

## WDI Final Report

### Summary of the writing instruction component:

- Each lecture started with a 15-minute writing task (e.g. connecting phrases, clauses and sentences, coherence, cohesion, topic sentences, writing paragraphs, the use of evaluative language, objectivity of reporting verbs in writing, the use of summary reminder phrases, rules for punctuation, rules for capitalization) meant to help students with all their writing assignments.
- Dr. Michael Kaler from the Writing Centre presented a workshop on “Writing Paragraphs” during the lecture on Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>. His presentation focused on topic sentences, transitional words/expressions and creating cohesion in paragraphs, information meant to support students with writing their assignments.
- I had planned a meeting between Dr. Kaler and the three TAs in the course to discuss how to organize a tutorial to be held a week after the meeting that would focus on the assignment that required students to write a critique of the textbook we used in LIN205. This meeting between Dr. Kaler and the TAs was planned for March 2<sup>nd</sup> but the strike event forced us to cancel the meeting and the subsequent tutorial.
- Detailed feedback on the writing assignments with comments and suggestions for improvement was given to all students.

### Summary of the writing activities undertaken by students involved in the project:

- Assignments and course materials were designed in a scaffolding fashion that involved structuring the writing tasks in a systematic way to support the students’ learning objectives. Thus, there were three writing assignments that were marked and that required the students to develop 1) full sentences, 2) full paragraphs; and 3) full essays. The course material was designed to provide support and information for each of the assignments. In addition, for the first two assignments, TA support was offered in the students’ tutorials.

## Evaluation of the project's effectiveness

- Given that students received both my support during lectures as well as the TAs support during tutorials, in addition to the invited lecture of Dr. Michael Kaler, the effectiveness of the project was high and quite successful. Students expressed their appreciation for the learning they had done through completing these assignments and taking this course, as you can see from some the students' evaluations: "There were lots of practice exercises given in class and posted on blackboard. The tutorials also provided great opportunities to practice"; "Before the strike, the tutorials helped me to better solidify my understanding of the course material"; "She gave us many exercises during the class to do. They are so useful"; "the prof. provided us with detailed notes and extra practice exercises"; The instructor has done a great job at explaining concepts and explanations were often accompanied by exercise questions that were done in class to further reinforce our understanding. The tutorials were also very helpful in consolidating our learning".
- My overall impression is that the instruction had a positive effect on the students' writing and this reflected into their assignments' marks where there is progression from a class average of C- for the first writing assignment to a C+ for the last writing assignment. Had the strike not disrupted the instruction and eliminated half the tutorials, I expect that progress would have been even more visible.

## Plans for future developments/modifications

- The students need continuous support for their writing that is offered in this course.
- One thing that I would continue to do is to enlist the help of the specialists from the Writing Centre as the experience we had this year was very positive. I think that their presence in lectures and tutorials as well as ongoing collaboration between the instructors, TAs and writing specialists increases the odds and degree of success in this course.
- Another thing I would do is to dedicate half of the tutorial time to writing strategies and half to mechanics (grammar, punctuation, etc.). This way, the students are able to apply what they learn in the lecture and also to receive customized feedback in a smaller setting.