Understanding Students’ Perceptions of Writing and Reflection: Impact of International Experiences

Shannon Barbeau, B.S.
Holli Leggette, Ph.D.
Theresa Pesl Murphrey, Ph.D.
Katy Lane, M.S.
Introduction

- Millennials’ writing skills are lacking.
- Students who perceive themselves as accomplished writers write at a deeper level than those who do not (Lingwall & Kuehn, 2013).
- Writing can be used to promote reflective thinking, which encourages deep learning rather than surface learning (Epler & Drape, 2013).
- Benefits of international experiences include professional growth, increased global awareness, and increased concept of self (Harder & Lamm, 2012).
- International experiences provide opportunities to write and reflect.
Purpose and Objectives

• Compare the reflective writing perceptions of students who have participated in international experiences and those who have not participated in international experiences.
  o Describe the impact international experiences have on students’ perceptions of their ability to engage in reflective writing.
  o Compare students’ perceptions of their ability to engage in reflective writing.
Method

- Quantitative
- 95 students surveyed
- Students were contacted using Dillman’s Tailored Design method
- Students were recruited via email
Instrument

- Lingwall and Kuehn (2013) media writing self-perception questionnaire
- Five constructs
  - Elaborative/Surface
  - Reflective/Revisionist
  - Self-Efficacy
  - Writing Apprehension
  - Social Media/Professional
- 50 questions
Demographics

- Agriculture Leadership, Education, and Communications students at Texas A&M University
  - Gender
    - Male 22%
    - Female 78%
  - Age
    - ≤ 21 years old or younger 72.8%
    - ≥22 years old or older 27.2%
  - Ethnicity
    - White 85%
  - Major
    - Agricultural Communications and Journalism 39.4%
    - Agricultural Science 16.0%
    - Agricultural Leadership and Development 27.7%
    - University Studies Agricultural Leaderships 12.8%
    - Agriculture Leadership, Education, and Communications 4.3%
  - Places lived
    - Outside of the US 3
    - Had not lived outside of the US 37
    - Missing data 55
Findings
Elaborative/Surface

- How much students think about writing process
  - Less than or equal to 5 = task only
  - 6 – 17= limited time thinking about writing
  - 18 – 31= “deep” writing

- Scores in this study ranged from -9 – 27
- International Experience: 7.43
- No International Experience: 7.36
- No statistical significance
Reflective/Revisionist

- How much planning and revision goes into writing
  - Less than or equal to negative 1 = single draft
  - 0 – 12 = occasional revisions
  - 13 – 25 = “deep” writing
- Scores in this study ranged from -19 – 20
- International Experience: 1.80
- No International Experience: 2.80
- No statistical significance
Self-Efficacy

- Writer’s confidence in their writing skills
  - Less than or equal to 11 = low confidence
  - 12 – 24 = fairly competent
  - 25 – 39 = confident
- Scores in this study ranged from 5 – 39
- **International Experience**: 29.30
- **No International Experience**: 27.03
- No statistical significance
Writing Apprehension

- Level of worry and anxiety students face when writing
  - Scores can range from -13 – 31
  - The higher the score, the higher the level of anxiety
- Scores in this study ranged from -13 – 25
  - International Experience: 4.40
  - No International Experience: 6.66
- No statistical significance
Social Media/Professional

- The amount students believe the writing used in texting and social media is of the same quality used in schools and careers.
  - $\leq 7$ = social media writing is different from professional writing
  - $8 – 17$ = some social media writing is good
  - $18 – 28$ = informal writing in social media is perceived as good
- Scores in this study ranged from $-4 – 21$
- **International Experience:** 6.67
- **No International Experience:** 7.54
- No statistical significance
Total MWSP

- Indicates an overall score of students’ perception of writing
  - $\leq 10 =$ not happy with their writing skills
  - $10 - 44 =$ moderate enjoyment in writing
  - $45 - 112 =$ positive perception of writing

- Scores in this study ranged from -49 – 88
- International Experience: 28.467
- No International Experience: 23
- No statistical significance
Conclusions/Recommendations

• No significant difference found between the two groups.
• Possibility that students who self-select to participate in an international experience or the experience itself could have a positive impact on writing perception.
• Need to add more students to the students, which we plan to do in the 2017 – 2018 school year.
• Conduct a pre and post assessment of the experience
References


