem here is the situation he describes - maybe a focus on one episode would have allowed for more detail - ah - physical descriptions, etcetera - um - maybe just a focus on I don't know the one class - I get a little confused between the two classes here - the - the teacher who couldn't teach and then the - ah - the woman teacher who he describes - maybe because of the lack of detail I guess I sort of get a little confused - she is attractive and young - key words not no charisma - um - maybe if he focused on just one of those or something - I don't know - seems to jump around a little bit - organization and expression are fair - uh - fairly good - aside from several errors in verb tense and articles - ah - was it plurality? - yeh, plurals - I would say the writing is pretty clear - I'd say it's just average - I would suggest working for figurative language - using metaphors to spice this up a little - maybe use some more surprising verbs and nouns - this seems to be - ah - I don't know - I think about most of the international student writing is that the word choice is often just kind of ordinary and I guess that's to be expected when it's - when it's second language - they're just not very fun to read I guess would be my first impression of these papers).

(Major Turning Points Of my Life - broad title - Assignment 1)  
To me, school serves two functions. The first one is the manifest function where it provides knowledge and education (oh, manifest is a good word). 25, 20  
The second function is the latent function where it serves as a ground of social lives. Both of these functions have contributed greatly to the development of my life as a student (well, that's a good intro - I like the word choice here). 25, 1, 2, 20, 26  
I believe that life as a student is never easy. I have been spending 14 years of my life playing the role of a student as well as several other roles simultaneously (here it should be I have spent 14 years of my life - tense). 6, 23, 24  
I have to be a daughter to my parents, a sister to my siblings, a student in school and many more. Of all those, life as a student is the most hectic and demanding one (ah - a good intro I think). 25, 1, 2, 26  
There are always tons of academic work loads to accomplish - be it in elementary, secondary, college or university that makes me pretty occupied most of the time. To start off, I was from the same catholic school known as Canossian Convent girl school since kindergarten, primary and secondary (um - I think we need a stronger verb here - was from the same school - maybe attended - I attended the same catholic school known as the Canossian Convent girl school - let's insert some commas between that clause there - or that phrase rather - since kindergarten or maybe from - from kindergarten - or for kindergarten, primary and secondary). 25, 20, 16, 23, 24, 26  
I cannot recall anything about my kindergarten year. Maybe I was too young that time and did not bother to cherish any childhood memories (um - maybe we should insert at there - maybe I was too young at that time - ah, yeh). 25, 13, 24, 23, 26  
I remember once I was in primary six (we need when - I remember once when I was in primary six), 20, 24, 23, 26  
I was told to do a science project to represent my school in the district competition that was held yearly. The school put so much pressure on me, when there comes a time that I thought I would explode (maybe when the time came is what she meant there)! 17, 23  
The year was 1988, when Canossian Convent Primary School was (announcing - was) 23  
announced the champion of the year (maybe that should be announcing and I read it that way - was announcing - yeh, that sounds better). 6, 25, 26, 23, 24  
I was struck numb when I heard the announcement made by one of the judges. I was overjoyed with my success but deep within my heart, I silently thanked my science teacher, Mr. Lum Man Lung who was there for us in preparing for the competition (ah, so I take that to mean that she won). 25, 1, 26  
Later, upon returning to school, to my greatest surprise, my principal gave us a treat to Mac.Donald
It was really a memorable event that I will never forget. I learned a lot about team cooperation and consideration for other people.

Life in secondary school was far worst
(I guess she means worse - far worse). There were two major national examinations
that are the SRF and the SPM. I took the SPM in 1993 while I was in senior high. I can say that I have contributed most of my time in preparing for these two examinations that will affect my career and life in the near future
(maybe and they will affect my career and life in the near future). Thus, I burned midnight oil every night a month before the examination
(burned the midnight oil is a cliche here).
Besides having headache and butterflies in my stomach
(that should be headaches - Besides having headaches and butterflies in my stomach)
about examinations, there are always never ending tests, homework, assignments and quizzes that I have to do in every class. Teachers never 'spoon feed' us
(with any relevant materials about our assignment. We have to do our own research in the library.
Unfortunately, we do not have enough books in the library when everyone in the class is trying to have them
(yes, I know what that's like).

I was very depressed that time, having to go through so many works. I remember vividly that on the 26th of August 1993, I was carried to the principal's office because I fainted in the middle of the class assembly
(It was due to the result of skipping meals. My mother lectured and grumbled about the incident
(each time I tried to skip meal)

I was very happy that in the end, my hard work paid off

Besides having cold sweat and sleepless nights over examinations

Besides having a great time during my secondary school year. It was on Christmas eve

I guess people must be wondering why all the trouble? Take life easily. All these sacrifices are due to the fact of receiving scholarships. All of my family members are granted scholarship by the government and I do not one to be left out

I did have a great time during my secondary school year. It was on Christmas eve

Besides having cold sweat and sleepless nights over examinations

Besides having cold sweat and sleepless nights over examinations, I did have a great time during my secondary school year. It was on Christmas eve

Besides having a great time during my secondary school year. It was on Christmas eve

in order to sell them to outsiders. Many people turned up that day. I insisted my mother to teach me how to cook some Chinese cuisine

(chinese should probably be capitalized - Chinese cuisine)

(Chinese cuisine)
for the 'kantin day.' I came up with sweet sour pork
(sweet and sour pork, maybe?) 19, 23
and 'bak kut the' (chinese herbal chicken). I was proud of myself because I have never taken
the initiative to learn how to cook before
(there's some good description - I like this). 20, 1, 26
I sold all of my food and handed all the money to the class teacher. The 'kantin day' is for the funding of
our new building that is to be the auditorium, north west to the canteen (again a problem with tense
-strange because it seems as though she's thinking back and kind of reliving the present time that it was - if
that makes sense - so is should be changed to was 'kantin day' was for the funding - and that is to be the
auditorium - that is now the auditorium probably - that is now the auditorium, north west to the canteen).
6, 26, 23, 24, 20
I was also told to be the flower girl. I have to sell flowers
(again that should be had - past tense - I had to sell flowers) 6, 23, 24
and candy to the visitors. I really had a great time and fond memories about high school. (Ah, I gotta get
a drink.) 25, 26
Well, now that I think back, I have done so much for my school and vice versa. I really felt deja
vu each times I talk about it
(I really feel deja vu every time I talk about it? - ah, let's make those changes).
6, 8, 26, 23, 25
I guess I will never stop learning about life and that means
(well, let's put a comma in there - I guess I will never stop learning about life comma and that means) 25, 16, 24, 23
I am going to be a student for the rest of my life. I have grown to be more mature psychologically and
cognitively through all these experiences in life. Therefore, I will always cherish all the fond and sad
memories no matter where I go.

(Good material here - good vocabulary - I thought the vocabulary and word choice is quite strong
here - I think aside from sort of problems like verb tense and plurality - and prepositions, which seem to be
a problem for the students - I think aside from those things - and the cliches of course - gotta get those
outta there - I think aside from those things the writing is well-organized and pretty well expressed - I
would give a good on organization and expression and a good to excellent on material, so a B+). 1, 20, 6, 8, 13, 26, 2

#10
(Next we have BEAUTIFUL MOMENT IN MY LIFE - Beautiful Moment in My Life seems like a pretty
weak title to me - I don't know). 1, 20, 26
(I think this first paragraph is indented too much also). 2 (indentation), 26
I spent my first six years studying in my hometown for elementary school. At 12 years old
(should probably be spelled out since it's just a syllable - At twelve years old) 18, 23, 24
I moved to different city to continue my study in junior high school
(let's put an a in there - to a different city). 11, 23, 24
When people ask about my life as a student I can answer them that my life is the same as other ordinary
student
(should be students - as other ordinary students - um - I don't know - it doesn't seem too relevant -
let's see). 8, 23, 24, 25, 26, 1
I started my day at 06.00 AM
(it's military time - oh six hundred - I started my day at 6 a.m.) 26, 18, 23
and ended it up at 11:00 PM, that was my routine as a student. If people ask me what is interesting from
my life as student, I can give many stories that are interesting from my life as student
(ah - that's pretty repetitive - ha ha ask him how he thinks he can fix that - I don't know - he seems to be
hedging here - I think he should just begin the story - takes him a whole nother paragraph it looks like
-well, let's get to it). 25, 4, 26, 1, 2
One thing is very interesting that I always remember is what my parents had taught me since I
was elementary student
(I think we have an extra verb there - One thing is very interesting that I always remember is what - yeh,
let's cut one of those is - One thing is very interesting that I always remember - I think we maybe need
another sentence here or something - my parents had taught me since I was elementary student - an elementary student? - or in elementary school?). 7, 17, 23, 24, 11, 13, 25
They always taught me that I must learn as much as I can, because that is the only thing that they can provide to me that I can use forever. That encourage me to learn about many things (that should be encouraged - That encouraged me to learn about many things) 6, 23, 24
and always want to continue my studying to higher degree (to a higher degree - insert an a there). 11, 23, 24
(Ahright, here we go - now is where the scene of the story starts). 1, 2, 26
The most interesting class that I ever took was my algebra class. I took the class for my first two years in the high school (in high school - scratch out the the). 12, 23, 24
I think it was very interesting because that was the first time I became interested in mathematics, I never like mathematics before (he uses interesting twice, so I think he should vary some word choice here - also it looks like we have a comma splice here - I think it was very interesting because that was the first time I became interested in mathematics, comma I never liked mathematics before - yeh, we gotta comma splice here - let's I'll make a note of that). 4, 20, 24, 16, 25, 26, 23
I remember the instructor's name: Mr. Riko Khonto. First time I took his test (the first time? - insert a the there - The first time I took his test) 11, 23, 24
I got very bad mark (I got very bad marks I guess is what he wants to say). 23, 8, 26
So he called me to talk to me (I would combine those two sentences.) 17 (combine sentences), 24, 26
He asked me why I got very bad mark (s) 8, 24
in his class (I would even combine that one - let's see, how would I do that? - The first time I took his test I got very bad marks - and he called and talked - ah - and he called and asked me why I got the bad marks in his class - maybe something like that - anyway, the simple sentences kinda could be combined into more complex ones). 17, 26, 25, 23
So I told him that I did not like mathematics, because I heard people said (I heard people say I guess he means) 6, 23, 26
that mathematics was difficult. He tried to convince me that my perception about mathematics (was - need a was there - mathematics was) 6, 23, 24
absolutely wrong, and if I assumed something was difficult before I tried it by myself, it becomes really difficult when I really try it (alright, we got some repetition here with really and it seems to just run on here - let's see) 25, 4, 15, 26
He tried to convince me that my perception about mathematics absolutely wrong (was absolutely wrong), 6, 23, 24
comma and if I assumed something was difficult before I tried it by myself, comma it becomes really difficult when I really try it (I guess I get the gist about ya know the teacher convincing him and his perception about math as being hard - ah - maybe he isn't really accurate or something). 1, 25, 26, 2
He gave me some advice too about how to study mathematics by doing many example problems (that's better). 26

After what he had done I became closer to him (I think we need a comma after that after what he had done). 16, 24, 26
I did not hate mathematics anymore. I tried to do my best when taking his test (test should be tests). 8, 24
The result was not bad, (comma) just reading (ah - I would call that a comma splice - um - that's two independent clauses). 25, 16, 17, 24, 26, 15
One thing I really respected from my instructor's personality was his discipline. He organized his time very well. He taught me to organize my time too.

He told me that the most valuable thing that I have now is my time. "When you are getting old, it is useless to regret what you have already done, so when you are still young use your time wisely." I was really sad when I heard that he passed away on November 13 last year, in 55 years old.

Sometimes I hope he is still alive and I can still have his wise advi.

These were some experiences that I considered interesting during my life as a student.

Although sometimes bored with it I couldn't agree more with their opinion that's it's.

Studying and doing homework are the main things we have to do. The hardest thing to do is to do the exams.
I usually study until one o’clock in the morning when there is an exam that day. (that seems a little backwards - When there is an exam, I usually study until one o’clock in the morning - I think maybe he should begin it with what he ends up with here).

Every student must have the same experience of that (every student, so that should be singular - must have the same experience - probably cut of that).

After all, comma studyint is not as hard as I thought, comma (is he talking in first or third person here? - Every student must have the same experience - I thought if we regularly review the material - wait a minute - let me start this one over again - After all, studying is not as hard as I thought, if we regularly review the material every day - ah, yeh - I think he’s not sure whether he’s talking in the first or third person here - we should make that we and I since he seems to begin in first person - regularly review the material every day - that seems sort of redundant, too - regularly and every day - sort of imply the same thing).

Having used this method (having used - that should probably be used - Having used this method) of studying, I hardly believe that not even it improves my grade but also saving my times on studying (wow - that’s kind of awkwardly worded - um - I hardly believe that it doesn’t improve my grades? - something like that - comma but also saves time - can cut the rest). However it was not the hardest thing (comma after however - However comma it was not the hardest thing)

after we (again he’s switching back to third person - that should be first person - However, it was not the hardest thing after we found out that doing what the teacher wanted us to do is the hardest one - one what? - and also us should probably be me - that one is pretty vague).

The worst thing was when the teacher force or dictating us to do something she/he wants (was should maybe be is - The worst thing is when the teacher forces or dictates us to do something he/she wants - ah - I don’t know - I’m not sure the tense here whether he’s telling this in past tense or present tense - I assume it’s present tense because he begins by sort of talking about living as a student how some aspects of fun also lots of trouble - so I guess I would change this to is and forces and dictates - make that parallel - The worst thing is when that teacher, forces or dictates us to do something - yeh, sounds right).

It happened when I was in high school for the first year. I was 15 years old. I was nervous for having new classes. I was not used to handle things by myself (hand - I was not used to handling things by myself - handle should be handling). Usually I got my brother in the same school, so he would be the one that help me. Here I was taught a new class, called chemistry. The Teacher who taught that was not very friendly (we’ve got some simple sentences here that maybe could be combined - also the one that help me should probably be helped me - teacher does not need to be capitalized).

Shenamed hundreds of rules that if we happened to disobey them we would get penalty without warning anymore (named is probably not a proper word choice here - she gave hundreds of rules? - or she told hundreds - um, I’m not sure - or she had hundreds of rules that if we happened to disobey them we would be penalized? - get penalty sounds strange - we would be penalized without warning - I don’t know why there’s anymore at the end here - let’s cut anymore and make get penalty into be penalized).

I wouldn’t dare to break her rules.
(again I'm not sure whether he's talking in present or past tense - I assume he's telling something from the past, so maybe all these present tense verbs should be past tense).

6. 1, 24, 26
The worst thing is that her voice was unclear
(that's strange, because there's is and was in the first sentence, so maybe it's just a matter of not recognizing what is the past tense verb of to be - the worst thing was that her voice was unclear). 26, 6, 23, 24

She taught very fast
(the first is should be a was). 24, 6
One day I happened to ask her to please slow down and explain more details about current lessons. It was nothing else that could surprise me more than she got angry
(that's a little bit awkward - I couldn't have been surprised more when she got angry, maybe?). 17, 23
She did not like to be interrupt in class
(interrupt should be interrupted). 6, 24
I was, comma thus, comma punished for being annoying in class
(that's pretty good). 26
I was shock and didn't know what to do
(shock should be shocked - I was shocked and didn't know what to do). 9, 23, 24
I wondered if it was my faults
(fault I think he means here - my fault). 8, 23, 24, 26
I was desperate but also angry, comma anyway I was to young to handle myself, I thought (I don't know if I would call this a comma splice - I think anyway is maybe misused here - it could probably be a substitution for but - maybe because he already uses but - I was desperate but also angry, but I was to young to handle myself - yeh, I'll let this slide I guess - to should be t-o-o instead of t-o). 16, 20, 19, 24, 25, 26, 18, 23, 15

Later, I found out it wasn't really only me who experienced her attitude, there were several of my friends that complain about it too
(should probably be complained). 6, 24
The fact was she did not want to be criticizes
(that should be criticized). 6, 24
She dictated us not taught us
(the use of dictated there is sort of strange - she dictated to us? - or she dictated over us? - and then probably need a comma there, too - not taught us). 20, 23, 13, 16, 24

First, comma we didn't want any trouble
(ah, wait - first, comma we didn't want any troubles - troubles should be trouble), 25, 8, 23, 24
comma so we remain silent and hope that it would
(it should be remained and hoped - again he's messing up the present and past tense - that it would) 6, 24, 26, 23

over
(that it would end? - he seems to be using the word over here to mean end). 20, 26, 23, 24

Day goes by day, it didn't change
(let's just cut the goes there and he's all set - Day by day, it didn't change). 20, 26, 23, 24
She seems to be so critical in grading my exams
(again past tense - past tense should be used instead of present), 6, 24
but it was true when I found out she had made a mistake to my grade. I asked her about that and hoped that she might give me some points for return. She didn't accept that, comma she even tried to seek another mistake from me
(that looks like a comma splice - she didn't accept that - and - maybe and needs to be supplied there - either that or a semi-colon - to seek for another mistake from me - I guess he means she tried to find more mistakes after finding - after he complained).
16, 19, 24, 23, 1

Some of my friends had the same experience too, so we decided to bring this problem to the School Principal
(ah - doesn't need to be capitalized - School or Principal). 25, 22 (capitalization), 24
He quickly evaluated what we said and called the teacher to make a judgment. After all, everything was fine at last. She promised that she would not do that again and this would not affect our grades.

I was terribly glad that everything is fine now (either that should be was and was or am and is - I was terribly glad that everything was fine - again, maybe). 6, 23, 24

I learn how to handle things and make a good judgment from this experience, specially from my School Principal (that should probably be I learned how to handle things and make good judgments - judgment should be judgments, maybe? - from this experience, especially - specially should be especially - and School Principal again doesn’t need capitalization).

I was terribly glad that everything is fine now (either that should be was and was or am and is - I was terribly glad that everything was fine - again, maybe).

I learn how to handle things and make a good judgment from this experience, specially from my School Principal (that should probably be I learned how to handle things and make good judgments - judgment should be judgments, maybe? - from this experience, especially - specially should be especially - and School Principal again doesn’t need capitalization).

It was really awakening of my new own life (maybe that should be an - it was really an awakening - and I would just cut of my new own life which doesn’t seem really to be needed here - um - and that’s it).

(1) I would say the material is - is fair - he chooses an experience that - cough - excuse me - he chooses an experience that clearly had a profound effect on him - I wonder, though, if he couldn’t have described the scene in more detail - ah - give the setting - I guess - give the setting some visual images to make it come alive, maybe - I didn’t get a clear sense of where the experience happened - whether in the U.S. or in Indonesia or wherever he was - or again what the teacher looked like - no physical descriptions really here - I think the main problem here lies in expression and particularly in - I don’t know - the expression seems to be just cluttered by problems like - hold on - cat problems here - get down - um, alright - what was I saying? - oh, expression seems to be muddled by all of the problems in verb tense - don’t know if that’s really a problem with his expression as much as correctness - but again seems like a problem pretty typical of international students - all of the verb tense problems are probably just going to come with practice - I guess also there’s the confusion between the shifting points of view I and we - between first and third person - I think with the - with the comma splices - I would give this a low pass on correctness - and I would give it a C on material, organization, and expression - I would say it’s just a fair paper).

TA 3

#12
(Something That Has Changed My Life).

Many years ago, I felt that I was the luckiest girl in this world. I was born in a good and happy family where all of the family’s members love each other. I also have good uncles, aunts, cousins and friends who love me very much and vice versa. Whenever I needed them, they would be there for me, especially my father’s elder brother and his wife. They loved me more than anyone else because they didn’t have any daughter (s), 24, 8

and additionally we had been living together in the same house for years. In fact, I could say that I was closer to my uncle and aunt than to my parents, because my parents were busy working all the time and they didn’t spend much time with their children. On the other hand, my aunt didn’t work outside (she helped my father at home) and my uncle only worked from 08.00 am to 05.00 pm. So, I spent most of my time with my uncle and aunt. We would eat, watch TV, go to the movies and do many things together. Love and being loved, I really thought that the world was a great place to live until ...

(Good transition). 2

One day, my aunt got (had) 24, 6

a stroke suddenly. She became unconscious (awkward - She became unconscious) 23, 20

and was put in Intensive (in an Intensive) 11, 23
Care Unit in Indonesia’s hospital. Day by day, her condition was becoming worse and worse. At that time, I was really scared. I was afraid that I would lose her and never saw her again. I never lost someone I loved before and although I didn’t know exactly what would happen after that, I just couldn’t imagine that awkward.

I kept praying day by day and asked for God’s help. What a miracle, she passed her critical condition and woke up. However, she still needed to be hospitalized for several months.

Since my aunt was hospitalized, I spent most of my time in the hospital taking care of her. Everyday, after classes, I would go home, eat with my uncle (my uncle cooked), take shower and then go to the hospital, and spent the rest of the day there. On weekend (On weekends), I would stay in the hospital with my aunt until morning. Although many people said I was slimmer than before, and I looked very tired, but I didn’t feel anything. I just knew that I loved her like my own mother and felt happy to take care of her and spend my time with her. In addition, I thought she also needed me because she was paralyzed or maybe I was afraid that I would lose her so I spent more time with her than ever. Everything went fine after that until...

One month later, my uncle died suddenly because of heart attack. It was Sunday. That morning, when I came back from the hospital, he opened the door for me and told me that he had bought breakfast for me. Usually, I would eat with him, but that day I felt so tired and I told him that I would like to sleep for a while first. If only I knew that was the last time I would see him ... He went out with his friends in the afternoon after having lunch with my father and never came back again.

If I thought of death, I would think that my aunt was the one who was going to die (how many pages is this? - way over the word-count limit - If I thought of death, I would think that my aunt was the one who was going to die) first instead of my uncle. At least, it was reasonable because she was sick. On the other hand, it just didn’t make sense for me,

my uncle was in good health, he went out with his friends and never came back, and they just told me that he had a heart attack after drinking coffee. Was it his destiny to die that way or was it my destiny to lose someone I loved? (Good personal contemplation there). Anyway, attending my uncle’s funeral, I couldn’t describe how I felt exactly. I felt there was something very heavy in my heart; sad, upset, lost, angry, afraid, questions, etc. mixed up together. Tears kept running down from my eyes and I couldn’t stop them. I wasn’t someone who cried easily and that wasn’t my first time to go to a funeral either, but it was just so different. I knew that my life would change after that, although I didn’t know how.

I didn’t need to wait so long to figure out what would change, because I figured it out soon after the funeral. Our house was so quiet without my uncle and my aunt (my aunt was still in the hospital), no one cooked for me nor ate with me, no one listened to what happened in my school and classes, and the worst (superlative) was I couldn’t tell my aunt about my uncle’s death (the ? sentimentality). I needed to keep it as a secret (a secret)
or otherwise my aunt would get another stroke, which would cause her death. Losing one person was
enough for me, though I didn’t want to lose any. I needed to act as if

nothing happened even when my aunt started to question why my uncle didn’t come for several days
(she’s lying to her aunt, too).

I lied to her and told her that my uncle went to Beijing to check up
(on) his health. She
didn’t believe that, but I could convince her by acting so well. I never imagined that I could be such a
good liar and actress. However, deep in my heart, I was crying and I really wanted her to stop questioning
me. I felt painful, I missed my uncle and I wanted to run out from this reality, but I couldn’t. This was the
first time I needed to handle my own problem. No one could help me, neither my friends nor cousins. It
was about my feeling (no, it was about your feelings). They couldn’t understand it because they weren’t close to my uncle and they didn’t live and face my aunt
everyday.

Fortunately, after struggling for a long time, I could get over it.

One year later, my aunt died because of her second stroke. That was not long after she found out
my uncle’s death. I wasn’t there in my hometown and I didn’t attend her funeral. Although I felt bad, but
this time
I was quite prepared already, because she was put in the Intensive Care Unit for one week before she died
and I had expected that before. I didn’t know why but I felt she would go and leave me
(leave me - I don’t know the tone; the mood - the order is self-indulging) I was ready to let her go, yet I missed her even until now. I missed both my uncle and my aunt very much.
Sometimes, I felt that they were still alive and they were always by my side guiding me. Hopefully, they
really are.

(Well, apart from a few grammatical - several grammatical errors, the content’s good, the tone’s a bit sentimental but so much of an improvement from past writing - think I’ll have one more cigarette and grade one more paper).

#13
(He talked to me about writing about the loss of his dog, but wrote it looks like about something else -
Wanna go outside - Have to let my dog out - okay - one more paper - Nothing but Lies - Good kid - I like
this kid - six hundred and sixty-six words).

I am 13 years old and at the time I am not a very studious, hard working person. In fact, I am
always looking for the easiest way out of situations; in other words, I am pretty much lazy.

So I am in class taking my final physics exam, when I decide to take out of my pocket a small
cheat sheet I made last night containing all the formulas and things I need to know. So I take it out and I
put it in my hand. It seems like seconds
I had
there for the longest time. I feel how my hand starts sweating,
then I start looking around nervously and all I can think of is the damn cheat sheet I have in my hand. I
cannot even concentrate on the problems I know how to do. I have not even seen the cheat sheet yet and I
am already trying to get rid of it. Then I realize that I won’t get anywhere with it, but it is too late.
"Guerrero!" the teacher says. (the teacher says) 5, 23
I look up at him (need a comma) 16, 24
hoping he is calling me for (an) 11, 20, 24
other reason but about what I have in my hand (a little awkward) 20, 26
"What do you have in your hand?" he said (tense - tense shift) 6, 24
Now I am horrified and my heart starts pounding and racing like one of those Indian drum chants. I cannot say anything and I slowly begin to open my hand hoping it would magically disappear or that somehow the teacher would not see it. Then after he sees the cheat sheet he takes my exam away from me and gives me an "F" in that right moment (awkward). 20
I am, almost in tears in front of the class begging for mercy, "Please Sir do not take my exam away," but what had been done was done.
Later, at the end of the exam I am going to (I am) 23 (modeling when followed up by correction) talking with the class president. (Later on, at the end of the exam I am talking with the class president) 20, 23
He is a good friend of mine and he is highly respect (ed) 9, 24
among most of the teachers, and for some reason lost in my despair I think (I'll let my dog in) 26
he can help me.
"But Adrian, was the cheat sheet yours?", he asked me. "No.", I said. "I thought it was a piece of trash on the floor and I was just picking it up so I could put it into my pocket."
(Good dialogue) 26, 1
Even I do not believe what I just said. The worst of anything (awkward) 20
is that when I said those words I felt terrible inside. I had just finished lying to a good friend of mine. I feel as if I am betraying him, and in fact I am. I am betraying his trust in me. In these moments of hopelessness and anguish I want to get anybody on my side, no matter what the cost.
Things are getting worse. Since there is no turning back now, the one lie (but did he know you were lying, Adrian? - Things are getting worse. Since there is no turning back now, the one lie) 26
I started out with would easily lead to another; and it would hurt me when I have to lie to my closer friends and to my family. I wish I had said the truth (I wish I had told the truth) 20 (said/told) 23
from the start to avoid all of this mess. Now I understand that the consequences of my lies are far ( ) 27
worse than the actual consequences of getting caught cheating. Actually, I do not mind too much (he stays consistent with what I asked for a life-changing event - he's got his realization - Now I understand that the consequences of my lies are far worse than the actual consequences of getting caught cheating. Actually, I do not mind too much) 2, 26
the "F" because it was what I deserved, but lying just bugs the hell out of me.
Even ( ) 27
now I do not like to talk about it because it was such a shameful situation that fills me up with shame and dishonor (he's appealing to the teacher here, I think). 3, 26
From that moment on my way of thinking had changed definitely. From then on I would take full responsibility (for) 13, 24
my actions. Most important, however, I found out that nothing was worse
than betraying the trust of your friends and family because essentially those are the things that are most important.

(A lot fewer errors than - I wonder what happened to the story about the dog. Even though it works because we know the act is dishonest, the way he writes it he’s not a dishonest person - so, for a personal narrative it’s successful - he uses good dialogue - some of his phrases are awkward, but - he’s an interesting student - he’s gonna be one of the top of the class which is good - but I’m hungry and I’m done). 26, 22 (general grammar), 1, 20, 2 (personal narrative)

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**TA 4**

#14

(The first paper I am going to do is called My Life As a Student.)

I had a good experience in writing when I was in senior high school because I liked Indonesian Language class. But of course, I could obtain good grades at that time because I wrote in Indonesian. I always be a favorite student in my Indonesian class (change be to was). 6, 24

My teacher, Mr. Frans, liked my achievements that I have been made
(just say Mr. Frans liked my achievements - I cut out that I have been made). 21, 23, 20

He would always be my favorite teacher also
(He was always my favorite teacher - that's what it should read). 23, 26, 6

That is why everytime there is a test
(I change it to past tense - That was why everytime there was a test), 6, 23, 26

I study very hard to get a good grade
(I studied very hard to get a good grade). 6, 23

And this impressed him. I love to write, but I think it is even harder to write in foreign language
(decided that should be in a new paragraph - that sentence should be in a new paragraph and I added an a in front of foreign language). 2, 11, 24

They have idioms, phrases, or else to be learned
(I changed it to they have idioms, phrases, and other things to be learned). 20, 23, 26

My high school used to set a requirement in Indonesian language’s test, that is: writing a composition! A lot of my friends hate to write because they don’t know what to write and how to explore their thoughts to the writing
(I changed to the with through writing). 13, 24, 26

but I like it very much! The test usually give us several topics to choose
(well, I didn’t correct that on her paper, I guess, but it should be The test usually gives - gave us several topics to choose from). 25, 26, 23, 6, 13

I always be the first student who finishes very quick
(I put I always was the first student to finish). 23, 6, 21, 26

I don’t know why I did that, I just feel very enjoy when I write and my thoughts seem overflowed that I want to write it all very quickly
(I changed that sentence to I don’t know why I did that, I just enjoy writing and my thoughts seem overflowed that I want to write it all very quickly). 17, 23, 26

That is my successful writing in Indonesian but I don’t know about writing in English. Sometimes when I write in English, I get stuck with my mind. I want to say something or to express my feeling into my writing, but it seemed very hard to find the right words
(I changed that to sort of a present tense since she’s trying to speak, I mean she’s trying to bring it to the present, so she’s saying Sometimes when I write in English, I get stuck with my mind - I changed it to I want to say something instead of wanted - or to express my feeling into my writing, but it seems instead of seemed very hard to find the right words).

6, 23, 26

I got upset when this is happened
(I tried to change that to present tense - I get upset when this happens). 6, 23, 26
I also know my one weakness, that is, correctness. Last time in my Engl 101C class, I got minus five because of my correctness!
(And, on that paragraph, I commented yes - sometimes you can express your feelings better in one language better than in another - I guess my comments are a little grammatically skewed). 26, 25
(And then I think she should start a new paragraph after her comment about the English 101C class where she said . . . ) 2, 26
I think one thing that motivated me to write is writing a diary. Since I was a little girl, almost every single day, I wrote everything that I remember in my diary. When I met someone, I wrote about it. When I said about something, I also wrote it (I changed that to When I was sad about something, I also wrote about it). 6 (missing verb), 23, 26
I like to express myself in writing. Maybe I was too shy, so I don't want anybody to knows me (I put Maybe I am too shy, so I don't want anybody to know me). 6, 23, 26
I think I just want to write about my life on papers (I changed that to paper). 24, 8, 26
But now, I get very busy, that I cannot spend a time just to write a diary (I changed that awkward sentence to But now I get so busy that I cannot spend time just to write a diary). 17, 23, 26
I still wanted to, though (I changed that to I still want to - she seems to have a problem with tenses - as far as that paragraph goes, I thought it was very well organized actually compared to the other ones). 23, 6, 2, 26
I don't think my parents have affected me to write because they seem don't care whether I want to write or not (change that to because they don't seem to care whether I want to write or not). 17, 6, 23
If I want to (be a) 6, 11, 24
writer that's fine with them, if I don't want to be a writer that is okay too. As long as my life or my job is good for me, they will support me. Actually she will support me ((my father is dead already for 10 yrs long)). My mother likes to write, but not writing a book, she just likes to write letters to me (I just changed that to My mother likes to write, but she just likes to write letters to me - actually the like - when Elty wrote it the like was she just like to write letters to me - I changed it to likes). 17, 26, 6, 23, 24
Her letters very (po - Her letters very) 23 poetic (she's missing a verb, so I threw in an are)! 6, 24, 26
She is very religious, so she always mentions about Jesus in her letters (I changed that to she always mentions Jesus in her letters). 23, 13, 26
She would also want me to write as long as she did, but sometimes I don't know what to write. But one thing for sure, I will write back.
That is all about my involvement in writing. I really want to be a professional writer, but I find so many weaknesses to be fixed. As a student in ISU, I will someday have to write. My major is graphic design, and I'm sure writing is important in my major. I still have to write when I present my project or my presentation. I know deeply in my heart that writing is very, very important in my future. I really want to try my best to write better.
(Um - I think in general this paper in she had some really good examples and how her experience shaped her writing - um - I told her to focus on the organization of that good paragraph - look at that good paragraph that she wrote that was well-organized and maybe model her other paragraphs on that - she should also work on verb tenses since her present tense and past tense are often mixed-up in places). 25, 1, 2, 6

#15
(These students did these papers - they handwrote them and I can not hardly make it through his, but I will try). 26
As a student, my life was simple and boring (his paper's called my Life as a Student).
As a student, my life was simple and boring. All the things I can do were rushing for classes, rushing for assignments.

The only class which made me have a different feeling about my life in school is my Engineering 101 class. I took the course at Fall 1995 in Iowa State University. My instructor in the class is Dr. Alday. He is the most helpful and patient instructor I ever met.

Because of his clear and detailed explanations, I can easily understand the course. The classroom which is a large computer laboratory, with many new computers. Even so, we had to share the computers during the class.

Every time, the instructor used the first hour of the class as a lecture hour and the second hour will be the class assignments hour. I enjoyed doing my class assignments with my partner. We discussed the problems with each other. Sometime we argued with each other. I enjoyed and did well on the class assignments and all the projects. But I could not do well during the tests. I really hated the tests because it made me feel nervous and uncomfortable. For the tests, we had to write some language programs on paper and that was quite time consuming. Even though I tried all my best to do it, I can not complete the whole paper on time.

From my experience, I found out that Iowa State University has a very good academic policy. The idea of the school is to let its student understand completely what they learnt.
academic policy. The idea of the school is to let its student understand what they learned - that's pretty good). 18, 26, 23
For example, from all of the assignments and projects we did, we can really understand what we (learned) 24, 18
and how to apply it to solve the problems we had
(he's pretty much restating something there - that's probably not a necessary sentence to be in there, I guess - it's not really a for example). 4, 26
From the tests, we can only solve the questions when we understood the course
(I don't really follow his logic at all in this thing - um - and I told him that although the paper was supposed to be about more than one class, you give a nice overview of different aspects of the class that you both liked and disliked - you need some help with grammar - work on verbs - I didn't - I guess I didn't really spend a whole lot of time with him - I should have given him a lot more marginal comments than I did - um - anyway). 25, 2, 26, 1, 22 (general grammar), 6

#16
(He doesn't have a title for hers.)
I spent my high school years in Indonesia, my home country. I went to a catholic school which had very high discipline. Every day, I had to wake up very early in the morning because the school started at 6:40am
(that's pretty early). 26
My father drove me to school by car. It took 20 minutes from my house. Waking up in very early morning was hard for me but I get used to it
(I changed that to Waking up in the very early morning was hard for me but I got used to it - it's past tense). 23, 6, 26, 11, 24
In junior high school, my grades were not so good. They were just a bit higher than the averages of my classmates. I worked and studied harder in senior high school because I realized that I had to get good grades in order to enter good university
(I threw in an a - a good university is what it should be). 11, 23, 26
At that time, I was still confused about which university that I wanted to apply
(and I added a - I added a to T-O after apply). 13, 24, 26
I also did not know what major that I would take. Everything seemed confusing.
Since I was in elementary school, I was interested in medical school. I had been hospitalized for a week when I was in the third grade because of my appendix. I liked to see doctors and nurses who cured sick people and made them well
(I guess she doesn't really need to have and made them well - should probably just end after people). 20, 24, 26
In the contrary, I could not stand to see people bleeding, suffering and even, dying
(I crossed off In the contrary - she doesn't really need it at all - the sentence should just start I could not stand to see people bleeding, suffering - or maybe she should throw in a however, I could not stand to see people bleeding, suffering and even, dying). 26, 2, 23
If I were a doctor
(I don't think even dying is very good - I would just say However, I could not stand to see people bleeding, suffering and dying - If I were a doctor), 26, 20, 23
I had to deal with all those things every day
(I changed it to If I were a doctor, I would have to deal with all these things every day - instead of I had to deal with those things every day). 6, 23, 26
In Indonesia, the best medical schools were in government universities. To enter these universities, I had to pass the placement test which was held once a year. The competition for this test was very high
(competition is misspelled). 24, 18
I had to compete with other students from all over my country. If I passed this test, it would take 6 years to graduate from medical school. It was quite long but it would be longer if I failed the test. My second plan, if I could not pass that test, was to enter private medical school. It would take 8 years or more to graduate.
My parents would always support me even though I had to study for 8 years in private medical school. They wanted me to be what I wanted to be. They also advised me to think about other major (I changed advised to advised and major to majors).  

I thought maybe it was a good idea since I felt that medical school was too tough for myself (instead of myself, she should say me).  

I began to think about agriculture. Since I was young, I liked to watch my mother watering and taking care of her plants. It was very interesting in gardening. Sometimes, I helped her to fertilize the plants. I talked to my parents about this and they suggested me to take agricultural business as my major.  

I thought this would be a great idea since I was also interested in economics. Another reason why I took this major was because Indonesia was an agricultural country which would need many employees in agricultural area.  

My sister studied in Ohio State University (I changed in to at - she seems to get in and at mixed up) so my parents wanted me to continue my education in USA, too.  

I started to find which university had a good rank in my future major. Finally, I found that Iowa State University had great program for agricultural business. Besides, the Iowa State University was located in a small town which was very convenient to live and study.  

My family had a relative who studied in this university (again it should be at instead of in) so I knew a lot about this university from her. I began to correspond with ISU in July 1994 and I decided to apply to this school in February 1995.  

Now, I am in the second semester for my freshman year (instead of for she should use of).  

I feel everything is great even though my family and friends are far away from me. It is because I study a lot of new things in here (that in should be gone - should just say here instead of in here) and have new friends who are nice to me. I also like (and have - It is because I study a lot of new things in here and have new friends who are nice to me - I also like) my classes and I think that I have chosen a right major for myself.  

Hopefully, I can finish my undergraduate study in spring or summer 1998.  

(I thought she had a really tremendous grasp of English grammar - just a few correctness mistakes and to me they seemed to be pretty minor - um - I thought it was a really interesting illustration of her thought process in selecting a major and a school - I thought it was really, really - considering the language barrier I thought this was a very well done diagnostic).
TA 5

#17
(Okay, the assignment that I had given them the first day was to simply describe their hometown for me - um - to describe it for people that had never been there obviously, which was most of the class - ah - the first student’s paper - she says) 25, 26

My hometown is Pekan Pahang, Malaysia. Pekan is a royal town that located 35 kilometers from Kuantan, Pahang which is the capital state of Pahang. There are three main races in Pekan which is Malay, Chinese and India. Malay is the native language beside Chinese and Indian languages. (Okay, basically this is just looking like standard nonnative speaking here - um - leaving out a few articles, but it doesn’t look too bad - um - she goes on to say) 25, 26, 11, 3 (nonnative)

Basically, Pekan can be describe as a small town and consist of several villages. In Pekan, there is Pahang river which is the largest river in Malaysia, is flow down near the Pekan town. There are several places that tourist like to visit while staying in Pekan. (At least she’s definitely following the assignment so far - again all’s I’m really seeing here is just leaving off some plurals once in a while - this isn’t too bad.) 26, 8

Permai Palace is the place where the Ruler of Pahang resides here
(hmm). 25
It is very beautiful palace with nice palace and royal garden (okay - um - I’m assuming she’s meaning just the building itself). 25, 1
If you happen to be here on Ruler’s official birthday on 24th of October, you would be able to witness the annual outburst of culture and tradition of Pekan’s town.

The State Museum of Pahang
(is) 24, 6
also located at Pekan. The State Museum are rich with collection of historical item (okay - a few verb tense problems in here). 25, 6
The old history of Pahang, especially that of its ancient kings is well documented in this museum. Pekan also boasts of its silk weaving centre in Pulau Keladi (excuse my pronunciation), 26
Pekan (okay that was part of the last sentence). 25, 2
This traditional silk weaving method has been passed down from generation to generation.

Since Pekan is located near the Pahang river and South China Ocean, it is the best place to eat seafood. There are varieties of seafood like lobster, fish, king crab, prawn and oyster. The famous food that made (that made) 23 from fish (hmm) 25 is called “keropok”. It is very delicious and smell good.

Lake Chini is the most beautiful place. Pekan Lake Chini is well known with its natural and wild preservation of environment (she’s definitely developing this well - she’s very thorough - a lot more thorough than some of the other ones). 2, 26, 1
Lake Chini is about twenty kilometers from my house and it has its own myths that attracted many people to know more about Lake Chini. The myths is about the mythical monster lurk in the deep of waters and guards the lake (um - she’s says here that she ran out of time since this was an in-class assignment - um - it sounds - she sounds like she’s developing things very well - just a few really minor problems, but this is much better than I thought it was going to be). 25, 26, 2, 1

#18
(He says)
Malaysia, a small multi-races country, is located within the boundary of South-East Asia. It is 7 degrees North of the equator, so the annual average temperature is around 81 degrees F.
The South China Sea separates Malaysia into two portions: East Malaysia and West Malaysia. East Malaysia consists of two states, Sabah and Sarawak while West Malaysia consists of eleven states (and he goes on to list those - um - so far I'm kind of wondering what exactly his hometown is - I'm glad that he's giving a geography lesson, but I'm kind of hoping he goes on to describe his town after this). 26, 25, 1, 2

Multi-races has become one of the characteristics of Malaysia. Malay, Chinese, and Indian are the three major races in Malaysia. Others include Kenya, Bajau, Kadazan, and Iban. They all live together peacefully under the central governmental system. Every race has its own custom and believe (he's got a few words in here that it looks like he's going phonetically on how he would say it, which is perfectly understandable - let's see), 18, 26, 25 but all Malaysian will celebrate its festivals, does not matter he or she is an Indian, Malay or Chinese (okay, it looks like he's gonna need a little bit more work on some of - than some of the other students - um - unfortunately, a lot of this looks like it's - it's articles and a few pronouns occasionally that he's messing up and that's just gonna take time, I think - let's see). 25, 26, 11, 22 (pronouns)

They celebrate Chinese New Year (okay, I'm not sure exactly which race this is or whether it's all of them - um), 25, 1, 26, 2

Hari Raya
(something I cannot pronounce), 26
Deepavali. Moon Lake Festival, and so on
(and again I have no idea whether this is all of them that celebrate this or whether it's just one race). 1, 2, 26

In Malaysia, we have many kind of food from different races, so people live in Malaysia (so people - kay, he's leaving out a who here) 25, 21, 24, 26

have the chance to try all kind of food and drinks (okay). 25

Besides, Malaysia has a lots of natural resources; for examples; petroleum, timber, mines, and so on. This helps to grow the economics in Malaysia. Many of the forests in Malaysia have been reserved or protected to avoid the greenhouse effect (okay - well, again I'm still wondering where his hometown is fitting in here - I - I haven't seen it mentioned yet - he may have misunderstood the assignment - um - and thought that I meant his home country because I did say to put in some any cultural things that would be relevant - um - let's see). 25, 26, 1, 2

I would say, people no more live on the trees in Malaysia as what some foreigners think of (well, even though his vocabulary is - is limited - um - and that he very definitely doesn't sound like a native speaker, he still manages to get the jokes across, so this could be interesting - um - so far I'd say he's the one who's going to need a little bit more work). 25, 20, 26, 1 (jokes)

#19
(The next paper is - uh - I cannot pronounce this name for the life of me is - she goes by XXX in class and so I haven't had to pronounce it - um - she starts) 25, 26

I left my hometown 9 years ago to study in Beijing. So in my memories, hometown is a paradise site of my childhood (okay - um - she's leaving out some pronouns). 25, 22 (missing pronouns)

I was born in a quiet town of Szechuan province in China. My province is just like a bottom of a bowl surrounded by high mountains (no, I like that - that image). 26, 25, 1

In old Chinese words, we had: 'To enter Szechuan is as difficult as going up to heaven (hmm - again I like her image - um - I'll have to see if - well, I know what she means is that this is an old Chinese proverb of sorts - but - um - might not be too clear at first reading - um - then she goes on to say). 25, 1, 26

But this unique geographic provides a great sightseeing of my hometown (okay, she's definitely going to require a little bit more work - um - definitely would benefit from the writing center - hope she goes - um). 25, 26

There we have plain, the green and colorful plain (something) 26 (undecipherable handwriting)
season and hills with forests and hills, mountains hiding the wildlife like pandas and great attraction the nature gives to us. (again I’m liking her image - she’s definitely - um - well, she’s - she’s following the assignment as far as her province - and I like how she’s describing it - it looks like she has very, well, insightful really isn’t the word I’m looking for - profound is the word I’m looking for - she has very profound thoughts - it looks like her vocabulary is going to limit her a bit as far as getting across). 26, 25, 1, 20

Also, my hometown gives me
(Okay, we’re gonna need to work on - on verb tenses) 25, 6, 26
a good
(give me a good) 23
memories of its delicious food.
(Ooh, boy - that’s a problematic sentence - um, I wouldn’t know where to even begin). 25, 26, 17
Since my province is famous for its agriculture. And
(okay, she put a period there - alright, we’re gonna hafta work on some sentence boundaries - um). 16, 25, 14, 26
We had a mild weather, we got many kinds of vegetables at every season
(okay - again sentence boundaries). 25, 14, 17
I can remember at the farmer
(at the farmer) 23
market
(plurals again), 8
people never sell over-night vegetables. No one wants to buy it. Life there is easy and comfortable. Food there is so delicious and cheaper.
(hmm), 25
it’s not only famous in China, also famous in the world
(I’m assuming she means the food). 1, 26
Nearly every year, people will enjoy a new dish, and it would soon become very popular (okay). 25
Life there is so easy
(she’s already said that), 4, 26
it seems people there are far away the competition
(she left out from - I just wanted to put it there). 26, 13, 24
People enjoy good food at home or at restaurant, enjoy life in home or with friends, enjoy the beautiful sightseeing during weekends. Life there is a enjoy thing
(Enjoy thing?). 25, 23
You never feel the pressure. Like an American friend told me in Beijing: “Szechuan is my favorite place in China.” Yes, it’s also my favorite out-of-world place to return
(okay, again her images are really good - she didn’t really talk much about her actual hometown - in fact, she never actually gave the name of the town - she said it was in Szechuan province - she does - she does describe the province and the way of life there - I don’t get a real - I get a sense for the geography of the landscape but not necessarily the geography of the town - um - although she did give some cultural - some cultural information - that was nice - um again she’s gonna take a little bit more work, I think - and will probably need the writing center). 25, 1, 26
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