

THE IDEA OF A WRITING CENTER IN ASIAN COUNTRIES: A PRELIMINARY SEARCH OF MODELS IN TAIWAN

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Writing centers in the U.S. are experiencing more diverse student populations than ever before. The increase in diversity affects the ways that centers function, in areas such as training programs, mentorships, tutoring strategies, and one-on-one interactions with students. Instead of closely examining the model of writing center adopted in the U.S., this paper investigates those centers located in Asian countries where most international students in American universities come from, in order to provide a different perspective for understanding the operation of writing centers in L2 contexts. Such a perspective helps index the methods for adjusting to a more diversified writing center, be it in the U.S. or in an L2 country, for cultivating better writers through the cooperation of L1 and L2 writing centers.

This paper starts by briefly reviewing the history of writing centers in the U.S. and discussing the effects that American writing centers have on Asian countries' higher education systems. The literature review on Asian writing centers presents the differences and similarities between American and non-American writing centers in terms of the services centers offer, the roles tutors play, and the format of one-on-one interactions. This overview of the status of the Asian writing centers is followed by a close-look at the centers at Taiwan's six traditional public universities.¹ Specifically focusing on the educational context of writing centers in Taiwan, the paper reviews these centers' development. Based on extensive web research, along with phone interviews on the status of the writing centers, these centers seem to function differently than U.S. counterparts. The Taiwanese writing centers are classified into three models according to the following criteria: purpose of founding, target students, target tutors, services offered, and centers' affiliation.

Introduction

The concept of the writing center comes mainly from the U.S. The first "writing lab," the former term used for writing centers, was established in the 1930s, and since that time, "writing labs" have experienced several transformations, from "writing clinics" to the "writing centers" of today. The mission of the writing center is widely believed to be helping students

become better writers rather than producing better papers (North). In the 1930s and 1940s, the initial purpose of establishing the writing center was to offer students extra writing instruction. Yet owing to social changes, usually affected by national government policy, American writing centers are now expected to solve a nation-wide problem—the literacy crisis—caused by "increasing enrollment, larger minority populations, and declining literacy skills" since the 1970s (Boquet 471). Associated with the image of "fixing" nation-wide problems, the writing center has been on the front lines of solving the literacy crisis, encountering many different kinds of students who are labeled as social problems and who do not belong to the "norm" (Carino, Waller, Arkin, Boquet, Yahner and Murdick). The writing center is expected by the government to increase the effectiveness of the educational system.

The use of writing centers as an effective solution to the national literacy problem in the U.S. leads these centers to become major resources for countries outside the U.S., and the successful image the centers present has prompted many educational institutions, domestic and international alike, to develop a writing center for their best institutional purposes (Mullin 1). Yet very limited research has been conducted about Asian writing centers, and Taiwanese writing centers are no exception. This paper starts by analyzing the literature on Asian writing centers, and then specifically focuses on Taiwanese writing centers in hopes of investigating the similarities and differences between writing centers in Taiwan and in the U.S. The present study indicates that one of the big differences between Taiwanese and U.S. writing centers is that faculty members commonly play the tutor's role in some Taiwanese centers. Secondly, free-standing centers in Taiwan offer bilingual writing assistance, which is rarely seen in the U.S.

Asian Writing Centers

The image U.S. writing centers have created regarding effective writing support for individual students has inspired similar approaches in Asian higher education. In the Asian educational context, possible factors invite the writing center approach, such as larger class size, limited instruction in

classroom settings, limited attention to each individual student, and students' different levels of English proficiency (Tan, Hayes, Johnston, Johnston et al.). Nevertheless, because interests in establishing writing centers outside North America did not emerge until the late 1990s or early 2000s, a limited context of the Asian and European writing centers as well as the limited number and scope of these centers is observed. As she discusses the challenges of innovating the writing center outside the U.S. in both her article and books published in 2010, Be Hoon Tan points out that the application of writing centers is relatively new in most Asian countries, and very little published material focuses on Asian writing centers.

By exploring Asian and European writing centers, Tan draws several generalizations from her comparison of those writing centers located within the United States and non-U.S. writing centers, and those generalizations help faculty members who are interested in creating their own institutional writing centers. For writing centers in an L2 context, certain accommodations seem to be needed—in her article, Tan specifically addresses adaptation to local needs and context.

- The first difference that Tan discovers is that “the non-North American OWLs (online writing labs) are either monolingual (in English or the native language), bilingual, or multilingual, while the North American OWLs are 100% monolingual and English” (Tan 404). The centers situated in European countries are usually bilingual or multilingual. The bilingual and multilingual services that L2 writing centers provide also seem to demonstrate that “the writing center approach has been used to teach writing in other languages” (Tan 405).
- The second difference is that the Asian and European writing centers seem to use faculty members, rather than peers, as tutors.
- Third, Tan points out the absence of email and real time tutoring in Asian and European writing centers.
- Fourth, in spite of creating resources that adapt to local students' learning needs, the supporting writing sources provided on the centers' websites are all directly from links to U.S. writing centers' websites, such as the Purdue Online Writing Lab.

Apart from the differences, according to Tan, some similarities of writing center operation also exist between North American and non-American writing

centers.

- First, both types of centers operate under a no-proofreading policy.
- Second, similar to North American writing centers, most of the non-North American writing centers in Tan's study provide “face-to-face individual tutoring, themed workshops, and a rich collection of online support materials” (Tan 405).
- Third, most of the non-U.S. writing centers focus on assistance for academic writing, but a number of them offer services that are not limited to writing support, but also include “oral presentation, reading and writing for career purposes” (Tan 405).

Although Tan's article offers an overview of how non-U.S. writing centers function, Tan's research subjects do not include the centers operating in Japan. Japan seems to be the place where most scholarly discussion about writing centers takes place in Asian countries. The writing centers symposium in Asia has become an annual event since the University of Tokyo held the first symposium on writing centers February of 2009 (website of the International Writing Center Association).

Focusing on four writing centers in Japan, Johnston et al. examine the similarities and differences in the ways that the four writing centers function, in order for other Japanese universities to understand the shape of the writing centers. The target writing centers in their study are at Osaka Jogakuin College, Sophia University, University of Tokyo, Komaba Campus, and Waseda University (“*Writing Centers in Japan*”). Although Johnston et al. conclude that there is no specific Japanese model, some generalizations from their study are still evident.

- First, the writing center at Waseda University supports writing in both Japanese and English.
- Second, the Japanese writing centers in their study not only offer writing support but also assist students in preparing for the tests that will be required for application to schools abroad. Johnston et al. state, “it is difficult for us to limit ourselves to the term ‘Writing Center.’ The students have needs in writing, reading, giving oral presentations, applying for study abroad, and help with tests[,] such as TOEFL and TOEIC” (“*Writing Centers in Japan*”) They conclude that they are really “Writing and Learning Centers that support students in their learning and improvement of writing and other skills” (Johnston et al., “*Writing Centers in Japan and Asia*,” “*Writing*

Centers in Japan”).

- In some of the writing centers, faculty members play the role of tutor.

The last two features seem to be the significant indicators for a writing center situated in countries (especially Asian ones) where English is used as a second/foreign language. In 2009, in a forum concerning writing centers and tutoring in Japan and Asia, the Japanese Associations for Language Teaching (JALT) presented a common idea for the function of the writing centers at Japanese universities: “all [the Japanese writing centers] are committed to not just helping students produce a better paper, but to support student learning” (Johnston et al., “*Writing Centers in Japan and Asia*”). That is to say, in Japanese writing centers, the goal of supporting students’ general learning seems to take precedence over that of assisting students with their writing. “Writing centers” in L2 contexts are no longer the writing centers where improving students’ academic writing ability is the focus; rather, L2 writing centers may better meet non-native English speaking students’ needs when they help students learn not only writing, but also other language skills.

Additionally, faculty members serve as tutors in most Japanese writing centers. Faculty members playing the tutor’s role is the second indicator of non-American writing centers, and this common phenomenon seems to challenge the approach of peer tutoring. As the co-director of the writing center at Tokyo International University, George Hays discusses some of the tutees’ perceptions in his writing center concerning the peer tutoring approach, and the overall results of his questionnaires indicate that students agree that peer tutoring is good because they feel more relaxed and helped when they interact with their peer tutors. One of his research participants said that he felt less intimidated in collaboration with his peer tutors than with his professors (595). However, Hays also finds that there are some instances when tutees become irritated by their peer tutors (for example when they cannot have every grammar mistake corrected – especially when it comes to article usage). Interestingly, although the majority of his research participants understand the concept of peer tutoring, a few of them still feel irritated by the refusal of their tutors to passively correct grammar mistakes (595). Hays concludes that more in-depth research on how effective peer education can be needs to be carried out (595).

While most of the articles published regarding Japanese writing centers discuss the configuration of an L2 writing center model suitable for Japan, Adam Turner argues that the effects that social-cultural

background brings to the shape of Asian writing centers should not be underestimated.

Adam Turner, the director of the writing center at Hanyang University, Korea, discusses the dissonance that has been created by the application of the North American writing center model in Korea. Adapting the U.S. writing center model to local needs and culture results in a different type of writing center. The English Writing Center, which is part of the Hanyang Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), was established in 2003 as a result of a proposal Turner made. He points out that his clients seem to be affected by the deep-seated cultural concept that “age differences of even a year must be respected;” this cultural concept might increase the difficulty in implementing the peer model of interaction in Korea (“*Re-engineering*”). For instance, the centers placed in Hanyang and Seoul National Universities, which serve undergraduate students, do not use a peer-tutoring model.

As the only native English-speaking faculty member in the department of English, Turner “does the editing and conferencing alone” (“*Re-engineering*”). The target tutees are both faculty and science major students, and most of them “are not attending any classes in English or studying English in a formal program” (“*Re-engineering*”). Since his target tutees seem to be mainly from the field of science, the writing support his tutees need the most is “journal article revisions based on reviewers’ comments,” “research writing for publication purpose,” and “professional lab reports” rather than writing assigned in class (“*Re-engineering*”). In the conferencing process, his clients submit their papers to him via email and have to offer a sample article from the journals in which they wish to publish. With the MS Word editing function, Turner will first gain an understanding of the requirements and structure of the sample article that his students attach to the email, and then he will send the edited paper with his suggestions for revision before their face-to-face sessions start.

Additionally, Turner discovers that his students prefer a more directive approach rather than a non-directive approach. Based on his experiences working in this writing center, he finds it more appropriate to play the role of teacher as facilitator rather than peer as facilitator. Regarding the process of giving comments on his clients’ writing, Turner takes an approach that is between “editing and conferencing” in order to meet the needs of students’ publication goals (“*Re-engineering*”). He does not proofread and correct all grammar mistakes, but he does “flag sentences that are not understandable for revision and may correct some important errors that interfere with

communication” (“*Re-engineering*”). Working in the L2 writing center, Turner expresses that he has found the combination of online and face-to-face feedback “to be the most effective and flexible for writing center work,” and he also adds a note that the traditional way of separating online and face-to-face writing center service may need to be reexamined (“*Re-engineering*”). In short, the tutoring approach that he has acquired from the U.S. writing center model has been adapted to his L2 working environment: he is more directive in his tutoring approach.

A Close Look at Taiwan’s Writing Centers

Though the establishment of writing centers began in the 1930s, the study of this field only started to receive academic recognition in the 1970s. In this regard, writing center work is a fairly young field in the U.S., as is its influence on the development of the contemporary writing centers in Asian countries from which the majority of tutees come. Researchers, such as Carol Severino, Jessica Williams, Shanti Bruce (ESL Writers), Ben Rafoth, Tony Silva, and Ilona Leki, have targeted their research at strategies for effectively tutoring the increasing number of international students as tutees in writing centers in the late 1990s and early 21st century. Unlike the emergent study in the 1990s, which focused on the awareness of the ESL/EFL learners’ cultural or linguistic differences, these researchers, and others doing related work, examined ESL issues in a broader and more in-depth analysis, both decoding NNES learners’ English acquisition and writing process as well as investigating their cognitive and second language development. Since the 1990s, researchers focusing on ESL issues have seemed to decode their target research participants in the U.S. by trying to identify effective tutoring approaches for enhancing NNES learners’ writing competence; however, researchers seldom investigate the challenges and benefits the application of the writing center approach brings to L2 contexts, where enhancing NNES learners’ writing competence is also the goal. If both L1 and L2 writing centers share the same goal of improving NNES learners’ writing competence, investigating writing centers located in L2 countries, such as Asian ones, is worthwhile. Understanding the operation of L2 writing centers and their adaptations to each individual country also helps indicate the possibility for writing centers in the U.S. and Asian countries, such as Taiwan, to work together to create a collaboratively international writing center community.

As discussed earlier, very little published material focuses on Asian writing centers, including writing centers in Taiwan. Thus far, only one conference

presentation regarding Taiwan writing center work has been found, in the 2010 International Writing Center Association-National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (IWCA-NCPTW) Joint Conference. The two presenters, Thomas Truesdell and Jui-Chuan Chang, examine the efforts to start an EFL writing center at National Cheng Chi University. They also discuss “the challenges of introducing collaborative, peer-based learning strategies to both students and administrators who are accustomed to a hierarchical passive learning environment” (IWCA program).

Through email communication, both presenters provided the handouts that they used for their presentation. From the handouts (personal communication, January 30, 2012), Chang shared his study on students’ needs and comments about the center as well as tutors’ comments on their writing center sessions. Most students in that university need assistance on statements of purpose (SOPs), resumes, and autobiographies for job or graduate school applications. The second greatest support students need is guidance to help them prepare for standardized tests, such as the TOEFL and GRE. Interestingly, the interview data from their study indicates that students rarely ask for tutors’ assistance with their essay and paper writing. For students in Chang’s writing center, writing in English seems to be a means to pass a test, receive a degree, a certificate, a job, or even a type of acknowledgment of being socially successful (Chang’s handouts). Chang’s results also suggest that students expect tutors to be a walking dictionary—knowing every word in English and everything related to English. Tutors are expected to answer tutees’ questions right away, and the tutoring sessions are perceived as the one-time thing. In other words, once students have completed their SOPs or resumes, they do not feel the need to come to the center anymore (Chang’s handouts). Also, students highly praise tutors who show them the mechanics and conventions of writing in English, such as sentence structure, thesis, organization, and coherence. Yet their attitude toward the use of the center seems not to echo with the composition theory prevalent in the U.S.: writing is a recursive process, and the one-time writing center session cannot fix all learners’ writing problems. Students’ reluctance to visit the centers multiple times corresponds to tutors’ comments that “most students do not like the idea of rewriting and revising; they think changing a few words or rewriting a few sentences is good enough” (Chang’s handouts). Tutors feel frustrated when their tutees think one session can solve all of their writing problems, but at the same time, tutors also feel their tutoring competence is not good enough to deal with large-scale, global problems

in their tutees' writing, and thus more training on effective strategies for tutors is necessary (Chang's handouts).

Chang further points out the challenges that his writing center has to face. First, the tight budget becomes a main reason for mistreating tutors as student workers. In addition to tutoring students, tutors have to take on administrative work, such as "designing and drawing posters for promoting the services of the Writing Center on campus" (Chang's work notes). This trivial administrative work sometimes distracts tutors' attention from their own tutoring sessions. Second, with an unclear idea of the writing center work, tutors seem to have difficulty maintaining the quality of their sessions. The only six hours of training tutors receive before they officially start their sessions seems not to be enough. Chang concludes that developing a writing center course that requires an internship period might help strengthen tutors' competence in conducting effective and productive sessions.

Apart from the aforementioned 2010 IWCA conference presentation, discussion of the other Taiwan writing centers—their operation, institutional role, tutoring approaches, development, and challenges—seems to be neglected in writing center scholarship. All of the related information concerning writing center work can only be viewed on the webpages of each university in Taiwan.

The establishment of Taiwanese writing centers began in the early 21st century. These centers share the common goal of enhancing students' writing abilities. Taiwan does not have many writing centers, and only a few of them can be found after a thorough web search and exhaustive check through the list of the country's traditional public universities and universities of teachers² (excluding the national universities of technology). Because of the unique institutional purposes and needs in an L2 context, some of the centers do not run exactly like the U.S. writing center model, and they are more like prototypes of it in their application of one-on-one interactions with students outside of classroom settings. Very little literature discusses Taiwanese writing center work, so for a better understanding of these writing centers placed in the six traditional universities, Table 1 presents the basic information about them, collected through extensive web research along with phone interviews (National Tsing Hua University writing center website, National Cheng Chi University writing center website, National Chiao Tung University Language Teaching and Research Center website, National Chiayi University Language Center website, National United University Writing Clinic website, National Sun Yat-

Sen University Language Learning Lounge website³). For an easier grasp of how Taiwan's writing centers operate, these centers are categorized into three types of models. From Table 1 (see p. 9), we can conclude that the more freedom these centers have to offer services and the more stable funding they receive, the more responsibility they have to improve students' writing abilities.

The first type of writing center runs comprehensively and similarly to North American writing centers. Separated from language learning centers, this type of center stands alone and is in charge of its own operation. This type of center is usually affiliated with the office of Academic Affairs directly under the control of the school and does not need to worry much about the budget affecting the center's ability to operate. The free-standing status and direct financial support from the school causes this type of center to bear more responsibilities, and at the same time, to have more freedom to decide the services that better improve students' writing abilities. Additionally, this type of center offers writing support in both English and Chinese (Tan 404). Of the Taiwanese writing centers surveyed, only one can be categorized into this type: the one at National Tsing Hua University.

With some differences, the second type of center model also operates similarly to the model of "writing center" that runs in the U.S. Instead of operating autonomously, this type of the center offers services that are assigned by broader organizations, such as a language center or research center. The writing center has to follow instructions from top management directives; therefore, this second type of writing center has less freedom and less direct financial support in deciding the type of services it wants to offer. The role typically played by the second type of center means that the center's only duty will be conducting tutoring sessions. Yet this type of center has a greater chance of having to shut down because of budget issues. For instance, a phone call to the center at National United University revealed the surprising fact that it had actually stopped running in 2009. The life of that center only lasted for two academic years after the budget from the Ministry of Education ran out. Sometimes this type of center has to offer language support in addition to writing assistance. The writing centers at National Cheng Chi University, National Chiao Tung University, and National United University are classified into this category. In the writing center at National Cheng Chi University, students play the role of tutor, but in the other two universities, faculty members are the tutors. However, all of these writing centers only offer writing support

in English, unlike the bilingual writing assistance provided in the first type of center model discussed above.

The writing center sessions operating in both the National Sun Yat-Sen University's language learning lounge and National Chiayi University's language center are categorized into the third type of writing center model because of the one-on-one interactions with students in those sessions. This type of center is under the control of the language center or a similar sort of organization. Of these three types of writing centers, the third type has the least freedom to offer the services it wants to provide. Like the second model, the third type is only responsible for offering tutoring sessions. The big difference between the second and third types is that the third type is usually not called a "writing center"; rather, it is usually called a "language consultation center" or a "language teacher." The issue of the funding that keeps these "centers" working needs more in-depth investigation, and research on these two centers through web search and phone interviews indicates that both centers are still functioning now. Tutors run the sessions based on the peer-tutoring theory. One-on-one interactions with students take place outside of regular classroom settings, but apart from the expected one-on-one tutoring approach, the goal of the sessions is not restricted to providing writing assistance. Instead, tutors are expected to help students with any problem related to English learning and to guide students to practice English in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In these centers, students play the role of tutor rather than faculty members.

In addition to the three types of center models discussed above, there is one writing center that exists in an online format. This type of "online writing center" is difficult to categorize into the three models classified above. First, among Taiwan's traditional public universities, an online writing center is one of the services that National Sun Yat-Sen University's language learning lounge offers. However, the information related to its operation on its webpage does not specify if students have the opportunity to participate in synchronous sessions with their tutors. The webpage shows that students submit their papers to the web platform designed by this online writing center, and instead of proofreading students' papers, tutors will return their overall comments on the students' writing via email. The lack of information regarding whether students will receive an immediate response from their tutors and whether students will have synchronous interaction with their tutors makes this online writing center difficult to categorize as a comprehensive writing center. The second reason it is

difficult to categorize this online writing center is that in addition to the online writing center, the center also provides physical face-to-face language consultations. Although having both an online writing center and face-to-face sessions seems to be quite common in U.S. centers, such as the one at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, the asynchronous sessions at National Sun Yat-Sen University's "online writing center" seem not to fit the protocol of the most writing center work in the U.S.

The brief discussion of the three models and the online writing center presented above provides an overview of writing center implementation in Taiwan's six traditional public universities. The three models classified here not only indicate an application of the North American writing center model, but also demonstrate the shape of the adapted writing center model.

One of the big differences between these centers in Taiwan and the U.S. center model is that faculty, rather than peers, often play the tutor's role in some centers. The second difference is that free-standing centers offer bilingual writing assistance, which is rarely seen in the North American center model (Tan 404). Concerning the policy of no-proofreading, the centers at National Sun Yat-Sen University, National Cheng Chi University, and National Chiao Tung University announce such a policy, but the limited research on Taiwan writing center work fails to indicate if the rest of the writing centers announce and administer this policy.

An adapted writing center model seems to be inevitable, as the exact application of the model used prevalently in the U.S. to Taiwan's traditional universities might not necessarily meet their institutional needs. Such a notion also echoes Turner's study concerning the search for a suitable writing center model in Korea, and he concludes that "some of the practices of the typical North American writing center model need to be adapted to fit international contexts and needs" ("*Re-engineering*").

The first type of adapted writing center discussed here is the one that is close to the U.S. writing center, and the benefits of offering bilingual assistance in both Chinese and English is not difficult to understand even though such a service is not commonly seen in the U.S. As English is the de facto global language, and Taiwanese students desire to learn it well, all the universities in Taiwan are encouraged by the MOE to assist students in learning English, so the assistance in English service seems to be obligatory and necessary. The assistance in Chinese is actually closer to the writing center service commonly practiced in the U.S. because of the status of Chinese as Taiwan's official

language and mother tongue. Taiwan has become one of the countries where more and more foreigners would like to learn Chinese, so the first type of writing center seems to have the potential to develop more comprehensively to begin tutoring in Chinese as a second/foreign language. Yet more data needs to be collected to determine its future development.

Compared to the third type of the writing center, the second type of writing center seems to be easily at risk of having to shut down because of its focused or restricted assistance on the development of students' writing skills. According to Truesdell and Chang's presentation discussed earlier, the majority of tutees comes to the center primarily to have their papers corrected, and those papers are more exam or job/school application-oriented and subject to particular deadlines. Also, most Taiwanese students are not required to write their classroom assignments in English. Under these circumstances, tutees seem to value more the idea of producing better papers than training better writers. In this regard, if the writing centers only focus on offering writing assistance in an environment in which writing is not commonly or practically perceived as a process, and in which writing in English seems not to be the requirement for university students' assignments, writing centers can barely survive.

The third type of writing center seems to be the type that better meets tutees' needs—learning English well in terms of four skills. This type of writing center also corresponds to Johnson et al.'s study. The most crucial aspect of the third type of writing center in Taiwan that deserves further research is what tutors can do to help their tutees become both good language learners and better writers, as well as what L2 directors can do to navigate the centers to a place where good language learners are also better writers.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

The synthesis of this review of L2 writing centers, mostly located in Asian countries, and discussion of the writing centers in Taiwan's six traditional universities reveal several significant indicators of non-U.S. writing centers:

1. Comprehensive L2 writing centers usually offer bilingual services: English and the first language used in the L2 context.
2. Outside the U.S., the use of faculty members as tutors rather than peers seems to be common.
3. The services that L2 writing centers offer seem not to be restricted to writing assistance but are more language support focused.

4. Regarding the policy of no-proofreading, most of the non-U.S. writing centers announce such a policy, but the limited research and scholarship on Taiwanese centers' work fails to indicate how this policy is administered in the "actual" tutoring.

Although the preliminary research results uncover the skeleton of the L2 writing center, such as its purpose of establishment, target students, and services offered, the flesh of the operation—students' needs and expectations, tutors' tutoring approach and philosophy, and directors' vision statements—still remains unclear and deserves more in-depth investigation. For instance, the degree of accommodation to tutoring strategy, such as Turner's non-directive tutoring approach discussed above, requires further study.

The torch of writing center work has been passed to Asian countries, and Taiwan is not an exception. But the bright light deserves more work, and this article is simply the start for an ongoing project of gathering interview data with tutees, tutors, and directors of Taiwan writing centers. The very limited research on Asian and Taiwanese writing center work does not specify the features that an adapted writing center requires in an L2 context.

Identifying the features that better meet the needs required by Taiwan's traditional public universities is significant. Those identified features will help specifically index one of the potential operation systems for the writing centers located in countries where English is used as a foreign/second language. The results of the present study help countries outside Taiwan, especially other Asian countries, such as Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Korea, and so on, revisit the theory of collaborative learning and the effectiveness of more "mature" students assisting their peers to enhance their writing competence in an L2 context where peers might not be socially and culturally seen as authority figures.

The specific operation system identified in an L2 context also provides the writing center community in the U.S. with a different perspective for responding to a more diversified writing center, be it located in the U.S. or in an L2 country. Understanding the operation of L2 writing centers enhances the practices of collaborative learning because such an understanding opens the dialogue between L1 and L2 writing centers for improving NNES learners' writing competence as a shared goal. The present research helps to indicate the possibility for the both writing centers in the U.S. and Taiwan to work together to create a more collaboratively international writing center community. When writing centers located in L1 and L2 countries

work together, achieving the goal of cultivating better writers, rather than better papers, is near.

Notes

1. The references of the writing centers in the six Taiwan traditional universities in this paper. For easier access to those centers' websites, the links are provided below:
Language center web site. Retrieved from National Chiayi University. 2012. Web. Jan. 2012.
http://www.ncyu.edu.tw/lgc/content.aspx?site_content_sn=36275
Language Learning Lounge web site. Retrieved from National Sun Yat-Sen University. 2012. Web. Jan. 2012.
http://zephyr.nsysu.edu.tw/self_access/newweb/a5_clinic.html
Language Teaching and Research Center web site. Retrieved from National Chiao Tung University. 2012. Web. Jan. 2012.
http://ltrc.nctu.edu.tw/news_o.php?id=132
Writing center web site. Retrieved from National Cheng Chi University. 2012. Web. Jan. 2012.
<http://flc.nccu.edu.tw/writingcenter/>
Writing center web site. Retrieved from National Tsing Hua University. 2012. Web. Jan. 2012.
<http://writing.wvlc.nthu.edu.tw/writcent/index.php/main/viewcontent/23>
Writing clinic web site. Retrieved from National United University. 2007. Web. Jan. 2012.
<http://lctc.nuu.edu.tw/sac/ClassInfo.asp>
- ² Compared to the universities of technology, both the traditional public universities and universities of teachers have a longer history, better reputation, and more stable funding from Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan. Both types of universities are also mainly responsible for Taiwanese higher education.
- ³ See references.

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Table 1: The Writing Centers Placed in the Six Taiwan Traditional Public Universities

University	Year Est.	Purpose of Founding	Target Students	Target Tutors	Time of Each Tutoring Session	Services Offered	Affiliation
National Tsing Hua University	2002	To enhance students' writing abilities and to assist students who have writing problems. (It is the first university to start a writing center in Taiwan.)	All Students	Full-time and part-time teachers who are from the departments of English and Chinese and are working in the writing center	1 hour (Students can only have 3 visits per month.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To offer tutoring sessions To host workshops in relation to teaching writing courses To advise thesis and dissertation writing To design sessions for English Corner To offer training courses where invited experts in English and Chinese writing teach a group of students (up to 20 students) To provide helpful writing materials To establish writing corpuses To design the teaching materials for academic writing in English and Chinese 	The Office of Academic Affairs
National Cheng Chi University	2008	To enhance students' writing abilities.	All Students	Graduate and undergraduate students from the department of English	50 minutes (no limitation for number of visits)	To offer assistance on essay, report, thesis, and dissertation writing—including analyzing the goal of the assignment, brainstorming ideas, outlining, ensuring the coherence of the paper, enhancing the coherence of the paper, knowing how to cite, discussing other issues related to academic writing in English	Foreign Language Center
National Chiao Tung University	The WC started in 2000, but more established service began in 2007.	To enhance students' writing abilities and their expertise in academic writing, thesis and dissertation writing, and application materials for schools abroad.	All Students	Native and non-native English speaking teachers who work in the Language Teaching and Research Center	25 minutes (Students can only have 5 regular visits per semester, but more if there are spots open for drop-ins.)	To offer tutoring sessions focusing on issues of writing in English, such as journal, research report, thesis and dissertation writing; study plans; resumes; applications; as well as questions regarding essay writing for TOEFL/GEPT	Language Teaching and Research Center (Language Self-Study Center)
National Chaiyi University	2002	To answer students' questions regarding English learning.	All Students	Undergraduates across departments	50 minutes (students can have 4 visits at most per week)	To assist students who have problems in English	Language Center
National United University	2007-2009 (due to budget)	To enhance students' English abilities along with the establishment of English Corner.	All Students	Native and non-native English speaking teachers who work in the Language Center	1 hour (there is no limitation for number of visits)	To assist students with their understanding of writing in English	Language Center (Self-access Learning Room)
National Sun Yat-Sen University	2009	(a) Regular language consultation: assist students with English language learning problems (b) Online writing center: offer comments on students' papers (500 word limit)	All Students	Undergraduates, M.A., and Ph.D. students across departments	(a) Regular language consultation: 1 hour (no limit to number of visits) (b) Online writing center: submit papers to tutors via email	To assist students who have problems in English and offer them a way of practicing English	Language Learning Lounge