



## **Teaching Writing for L2 writers in Indonesia and Teaching Writing for L1 writers in the U.S: A Reflection of An Indonesian Graduate Teaching Assistant in First-Year Composition course**

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### **Abstract**

This study is conducted in order to obtain a reflection from Andy (pseudonym) an Indonesian graduate teaching assistant currently serving at one of the American public universities in Arizona about the experience of teaching writing for L2 writers in Indonesia and teaching writing for L1 writers in the U.S. The study is framed in a narrative inquiry investigation using three stages of open-ended and closed-ended interview questions then the data went through narrative analysis based on the data collected from the participant. This current study focuses on Andy's reflection on his teacher experience, teacher beliefs & attitudes and teacher knowledge. The study found that for teacher experience Andy has significant teaching experience between teaching in the U.S compared to teaching in Indonesia, while for teacher beliefs and attitude Andy has shifted his pedagogical beliefs and attitudes, as for teacher knowledge Andy has showcased specific subject matter knowledge about teaching writing in FYC course.

**Keywords:** *Narrative Inquiry, International Graduate Teaching Assistant, First Year*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Graduate teaching assistant (GTA) is the role open for PhD students who are both coming from within the U.S as the domestic students or outside the U.S categorized as international students. This teaching assistantship opportunity is given to PhD students as part of their financial support that will benefit the GTA through stipend as well as the tuition fee during their studies. There are a lot of types of teaching assistants based on the majors or programs. For English PhD students especially, the most common teaching assistants positions will be about First-Year Composition (FYC) courses which is a requirement for first-year university students.

For any GTA who are identified as international students and come from non-English speaking countries, it is expected that they have teaching experience working with second language (L2) student writers. However, during their time serving as GTA they are expected to teach both domestic students (L1 English writers) and multilingual students (L2 English writers). Therefore, other than studies about GTA, there has also

been growing interest and body of research on this issue of international graduate teaching assistants (IGTA) in order to understand, document and support how the IGTA navigate their teachings throughout their assistantship.

For example, Liu (2005) looked at how international graduate teaching assistants from China navigate through their experience teaching composition courses to first year students. The study particularly uses interview and teaching evaluations as the source of the data. The findings show that the participants encounter challenges as a non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST) teaching their native-English speaking (NES) students. However, it is important to mention that the issue is beyond NNEST and NES but more about teachers' and students' different cultural expectations, intercultural miscommunication, as well as styles of teaching and learning (p.73). This is due to different context coming from teachers and students.

Another previous and most recent study related to graduate teaching assistants can be found in research conducted by Collins et al (2022) in which looking at 100 participants consisting of more than half of them identified as international graduate teaching assistant (IGTA) serving in one of UK universities. The study employed data collection through interviews and workshops specifically highlighting the existing challenges related to cultural differences on how these IGTA navigating their transition education system from their country towards U.K higher education settings. The study found three themes including starting teaching, essay marking and then classroom & teacher boundaries as the most important shared issues.

This study is important to be conducted to share the voices and perspectives of those underrepresented teachers with diverse background coming from non-English speaking countries. This is because there are still very few studies that have been done intentionally involving teachers from this particular demographics. More importantly Indonesian writing teachers teaching writing courses in English speaking countries such as U.S. universities.

The goal of this research is to add another layer and perspectives to existing research talking about international graduate teaching assistants' experiences with L2 writers of English may or may not resonate with their current teaching position with L1 writers of English in the U.S. This study aims to investigate (1) How do the experiences of a writing instructor differ when teaching writing to L2 writers in Indonesia as compared to L1 writers in FYC course (2) How do a writing instructor's beliefs and attitudes influence a writing instructor's teaching in these two different contexts (3) How do the teaching practices of a writing instructor differ when working with L1 writers in FYC courses compared to L2 writers in Indonesia.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Teacher Experience**

John Loughran (2006) in Wisniewski (2014) highlighting some of the considerations that may become the reason behind how teachers encounter problem solving situations due to the limitations of teachers' experience. In addition, there might be some different perspectives when comparing teachers' and students' points of views when looking at the same problems. Wisniewski (2014) contextualizes this particular phenomenon by recognizing two specific branches of studies when looking at this topic (1) studies related to how teachers' schooling experiences influenced their experience as teachers (2) studies talked about teachers' expertises.

For example, a research study from Meghan Brewer (2020) did a study with several graduate teaching assistants for first-year composition courses. The participants majored in different programs within the English department including composition

and rhetoric, creative writing, and literature. The study found that “The graduate instructors drew heavily on their teaching experience in their descriptions of influences on their pedagogy” (p.135). Therefore, “Mentors and practica instructors should continually ask graduate instructors to reflect upon activities that work or don’t work and provide feedback on these reflections” (p.136)

Another sample of existing literature specifically addressing teachers' expertise has been conducted by Rudi Hartono (2016) investigating EFL university teachers regarding their perception and experiences of the issue of professional development. The findings show that the participants indicate a couple of paths to develop professionally including attending professional events, publishing research, being involved in professional organizations, consistently learning about teaching methods, being part of mentorship programs, and practicing lifelong learning.

### **Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes**

One of the most recent studies talking about the issue of teacher beliefs and attitudes come from Tan & Matsuda (2020). The study is specifically situated in multimodality discussion and the discussion surrounding incorporating multimodality into first-year composition courses involving nine participants both domestic and international graduate teaching assistants with diverse teaching experiences and programs including (a) writing, rhetorics and literacies, (b) linguistics and applied linguistics, (c) english education and (d) english literature. The study situates teachers' beliefs into several category (1) modal complexity in which participants believe that students should be given agency about what modes they choose to deliver their ideas (2) critical analysis where it is important for students to acquire skills to access readings in multiple modes (3) subject-matter knowledge where the is emphasis on students can be benefited a lot from multimodality including in better comprehension of argumentation (4) rhetorical awareness which is centering around students' urgency to be mindful about rhetorical situations.

Therefore, the discussion about teacher beliefs is undoubtedly crucial because it is relevant to education. Moreover, teacher beliefs also accommodate intersections with “knowledge acquisition and interpretation, frame definition of problems, and guide actions (p.3) (Fives & Buehl; 2012 in Tan & Matsuda, 2020). In other words, teacher beliefs will have something to do with how teachers process new pedagogical information, having tools and terms to situate and contextualize any pedagogical problems, as well as providing any related suggestions whenever teachers encounter difficult situations that require any responses.

### **Teacher Knowledge**

It is argued that a teacher can be considered as good teacher if he/she can implementing multiple knowledge including (1) knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of learners, (3) knowledge subject matter and (4) pedagogical content knowledge into the classroom when teaching occurs (Shulman, 1986 in Toh et al, 2003). It can also be argued that pedagogical content knowledge can be used to differentiate between teachers who are considered experts in subject area compared to teachers who are categorized as novice in subject. With that said, this particular pedagogical content knowledge can also be seen as teachers' skill that those who possess that can integrate, transform and represent the knowledge of subject matter when they deliver their teaching to their students. Furthermore, it can be also very well argued that pedagogical content knowledge is the component that can differentiate experts compared to novice teachers (p.200).

Moreover, arguably the concept of teacher knowledge can also be translated into teacher professional development because the term shares the meaning of teachers continuously improving professionally. It can also be said that teachers within English as a foreign language (EFL) context fit well with this concept of professional development. In addition to that, there has been a study that specifically proposes a certain model for the purpose of teacher professional development (Irmawati, 2014, in Sulistiyo, 2016). Something unique about the model is that it particularly highlights two areas of knowledge (1) propositional knowledge “encompassing the content subject that teachers teach, such as the English materials they use” (2) procedural knowledge “related to the processes, procedures and strategies that help teachers perform teaching tasks” (p.404). Therefore, it can be further argued that teachers are required to have the knowledge about what subject they are teaching about and how they teach it.

## **METHODS**

### **Settings and Participant**

This study is guided by three research questions such as (1) How do the experiences of a writing instructor differ when teaching writing to L2 writers in Indonesia as compared to L1 writers in FYC course (2) How do a writing instructor’s beliefs and attitudes influence a writing instructor’s teaching in these two different contexts (3) How do the teaching practices of a writing instructor differ when working with L1 writers in FYC courses compared to L2 writers in Indonesia. Three semi-structured interviews through zoom meetings with the single-subject participant were conducted as the data collection method. The interviews were transcribed and then organized. This is a narrative study involving a single-subject participant of an Indonesian graduate teaching assistant named Andy (pseudonym) who is currently teaching first-year composition courses during fall semester 2023 at one of the public U.S universities in Arizona.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The narrative inquiry is the method used in this study. This particular methodology is heavily inspired from Dewey’s theory of experience criteria including (1) interaction and (2) continuity, with these two specific emphasis then narrative inquiry is defined as collaborative work of researcher closely with participant looking at experiences as stories framed within context of individual and social (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000 as cited in Clandinin, 2006). Moreover, the narrative method functions as a tool to comprehend perspectives of human experiences both socially and personally of not only the participants but also the researchers. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000 as cited in Preissle, 2001). Furthermore, it is also argued that narrative is considered the best methodology to not only comprehend a complex human experience but also represent it. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000 as cited in Lieblich, 2003).

## **FINDINGS**

### **1. Andy’s Teacher experience**

Andy has been teaching a first-year composition course for almost two years. He first started teaching in Fall 2022 and now by the time this study is conducted in Fall 2023 he has taught three semesters including Fall 2022, Spring 2023, and Fall 2023. However, prior to his doctoral study in the U.S, he had years of experience teaching writing courses in Indonesian university in English as a foreign language (EFL) context.

### **Teaching L2 Students Writers in Indonesia**

It is also important to be highlighted because of the English position in Indonesia as foreign language, this has caused students in Indonesia to be considered as L2 writers. Therefore, this has also influenced the structure of the courses to be highly considering language proficiency or levels in every course including the name of the class or courses.

#### **Data 1**

*“All these writing basic, intermediate, advanced all these courses happening in English department so it is exclusively the English department usually in other programs when they invited us to teach there it would be called English for academic purposes or it will be uh specifically designed for their program for example I once taught business school um what I taught was business correspondence, English for business correspondence. I’ve never done English for academic purposes that was just an example” (Interview 1)*

Andy has four years of experience teaching university level students in Indonesia from 2015 to 2019. These courses include the ones in the English department and other courses in the non-English department where instructors from the English department are being invited to teach certain courses such as English as Academic Purposes (EAP).

### **Teaching L1 Students Writers in the U.S**

Andy started teaching first-year composition (FYC) courses to domestic students in ENG 101 & ENG 102 in his fourth year of PhD. Fall semester is a starting point for the academic year, it means ENG 101 consisting of freshman year students in which students who just graduated from high school. These students are required to take FYC courses.

#### **Data 2**

*“I was not sure about the range of their English like how the range of their knowledge about the English language uh or the range of knowledge about composition in general like how familiar they are with the terms when we talk about academic writing even though this is not precisely academic writing but still I was not sure how to start teaching them like how familiar are they with the concept of uh paragraph sentence like because I didn’t know at all about what they teach at the American uh senior high school so that was my biggest concern like um I was completely unaware” (Interview 1)*

Based on the information shared by Andy it can be concluded that within the context of teaching writing in first-year composition courses Andy can be considered a novice teacher. This is because he has just recently started teaching the course.

#### **Data 3**

*“we’re doing informative writing right now uh and one of the biggest part of informative writing is to create annotated bibliography okay for graduate students I mean that’s like we do that all the time in all the courses and the textbook makes it sound like um students would be familiar with that like it just says basically briefly um well before you write informative essay one of the things that you need to do is to do uh to gather sources and then after you gather sources then you make something called annotated bibliography that’s what I did I just told them okay create annotated bibliography due next week submit it and then just later on um I saw students are like really struggling and then I*

asked them have you ever made this before and then they told me that no we've like we have no idea except for probably one or two students who took really Advanced English class but the rest of the class basically saying that um they've never had the experience before so I think that's a good example to describe my experience like I'm still trying to figure out what what they're capable of in English ” (Interview 1)

Even though the demographic of students in the ENG 101/102 are domestic and graduated from American high schools. However, the students are diverse when it comes to their background knowledge when involving with English writing assignments. Some possible reasons behind this can have something to do with multiple types of English classes offered in American high schools, therefore their knowledge of creating annotated bibliography is also varied where some are familiar but others are not.

### **Comparison of teaching L1 students writers and teaching L2 students writers**

It is expected that when teachers have different teaching contexts it would also mean that teachers will encounter different situations due to different demographics of the students in the classroom. Andy has been exposed to two different types of teaching writing context experiences, working with L2 writers of Indonesian students writers in the past as well as currently working with L1 writers of American students in FYC course.

Data 4

*“as a comparison when I taught in Indonesia I knew exactly what they learned in their their senior high school so when I taught how to um how to do academic writing I knew exactly that Indonesian students were not familiar with the the entire concept of academic writing especially in English so I knew where to start” (Interview 1)*

It is also expected that Andy is more familiar with Indonesian students because he shares background knowledge in terms of culturally and linguistically in which this helps in identifying the students he was working with at the time in the past.

Data 5

*“probably just the pace I would say but I mean composition would be the same uh whether it whether it's taught in Indonesia or in here because I was in the at The English Department as well so we would assume that they have some degree of English fluency or Proficiency in order to take um what we call academic writing but most of the time it's just almost the same so probably just the pace” (Interview 1)*

Andy also noticed that some of the things he did differently is about the pace, faster pace when working with L1 writers in the U.S and a slower pace working with L2 writers in Indonesia. Some of the possible reasons behind this action has something to do with English proficiency belonging to Indonesian students in Indonesian universities.

Data 6

*“the critical thinking part really they're really big on yeah inviting students to be more aware of the context yeah explore their writing explore their ideas giving them chance“ (Interview 1)*

Another major difference between the two courses also can be found on how FYC courses enable more critical thinking and accommodating students' exploration about their ideas and about their writing. FYC course also gives students possible space for being more mindful about the context due to the importance of context in writing.

### **Similarity of First-Year Composition in the U.S and Writing Course in Indonesia**

Writing courses in the context of FYC courses in the U.S seems to have a lot of difference compared to writing courses in Indonesia. However, it is also important to find out the similarities that can be found in these two different writing contexts. When Andy was given such a question, Andy had some challenging time pointing out the similarities.

Data 7

*"I think the focus on the mechanics of writing uh grammar editing uh genre we mentioned that earlier I think that's the same between here and Indonesia okay so there still a portion of grammar discussion being covered in FYC as well even though compared to Indonesia there are like almost more than 50% about grammar I would yeah I would think so yeah okay but the difference is easier to explain" (Interview 1)*

Andy eventually thinks of the major similarities that exist in both writing courses in the U.S and the ones in Indonesia. He then shared that both contexts share emphasis on mechanics, in other words it is about grammar and editing. With that said, working with L1 writers does not necessarily mean that there is no grammar and editing issues that can occur. Even though it also seems clear that such issues are not as much as what can be found with L2 writers in Indonesia where most of the time it takes more than half of the teachers' focus on helping students with their grammar as well as editing.

Then it can be argued that based on the information shared from Andy, there seems to be only a very minimal amount of similarities between teaching writing in FYC courses in the U.S compared to writing course in Indonesia because when teaching writing to L2 writers in Indonesia the teachers need to still teaching the language while simultaneously teaching the writing to accommodate the students L2 literacy.

### **Emphasis & Objectives of FYC course in the U.S**

First-year writing course is structured in one long semester including fifteen weeks with three major assignments. With that said, it means five weeks each will be dedicated to work on each major assignment so that at the end of the semester the whole three assignments will be completed as instructed by the university.

Data 8

*"basically the guidelines would be one semester is 15 weeks we divide 15 into three units and three major assignments and between those major assignments we also do other smaller assignments it could be just rough draft it could be an outline or it could be like my previous assignment this week we just annotated bibliography so that's the general idea of the structure of the course I think" (Interview 1)*

As a PhD student, Andy is teaching the writing course while at the same time writing his dissertation. This has made Andy realize that while he advocates for the

writing process to his students in the class, he also experiences the writing process when he is working on his dissertation during his fourth and fifth year of PhD.

Data 9

*“um so I am right now writing a dissertation right um and I just realized that all of the writing processes all of the theory that I have thought um all that well I could explain it but then I just realized how important it is actually to actually Implement them uh so I think my goal would be to uh for students to actually realize how important writing processes is uh and to see for them to be more resilient about those processes” (Interview 1)*

Moreover, when asked about the objectives of the FYC course, Andy shared some of the objectives because there are a lot of them to mention completely.

Data 10

*“considering multiple perspectives so they have to have open stance so students I think that's part of the critical thinking part of the objective because there is a critical thinking there is composition there is one other big group that I can't remember uh so they expect students to be more open minded basically uh understand multiple perspectives uh they need to consider equity as the outcome of what they're learning um and then of course there is also writing process they need to know that um there is a basically writing process that um this is not easy uh in writing sorry that is not yeah that's what I can remember so basically value diversity value equity what the course or the textbook really telling you to do because they're like more follow this APA MLA type of thing and then you kind of like focusing more on the content rather than the form” (Interview 1)*

### **Emphasis & Objectives of Writing Course in Indonesia**

It is essential to first mention that this discussion of writing courses in Indonesia takes place in the English department where Andy used to teach in university in Indonesia before he started his PhD in the U.S. With that said, English students in Indonesia have the privilege of being exposed to writing courses in university unlike their peers studying in different programs and majors in universities.

Data 11

*“the curriculum focuses more on um language fluency what should we language proficiency so like first two years they are drilled with grammar reading listening writing so I think because of that framework uh my focus at that time would be more writing as a way to improve the uh proficiency of English because that writing uh that writing course is placed within a con context of English department in Indonesia that sees there are two types of course two at least two levels of uh two General hierarchy of course the first one would be the language proficiency which includes reading speaking listening writing and then the next one would be the specialized aspect” (Interview 1)*

However, even though students in Indonesia majoring in an English program have access to writing courses, the course cannot be considered a writing course because it is still heavily focused on the language instead of the writing. The policy that has placed this writing course as part of other language skills courses is also one of the reasons why this writing course has language course characteristics.



Data 12

*“so first two years they will focus more on language proficiency which includes the academic writing actually and then third year fourth year that would be the content courseworks where students were uh given uh options to pursue more of their interest so some students take literature for example then they will take courses like history of literature um prose poetry drama uh or American studies then they will take courses like History of the United States uh American culture American economy or I can't remember what is the other one translation would be the theory of translation and so on so I think because of that framework placing writing as part of the the the part where students were trained more on um language fluency that makes writing just become part of that other courses like like reading listening speaking uh even though we are all definitely aware that teaching writing is definitely not mostly language so you're saying like when you were teaching writing basically the the whole point of the biggest uh goals would be like they have this proficiency they increase their Proficiency in terms of like performing writing and develop as a writer” (Interview 1)*

## **2. Andy's Teacher beliefs and attitudes**

### **Andy's beliefs about how to be a good writer**

In the second stage of the interview Andy is given questions related to his beliefs and attitudes as teacher. When asked about how to be a good writer, Andy approached the question from a very general perspective looking at typical questions on good writers.

Data 13

*“oh that is so difficult to answer I would say a good writer would be if this is related to what I'm struggling right now writing dissertation a good writer would know exactly uh the um their main arguments and then articulate them really well by using really precise words uh that would be ideal for me but if we're talking about the general context of what good writers are I would say that in a lot of cases that's just accidental yeah some writers oh that's also that also reminds me one of the uh the part of the discussion that we did in our composition class um the question whether could writers are born or made oh yeah I actually think they're just born even though the the underlying assumption of uh composition courses is just that everyone can write everyone can learn to write so but if your question is good writers whether they become good writers or not they're accidental I think they just right and then somehow the audience finds that compelling okay now if I ask you more specific to define a good writer” (Interview 2)*

However, on the second attempt of trying to respond to the question, Andy answers the questions as an FYC instructor. This time Andy incorporates his beliefs and attitudes as a writing teacher with some prior experiences teaching writing.

Data 14

*“As FYC instructor I would just say articulate which can mean a lot articulate in a way that they just they can choose precise or very accurate words but articulate also means that they know how to use uh all the means of rhetorics um the paragraph the sentence the the structure of the essay in a way that they precisely uh support what they're going to say okay they should be really articulate but what they're trying to deliver okay it doesn't really mean that they follow the rules sometimes they break rules I've seen students break rules uh*

*but sometimes it it can really work so breaking the rules can sometimes work and I think that's that's I think a good indication of a good writer so they know exactly what is the purpose what they're trying to do with their writing and they just use the best means that they can” (Interview 2)*

It can be seen from Andy’s answers that he started drawing his beliefs informed by pedagogical theories and pedagogical practices as someone who has been exposed and actively engaged with composition pedagogy within FYC course in the U.S university.

### **Andy’s beliefs about how to be a good writing teacher**

Andy contextualizes the question by giving the context of how students in the FYC course take the FYC course as well as the general shared knowledge of what students may or may not perceive about the experience of enrolled in FYC course.

Data 15

*“I think considering the context I think I mentioned this before in our informal conversation that sometimes English is not really considered as serious subject for students a lot of them are actually annoyed they just want to study what they want to study when they go to the university whether it is I don't know uh computer science engineering and then they're still required to take English some of them actually enjoy that they uh like it is the course that they can express themselves really well but some of them are also annoyed that they still have to take the course that is not relevant or what they consider as irrelevant to your to their project so considering that context” (Interview 2)*

Andy put emphasis on the importance of how writing instructors should make the learning process contextual. Therefore, it can be argued that the more context is given to the students within the writing classroom the better it helps the students to understand.

Data 16

*“I think a good teacher would be a teacher a writing instructor that can make writing very engaging uh and then very contextual and then can make students learn the um transferable skills that can be applicable to their own course so that that makes them more invested” (Interview 2)*

Andy also specifically mentioned that the transferable skills should be one of the major objectives of teaching writing in FYC courses. This is because the students in the writing classroom come from diverse backgrounds in terms of the majors or programs they take in the university. That is why it is important to make sure that the learnings from the classroom can also be incorporated into the other courses they take during their time in the university to some extent so students can see FYC courses as a bridge.

### **How Andy’s beliefs has/has not changed**

Andy has unique experience of beliefs shifting because of his situation of juggling between teaching writing as well as having a major writing project which is about his dissertation at the same time. Andy somehow has eventually come to the conclusion or realization that the more someone is engaged with something the better someone will have the experience of doing the activity in which in this case is writing activity.

Data 17

*“um so back then before I teach writing in FYC course or before the process I think dissertation actually changed a lot of my beliefs more than teaching writing but teaching writing some of it also um makes me realize that okay writing is difficult but at that time I thought that I didn't need to struggle like I didn't I didn't need to strive to uh to get better results uh because I don't know at that time probably I thought that there is there was no way to do that some people were just born to be good writers and some just like some are just trying like what I did but then I think um I learned more that writing is more like um something that you can learn something that you can achieve something that the more you do it which which is actually not new thing but I just realize the yeah yeah the um the gravity of that that uh lesson that writing simply is says the more you do it the more you uh you are more you are better at it I think I kind of like understand that like you used to see it as something impossible but now see it as something doable yeah more or less more or less what” (Interview 2)*

Andy's pedagogical beliefs as teacher have changed from looking mostly on grammar and mechanics into a more context based pedagogy. He has shifted his beliefs about perceiving teaching writing as something that is static to be something that can be quite dynamic and conversational. Andy has realized that his beliefs have shifted.

Data 18

*“um well I think I mentioned earlier teaching composition changed my perspective on writing from previously which was actually programmed imposed uh situation that I thought more about language and the mechanics of writing grammar and so on uh teaching first year composition in the US um opened like my Horizon that writing is actually or supposed to be placed within this really exciting um context really lively conversation” (Interview 2)*

### **What contributes to the shifting Andy's beliefs**

It is also important to investigate what are factors contributing to Andy's pedagogical shifting. Interestingly, what influenced Andy the most is interaction with his peers or other graduate teaching assistants. This is because of the diverse background of how long someone has been teaching FYC courses and has been exposed and discussed about the issue. Some are considered novice teachers like Andy, but others can be considered having experienced engaging with FYC courses and students in the FYC courses either theoretically and practically. That is why Andy stated that the most influential factor that has influenced his pedagogical shifting is his GTA peers.

Data 19

*“believe it or not it's actually interaction with other um structures it's structures yeah so in that class uh there are some other um teaching assistants I think who are more exposed to uh or who have been more to yeah teaching and then seeing teaching as part of a uh relation uh with all the political awareness uh that I think gives me more um again opening Horizon of what teaching could actually involve” (Interview 2)*

Andy also shared a specific example of how he viewed one of the pedagogical approaches that is relevant to FYC instructors in which it is about word count. Andy

admittedly showing that he no longer views the issue of word count as black and white because he has come to more understanding of multilayer discussion on that issue.

Data 20

*“okay so let me give you example of what the issue of word count so there is this uh teaching composition movement that is really strongly against uh asking students to write with certain word count because they want to pursue more like we should we should pay attention more on what we're saying rather than how long we say that right and then one of the examples that they give uh with some other instructors agree at the time the teaching assistants agree with that method uh one of the ways is that if students cannot achieve certain word count we open dialogue with them like why did you just write for example two paragraphs or do you think that's enough for example I think that's good as an idea but if I have 50 students in a semester I don't think I will sit with them and oper log one by one 50 times yeah but word count is still useful but in a way that's also broaden my Horizon that probably there are there is a middle ground to that for example if students cannot achieve certain word count we don't immediately uh penalize them like we can still see other aspects of their writing yeah I think that's one of the example of me being exposed to alternative teaching not always agree but at least it broaden my Horizon” (Interview 2)*

### 3. Andy's Teacher knowledge

#### What students need to know to be a good writer

In the third stage of the interview, Andy was being asked questions related to his pedagogical knowledge specifically within FYC course context. Andy responded to the question about what students need to know to be a good writer showcasing his pedagogical knowledge on the subject matter by indicating the audience is important for any writer who hopes to write and makes their ideas in writing delivered to the audience.

Data 21

*“uh most of the time when I give emphasis in the class that would be to be aware of your audience and the context I think that's what that would be my main idea for example if you're writing for a class I actually said this said this to them so probably one day you graduated and then you become uh I don't know New York Times reporter you're really good writer but then right now this is your assignment there is a specific requirement that for you to complete for you to meet so this is your context New York Times probably will give you different context different kind of writing different kind of audience but right now this is your audience this is your requirement so to be a good writer simply means to understand the context the purpose of uh your writing” (Interview 3)*

Andy also mentioned specific examples from his classroom when he gave writing instruction to his students about how to write reflective writing. He continued his explanation about the importance of being aware of the audience for every writer.

Data 22

*“um for the reflective writing so I told them that you are going to write for other college students uh the reflective writing the general Topic at that time was um uh first days of college so basically I asked them to reflect on their transition between senior high school students to being a college student um so I asked them to if you want to know your audience then uh then now I'm giving you the opportunity to talk to your classmates because basically they are college*

*students uh so we did activate this like three similarities three differences uh and then after that I asked them to basically um uh summarize what have you learned about your audience who are college students” (Interview 3)*

### **Andy’s knowledge about rhetorics in FYC course**

Andy shares his pedagogical knowledge by elaborates the definition of ethos, pathos and logos in which are keys in understanding and explaining rhetorics. This is because rhetoric has been arguably one of the most important topics to talk about within composition studies as well as when someone serves as graduate teaching assistant teaching first-year composition courses to first-year students in the university.

Data 23

*“Ethos as the writer um how the writer convinces the audience uh pathos is more emotion uh emotionally evoking for audience and then logos is the um more logic data but there are still there is still overlapping that I just realize later for example number in the textbook would simply say that oh usually if you see numbers you see statistics that would be logos but no in a lot of occasions statistics is evoking emotion for example I showed the I showed them the example of the number of crime in California because we see that a lot in um social media saying that oh the number of the theft is really high in California would you say that Logos or more pathos?” (Interview 3)*

Andy did not only successfully share his pedagogical knowledge about the subject matter but also questioned the use of ethos, pathos and logos that sometimes can be seen indicating that because they are quite entangled to one another causing some confusion on deciding which goes to which terms when being discussed.

Data 24

*“so like what I mentioned earlier I think one of the main takeaway that I want students to learn from writing class is to be aware of the context and audience probably you are a good poet probably you like really really um can write Prose really beautifully but if that is not the assignment we we talk about really small context here if that's not the assignment then you're not successful in your uh writing the same with any other kind of context you are asked by your bus to write an email to set up an appointment and then you use that poetic skill that still won't be successful so I want them to be just sensitive about that and I think rhetoric is actually one of the ways uh to better understand that uh considering the audience um uh to be more sensitive about the context I think that's why it is um useful in teaching writing” (Interview 3)*

Furthermore, Andy connects the importance of rhetoric with teaching writing in which it serves a function to help students to be more intentional about structuring their writing and their argument considering their audience when they complete a writing.

### **Example of some parts of Andy’s syllabus for FYC courses**

When sharing about some parts of his syllabus, Andy elaborates on the rationale behind the reason why he decided to include one type of writing as one of the major assignments. The writing is called informative writing, and Andy is particularly interested with writing because it can somehow be used against another typical writing that students have encountered multiple times. Therefore, Andy took this opportunity as accommodating learning for the students because this will be something new.

Data 25

*“okay so yeah yeah so probably I've described about informative writing I mentioned it earlier about an and thing but let me tell uh the other one then the reflective I say was more interesting to me because based on textbook again textbook is really resourceful based on the textbooks uh explaining what is this genre of um reflective writing it is very counterintuitive to what students know about writing essay so if you're talking about trying to fight against five paragraph essay reflective writing is a good way to do it so basically for example uh students all know that when you write an essay thesis statement is supposed to be in the introduction in the first part of the essay but no in reflective essay according to the textbook basically the thesis statement or the discovery is supposed to be in the last paragraph in the in the earlier parts of the essay is supposed to be strictly about story so this is more storytelling than typical argumentative essay so I I was aware of that and then I'm actually I was enjoying uh teaching something new to students rather than something that they already know” (Interview 3)*

Andy also brought the discussion related to the existence of ChatGPT and shared his views about ChatGPT and his own policy as a writing teacher if he found his students identified using the help from this particular AI chatbot for the assignment. Andy admitted his stance about the use of AI with his own specific classroom policy.

Data 26

*“this is interesting also so because we have the insecurity with the AI right I think I can I think I could identify some of my students try to use um chat gpt to submit but chatgpt cannot write uh reflective essay all of their essays five paragraph essay I did not do anything about that exactly not to report like academic dishonesty or something I just marked them down like give them really bad grade because simply they did not meet the requirements. I am open to AI I told them that uh probably during class activity we will do uh AI but for uh submitting assignment using AI is basically like using external source this is not your work so if you use that that's the guideline from University by the way you have to site them or you have to mention uh which is the the same basic principle and every time we use external sources we have to acknowledge that as simple as that we had like very long conversation about it.” (Interview 3)*

### **Andy's syllabus examples when teach writing in Indonesia**

Andy also reflected on his previous teaching writing experience when he was working in one of the universities in Indonesia. It can be said that the main argument that can be taken from his reflection is the simplicity in terms of how he structured his syllabus in the past. Then it can also be said that that means the way he structures the syllabus now for teaching writing in FYC courses is more complex to some extent.

Data 27

*“it was really simple back then so I did not really see teaching as like really structured with syllabus well I had syllabus and then I told students like uh the assignments the plan for the assignments the objective of the course and things like that uh but that's more formality than the actual planning of the teaching because we have to submit the syllabus” (Interview 3)*

Andy also shared his personal opinion and perspective about creating a course syllabus in Indonesia in which he described it as “for the sake of the administrative

formality” so that he may or may not follow everything that was written in the syllabus when he came to the classroom. It can be argued that he has learned a lot from his experience teaching writing in FYC courses and might do things differently and he started teaching again in Indonesia when he completed his PhD in the U.S.

Data 28

*“Frankly speaking so Indonesian teaching writing Indonesia syllabus is not as meaningful as teaching writing syllabus in the U.S yeah I understand that correctly well maybe because it's it's part of the experience as well so at that time I was a new professor you know that most of the time I I believe that teachers who teach elementary school uh middle school senior high school I think they are better teachers because they are actually trained to teach as opposed to University professors they are trained in their subject but they're not really trained in um pedagogy so at that time I was like still trying to figure out what teaching means and then they asked me to create syllabus and then at the time I didn't see the the essence or how syllabus actually works so they asked me to create syllabus I created I submit it and then that's it that's the end of the story of my syllabus just for the sake of the administrative formality” (Interview 3)*

## DISCUSSION

Similar study in terms of capturing teachers' experience into a reflection has also been conducted by Aperecho et al (2023) where the study did a biographical research about the experiences of the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) program from the Philippines. Some of the intersection between Aperecho et al's study compared this current study can be found in what counts as the data including teacher's personal history and professional experience as and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in their home country. For Andy, he shared his teaching experience in a university in Indonesia from 2015 until 2019 as well as how he first started teaching first-year composition courses in a university in the U.S.

Andy's dynamic pedagogical experience, beliefs & attitudes, and knowledge resonates with finding from the study conducted by Nabilla & Sutrisno (2023) who looked at participant's teacher identity as a vietnamese Non-native English Speaking Teacher (NNEST) in a language school for ESL students from around the world in an American public university. This is because both studies highlight the dynamic nature of the participant reflecting their experiences.

A study with similar demographics can also be found in Putri (2020) who investigated Indonesian teacher experience teaching English in Thailand. It is interesting to mention that Indonesian teachers in Putri's study showed that they have good understanding of the English grammar so that they tend to help Thai students when it comes to checking the grammar while Andy in this current study also shares familiar experiences in helping L1 student writers about the issues of grammar. Even though most of the cases may revolve around spelling, typography, and run on sentences. However, based on Andy's reflection about the teaching experience and grading students' writing experience indicate that L1 student writers also are not free from grammatical errors just like how any L2 student writers can produce any grammar issues.

Moreover, in terms of sociocultural settings, Andy has also shared his concerns on how the sociocultural differences play a part in his teaching practices. For example, Andy can casually incorporating some cultural coded comments that is widely shared among L2 writers in Indonesia during the class. However, such approach cannot really

applicable when Andy delivers his teaching with L1 writers in American university due to this particular difference on the cultural aspects not allowing him to do the same thing. In addition to that when it comes to motivation and professionalism, Andy is arguably more motivated and invested in preparing the syllabus when teaching writing for L1 writers in the U.S compared to teaching writing for L2 writers in Indonesian in the past.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has explored Andy's pedagogical reflections especially about (1) teacher experience, where he reflected on teaching writing for L2 writers in Indonesia compared to teaching writing to L1 writers in the U.S in which one of the concluding reflection show that teaching writing in Indonesia has always associated with teaching language with more than half of the teaching focuses on the grammatical issues. However, even though the two experiences might look very different yet there is still similarity that can be drawn from both contexts when it comes to teaching mechanics of the writing. Moreover, regarding (2) teacher beliefs & attitudes, Andy has shown a shifting in his beliefs and attitudes when it comes to defining how to be a good writer and how to be a good writing teacher. With one of the most important lessons emphasis on the context, about how teaching writing should be contextualized. In addition to that, Andy has also shared that one of the major factors that has shifted his beliefs and attitudes comes from interaction with his peer graduate teaching assistant (GTA). Furthermore, related to (3) teacher knowledge, Andy has also shared his knowledge on the subject matter through the incorporation of rhetorics and an example of teaching writing instructions.

## **LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD**

The researcher would like to acknowledge the limitation of this current study due to the nature of this study as a single-subject research. Therefore, the findings of this study may or may not represent any graduate teaching assistant who shares cultural and academic background. With that said, Indonesian IGTA as the participant being studied in this research may or may not resonating any experiences or practices of other teacher coming from any Asian or south east Asian countries who are currently teaching writing courses in the U.S. public universities.

Moreover, any researchers interested in conducting related studies in the future can consider have multiple research participants so that more diverse information and insights can be gathered and highlighted. Furthermore, any additional data collection can be also useful to enrich the data such as classroom observation or field notes while doing the classroom observations.

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