

# 12 Building Confidence as NNESTs of Writing through Pre-service Training and Professional Development

Anastasiia Kryzhanivska  
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Tetyana Bychkovska  
INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

Entering a classroom as a novice writing instructor may be challenging, but starting to teach as a NNEST sometimes adds additional difficulties. Previous research has revealed that NNESTs may experience a lack of confidence in a classroom and doubt their credibility due to their linguistic or cultural backgrounds (Floris & Renandya, 2020; Li, 1999; D. Liu, 1999; Long, 2003; Reis, 2011; Thomas, 1999; Wolff, 2015; Worden-Chambers & Horton, 2020). NNESTs of writing in particular sometimes have their nonnative status highlighted by their students and colleagues (Braine, 1999; Ruecker et al., 2018), which, as a result, can make NNESTs self-conscious about their professional skills. Therefore, confidence building becomes an essential part of NNESTs' preparation for writing instruction.

While challenges of NNESTs have been discussed in previous research, less attention has been devoted to examining solutions. Existing suggestions for supporting NNESTs of writing in confidence building include, for example, encouraging writing programs to receive more education about NNESTs' experiences and capitalize on NNESTs' strengths (Kasztalska, 2019; M. Lee et al., 2017; Ruecker et al., 2018; Selvi & Rudolph, 2017; Thomas, 1999; Worden-Chambers & Horton, 2020; Zheng, 2017). Enhancing general pre-service teacher training has also been offered as a solution (e.g., Kasztalska, 2019; J. Liu, 2005); however, few studies have provided an extensive discussion of such training or additional professional development (PD) activities used to support NNESTs of writing.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a collaborative reflection on the elements of training and PD activities in which we, two master's program NNEST graduates, participated during our graduate program in the US.

These activities contributed to our sense of confidence as academic writing instructors, which was invaluable as we began teaching as graduate assistants and then transitioned into full-time jobs at two different U.S. universities. This chapter begins with a review of existing research on NNESTs' of writing training. Then, we introduce our reflective method and provide a brief overview of our backgrounds. After presenting the reflection on the barriers to our confidence, we discuss how they were addressed through training and PD activities. Based on our findings, we provide recommendations for NNESTs' trainers.

## Training and Professional Development for NNESTs of Writing

Research examining experiences of NNESTs of writing provides insights into their training and PD. Before starting to teach, NNESTs of writing typically receive a short one-week or multi-day pre-semester training (Chen, 2021; Kasztalska, 2019; Ruecker et al., 2018). This short training sometimes leaves NNESTs feeling “ill-prepared” for writing instruction (Kasztalska, 2019, p. 165) since many of them start teaching in their first semester of graduate school as international students, lacking familiarity with the composition pedagogy in the U.S. context. As a result, studies recommend providing more extended training (e.g., Kasztalska, 2019) or, as J. Liu (2005) strongly argues, delaying teaching until the second or later semesters to allow for sufficient NNEST teacher training, which “could greatly reduce anxiety and boost their confidence” (p. 174).

Concurrent with teaching in their first semester or year, NNESTs are sometimes supported through a graduate-level course on teaching writing and/or a mentoring program (Chen, 2021; Connor, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Kasztalska, 2019; Li, 1999; J. Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018; Snow et al., 2006). While teacher training in global contexts often includes required academic communication courses to improve English proficiency (Snow et al., 2006), such courses are either rarely offered in the North American contexts or are electives (D. Liu, 1999). NNESTs of writing in the US rarely enroll in these electives, with only one participant in Zheng (2017) mentioning taking such a course. This is despite almost all participants in NNEST research sharing concerns and difficulties with adjusting to the new language and culture.

The importance of promoting discussions about the relationship between language and identity, the native speaker fallacy, and translanguaging through training is emphasized by NNEST participants and recommended by re-

searchers (Kasztalska, 2019; J. Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018; Selvi & Rudolph, 2017; Selvi & Yazan, 2021; Snow et al., 2006; Worden-Chambers & Horton, 2020; Zheng, 2017). Most NNESTs of writing report gaining confidence and feeling empowered through such discussions. Early-career professionals also report that membership in professional organizations has allowed for their identity (re)construction and supported professionalization (Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Kim & Saenkhum, 2019). Exposure to writing samples by NES students early in training is also recognized as useful for building NNESTs' of writing confidence since these samples demonstrate that NES writers are not "perfect" and that NNESTs can help NES students improve writing skills (Kasztalska, 2019; Ruecker et al., 2018).

Gaining training through working as tutors is not typically discussed in research on NNESTs of writing; this activity was only briefly mentioned in Todd Ruecker et al. (2018) and Xuan Zheng (2017). The lack of such discussion might be explained by tutoring being an uncommon component of new composition instructor training. However, it is also possible that the discussion of tutoring and perhaps other aspects of NNEST education was out of scope for the reviewed studies as their main focus was on general experiences of NNESTs of writing, and not specifically on their training. To contribute to a more complete understanding of the education that NNESTs of writing may receive, we present a range of training and PD activities that we, two NNESTs, engaged in as a way of overcoming early-career challenges.

## Method

To name the elements of training and PD activities that helped us address our initial challenges as NNESTs of writing, we employed a duoautoethnographic approach (Rinehart & Earl, 2016), which refers to a critical analysis of how two researchers' "own lived experiences contribute to broader understandings of a sociocultural situation or a social phenomenon" (Mirhosseini, 2018, p. 3). Thus, this collaborative self-study aimed to narrate our stories and draw conclusions for a larger audience.

To generate categories for the elements of training that contributed to our confidence building, we first independently created lists of activities we engaged in. The lists, as we discovered upon comparison, appeared similar to a large extent. We had many experiences that overlapped (e.g., taking the same coursework, tutoring at writing labs), but also each of us had unique experiences (e.g., Tetyana working on a feedback coding project as a research assistant, or Anastasiia teaching in several contexts). We then collaboratively discussed the lists of activities and grouped them into six categories: class-

room learning, tutoring writing and training tutors, observations, collaboration and mentoring, teaching experience, and additional PD activities. To recall specific details of our experiences, we consulted multiple artifacts from our master's program, including our CVs last updated right after our graduation; major course papers and instructor feedback on them; course materials; and even personal photos. In the process of writing this manuscript, we had in-depth discussions of the training details, during which it became apparent that each element of training and PD helped us address specific challenges that we initially experienced as NNESTs of writing. Thus, the discussion of challenges is also introduced in this manuscript.

Before presenting our joint reflection, we should acknowledge that our experiences should be interpreted in light of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Norton & De Costa, 2018). The experiences that we had intersect with other aspects of our backgrounds (e.g., race, religion, gender, prior jobs); not all NNESTs having gone through similar training or PD might have the same experience as we did. Therefore, we introduce our backgrounds below.

## Author Background

Anastasiia and Tetyana are both white females, born and raised in Mykolayiv, Ukraine. We are native speakers of Ukrainian and Russian. We received bachelor's degrees from the same university in Mykolayiv, where Anastasiia majored in English and German translation and interpretation and Tetyana in foreign philology (teaching of English and German as foreign languages and world literature). In Ukraine, each of us had around seven years of experience tutoring and a year teaching general EFL to children and adults. When we started our master's program in applied linguistics at Ohio University (OU), we were in our early 20s, with Anastasiia joining the program one year earlier than Tetyana. Despite studying at the same university in Ukraine, it was not until Tetyana applied to OU that we were introduced to each other via email by the OU linguistics program's graduate chair.

After graduation from OU, Anastasiia started a full-time job as an instructor at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). She has been teaching ESOL writing for graduate and undergraduate NNEST students along with other skill-based and teacher-education classes. Tetyana, after finishing the program, was hired full-time as a faculty ESL specialist at George Mason University's (GMU) writing center. Tetyana's job responsibilities included training tutors, tutoring, facilitating writing groups, and teaching writing. Currently, Anastasiia is an associate teaching professor and T/ESOL program director at BGSU, and Tetyana is an independent scholar.

## Barriers to Confidence: Our Initial Challenges

Before describing elements of the training that helped us build confidence as future writing instructors in the US, we first present challenges that we encountered at the start of the master's program.

Before OU we knew little of the U.S. writing conventions, which is not uncommon for NNESTs (Connor, 1999). Our pre-OU experience with writing in English mostly consisted of extensive translation practice or short essay composition, both following the conventions of Ukrainian writing. It was not until around the second year of our undergraduate program in Ukraine that we learned about writing the "American way," which included composing texts with a clear structure and a thesis statement. We then encountered this type of writing again several years later in TOEFL preparation materials, when applying to U.S. universities. Still, these brief introductions to writing expectations in the US were insufficient for us to gain comprehensive knowledge necessary for teaching this subject matter. When we started our program at OU, a graduate academic writing course was available as an elective; however, neither of us chose to take it since we had little time left outside of our required coursework, assistantship-related activities, and additional jobs, all of which were vital for supporting us financially and making our stay in the US possible. It was through the elements of training described below that we started to learn about expectations for advanced academic writing in the U.S. context, the knowledge essential for teaching writing with confidence.

Having little knowledge of the U.S. writing conventions, we had even less understanding of how academic writing can be taught (e.g., what a curriculum may look like, how to provide feedback). Even expectations for teaching in the U.S. academy in general (e.g., pedagogy, engagement, establishment of authority) were new for us. It is clear that without the knowledge of writing, writing pedagogy, and general pedagogy expected in the US, we would be unable to teach academic writing at the university level effectively and confidently. While fortunately we did not have to do so, we have heard anecdotally, however, from other NNESTs that they had to start teaching university-level writing in their first semester, which had a negative impact on their perception of their professional ability, mental health, self-esteem, and even willingness to continue a teaching career. Similar accounts were also documented in previous research (Chen, 2021; Kasztalska, 2019; J. Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018).

In fact, Anastasiia experienced some of these negative consequences during her first semester of graduate school, when she was assigned to teach middle school beginning pull-out ESL students. While teaching in this context was less demanding than teaching university-level academic writing, it

was still challenging because Anastasiia had to support her students who did not know the English alphabet while adjusting to a new educational context herself. Because her supervisor had a heavy workload administering the ESL curricula in several school districts, he was unable to provide his teaching assistants with extensive training before the start of their assignments or offer observation opportunities. The lack of feedback on Anastasiia's teaching performance led her to question her teaching practices and resulted in teaching anxiety. To compensate for the lack of training and support, Anastasiia spent long hours with her graduate school colleagues trying to understand K-12 standards and brainstorming lesson plans.

Although not having to teach during her first year, Tetyana encountered a challenge when tutoring at the writing lab. After Tetyana's first semester of tutoring, she received only average evaluations from students with comments stating that she was "unclear" in sessions. Having little experience with tutoring practices in the US, she felt frustrated that she was unable to provide writers with the support they needed. Challenges related to Tetyana's tutoring or Anastasiia's teaching occurred despite our previous work experiences in Ukraine.

Another barrier to our confidence was our belief that our NNES status was a limitation in the U.S. educational context. Coming from Ukraine, where the target of language learning was a native speaker, we were not familiar with the ideas of the native speaker fallacy, world Englishes, and linguistic diversity. This led us to experience impostor syndrome when we began tutoring in the first semester: "Who am I to give recommendations about English writing to students if I'm not even a native speaker?" Thus, we believed that one has to be a native speaker to have authority in providing English writing instruction or take on leadership positions. This led us to experience the feeling of inferiority and doubt our value as educators, a challenge also described in previous studies (Li, 1999; Thomas, 1999).

Finally, as other international students new to the U.S. context, we experienced linguistic challenges (Lui, 1999). When Tetyana just arrived in the US, it was sometimes difficult for her to comprehend and be understood by others, especially those with non-American accents. In the first semester, she was even once told that she sounded like "a textbook" when speaking, which perhaps was because writing and reading were emphasized over speaking and listening in her EFL classes in Ukraine. These communication challenges emerged despite her learning English since the age of five and scoring well on the TOEFL. Anastasiia also had a memorable incident related to linguistic issues when through a conversation with her classmates, she realized that she used an unconventional word order in noun clauses (e.g., "I don't know what state standards *should I use*"). It is clear that without the ability to

communicate clearly with students we would be unable to teach confidently, and having many language issues when speaking with or writing to students would negatively affect our credibility as writing instructors (Thomas, 1999).

## Building Confidence as NNESTs of Writing: Addressing Challenges through Training and Professional Development

In this section, we outline and reflect on the most impactful activities from our master's program pre-service training and PD that helped us overcome our initial challenges. As demonstrated below, it was a variety of experiences, some of which we took initiative to seek out independently, that helped us develop necessary skills for teaching writing, thus contributing to our confidence building as NNESTs.

### Pre-service Classroom Learning

Coursework offered through our graduate program greatly supported our confidence development. A course that was directly relevant to teaching English writing was reading and writing pedagogy. We discussed writing as a process with its various stages (e.g., drafting, revising, editing), peer review, individual teacher-student conferences, collaborative writing, pedagogical use of corpora, and principles of providing feedback on various aspects of writing (e.g., content, organization, language use). Another course that impacted the development of our writing content knowledge was an elective, English for specific purposes (ESP). For the major project in this class, Anastasiia and Tetyana chose to collaboratively reassess an academic business writing course for undergraduate international students offered at OU. Our research findings translated into specific recommendations for changes in the course. Learning that writing can be taught as a process and that teachers can conduct a needs analysis to develop or improve a course was influential in developing our pedagogical writing knowledge as NNESTs since these ideas were not present in our previous educational contexts.

Besides learning from course content, we had first-hand experience with different educational materials, pedagogical strategies, and written feedback practices that our professors used while teaching us; thus, we developed cultural understanding of pedagogy through coursework (D. Liu, 1999). When we started our program, we were surprised by how “informal” and approachable professors were, making jokes, sharing personal stories, some sitting

cross-legged on a teacher's desk, and learning our names before the first day of classes, all of which were uncommon in our previous educational experiences. High interactivity of classes and frequent use of multimedia were also considerably less prevalent in Ukraine. Therefore, being exposed to a university classroom environment and practices helped us understand the expectations that our own students might have in this context.

In feedback on our papers, our professors helped us enhance our linguistic proficiency by pointing out issues related to language use, especially possessives, articles, and word choice. While this feedback was invaluable for improving our accuracy in written English, the type of feedback that was the most influential in building our confidence as NNESTs was positive comments. We first encountered this type of feedback in the second language acquisition course, when we wrote our first substantial paper in graduate school. Our professor provided detailed comments on what we did well in our drafts and focused on content, which was unusual for us since previously we had primarily received only corrective feedback on language use. Receiving such inspiring comments in our first semester and then throughout the program from other professors substantially strengthened our confidence as NNEST writers and served as a model for our own assessment practices later. The importance of professors' feedback for building confidence in writing is supported by previous autoethnographic accounts of NNESTs (Li, 1999).

## Tutoring Writing and Training Tutors

Tutoring at writing labs at different levels during our first year was also instrumental in developing our content and pedagogical knowledge. Anastasiia worked at undergraduate, graduate, and intensive English program writing labs in addition to her assistantship; Tetyana also pursued tutoring opportunities at the graduate writing lab on her own, while undergraduate lab tutoring was a part of her assistantship. The majority of students visiting the undergraduate lab brought writing assignments from the same course Tetyana would teach in her second year. This way Tetyana became familiar with this course's assignments and interacted with students from the same population that she would encounter later in her classes.

The required training that we received at the writing labs was especially useful for building our knowledge of English writing conventions. During unbooked hours and student no-shows, we read academic writing handbooks (e.g., Swales & Feak, 2012) and writing style manuals (e.g., APA) as well as completed online grammar modules. This self-study in the first semester of graduate school addressed our lack of confidence related to limited knowl-



edge of English writing conventions and eliminated the need to take an elective graduate writing course.

Tutoring also helped us address impostor syndrome, which we both experienced, especially when working with graduate or NES students. Anastasiia's first tutoring session with a graduate student was on a dissertation about corrosion, a topic she hardly understood. She, however, still had a successful session and helped the student address sentence structure, his major session request. Working at writing labs led us to understand that we can address language use, content clarity, organization, or other aspects of writing without the topic or disciplinary knowledge. This work also allowed us to see that we could tutor (and consequently teach) all students—undergraduate and graduate, beginning and proficient, native and nonnative English-speaking—even if they were more academically or linguistically advanced than us.

At the end of every semester, we received performance evaluations from our students. In her first semester, Tetyana was described by students as “unclear” in sessions. After consulting with her mentors and recalling her previous observations of tutors, she realized that she misinterpreted the training she received. She believed that providing “answers” to writers is wrong pedagogy and relied only on indirect tutoring techniques (e.g., asking open-ended questions) at the expense of student understanding. While some literature on writing tutoring pedagogy does prohibit directive tutoring and even sentence-level work in general (e.g., Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2016, with the foundation laid by North, 1984), Tetyana's training did not adopt these orientations. Instead, the misunderstanding arose from the concept of “editing,” which is commonly misinterpreted by tutors, as Tetyana later learned as a faculty ESL specialist at the GMU's writing center (Bychkovska & Lawrence, in press). “We do not edit” could mean “we do not work at the sentence level at all,” “we are not allowed to be directive and sometimes tell writers how to change wording,” and “we do not take over a student's paper and correct everything for them without a conversation.” While the latter was implied in her lab training at OU, Tetyana had the second interpretation in mind. Eventually, after learning from evaluations and adding more directive techniques to her repertoire, Tetyana received high performance evaluations the following semester. Student feedback from the writing lab helped us understand which knowledge and skills needed further development in our tutoring practices and consequently future teaching.

In our second year of working at the undergraduate writing lab, we were promoted to assistant coordinators (i.e., graduate administrators), a position available only to one graduate student in a cohort. Anastasiia's assistant coordinator evaluations highlighted the effectiveness of her leadership, her ability to create a collegial work environment, and her guidance during norming ses-

sions. Such feedback helped reinforce the idea that we do not have to be native speakers to have a leadership position or authority in teaching English writing, which contributed to our confidence building. This position allowed us to transition to the roles of mentors and facilitate tutor training, thus sharing and deepening the knowledge about academic writing that we had gained through our training.

## Observations

In addition to implicit observations of our professors during our coursework, we engaged in explicit observations, some as a requirement from our assistantships or jobs and some independently, which aided the development of our confidence in teaching writing.

We completed required tutor observations, first as fellow tutors and then as writing lab assistant coordinators. We also watched instructors teach the classes that we were assigned to teach the following semester. For example, Anastasiia chose to attend and observe most class meetings of introduction to linguistics in her free time before she started teaching it in her second year at OU. Tetyana observed every class meeting for two semesters—one semester for credit as a part of her teaching practicum and another semester in her free time—as a preparation for teaching a first-year composition for international students. While time-consuming, class observation was a crucial step for us to build confidence since we learned about the curriculum that we were required to teach in advance.

By observing experienced teachers, we had a chance to notice the techniques they used to promote student learning and engagement as well as establish their authority. For example, one instructor made sure to explicitly list their relevant qualifications at the beginning of the course and highlight them throughout the semester. This made it clear to students that despite this teacher looking young, they were competent in teaching the subject. To us, as NNESTs, this also meant that presenting our qualifications could help prevent a possible lack of student trust due to our linguistic and cultural backgrounds, something that NNESTs often have to address strategically (Subtirelu, 2011). While observing, we filled out observation forms with guiding questions to explicitly reflect on instructor practices and decide which practices could be integrated into our teaching.

Finally, we benefited from the requirement of being observed first as tutors and then as instructors. While teaching, we both received suggestions to improve the clarity of our instructions for in-class activities; Anastasiia was advised to increase waiting time after asking her class a question; Tetyana's

mentor provided a helpful tip of starting a class with a small writing activity to prevent tardies. We found conversations with our mentors and peers particularly helpful for building our confidence since they helped us determine whether our tutoring and teaching met the expectations of the U.S. educational context.

## Collaboration and Mentoring

We were actively seeking collaboration and mentoring support from our faculty which, in autoethnographic accounts of other NNESTs, has been regarded as an important confidence-building practice (Connor, 1999). For example, during Tetyana's first year in the master's program, she was a research assistant, helping her mentor code teachers' feedback on student writing in a course she would be assigned to teach in her second year. She observed that some professors provided direct error correction by fixing students' papers, mostly focusing on grammar, and others asked questions, offered explanations, and provided examples on all aspects of writing. This allowed her to be exposed to possible types of written feedback she could provide in the future. During this assistantship, she also had required weekly meetings with her mentor, who informally discussed with her various aspects of academic writing and writing pedagogy.

We also offered mentoring support to others, which helped further build our confidence as educators. Anastasiia became an unofficial mentor to two of her co-teachers in the community English class, and she was required to mentor Tetyana, an incoming writing lab assistant coordinator. In turn, Tetyana in her final semester coached another tutor trainer to replace her after graduation and provided peer mentorship for a student who would teach the same writing course as her a year later.

## Teaching Experience

Throughout our graduate careers, we had multiple graduate teaching assistant positions and completed a teaching practicum class. These experiences allowed us to bridge the gap between theory and practice and teach in real-life contexts. In her first year of graduate school, Anastasiia taught pull-out ESL students at a middle school. Lack of training support during this assistantship led Anastasiia to independently prepare for her next teaching position the following year as an instructor of record of the introduction to linguistics class. The preparation included observations and an extensive review of previous materials. In her final semester, when taking a teaching practicum course, she co-taught a community English class at OU. Different teaching contexts, student populations, and class structures required adjustment and flexibility,

the skill that helped Anastasiia when she transitioned to teaching writing, among other subjects, after graduation.

Tetyana was also an instructor of record in her second year but taught first-year composition for international students, a course directly related to developing her skills and confidence as a writing instructor. Numerous activities prepared her for teaching: coding feedback on students' papers as a research assistant, tutoring the same student population, conducting research on writing produced by this population, observing each class meeting of this course for two semesters, and attending presentations on writing at conferences. Therefore, she felt extremely confident when she started teaching. Class observations prepared Tetyana to expect that, for example, students from East Asian countries, which comprised the majority of her classes, might be less likely to participate in whole-class discussions. Had she not known that this is common, she would have questioned her pedagogical competence and considered her NNES background to be a culprit of students' reticence. To address students' needs, she practiced other methods of promoting engagement rather than directing questions to the whole class. Thus, with her teaching delayed until the second year, Tetyana's transition to teaching was smooth and less stressful than that of Anastasiia who started teaching during her first year.

Delayed teaching for Tetyana also preempted possible linguistic challenges and stressful situations of not understanding or being understood while teaching the whole class. The ability to "re-calibrate" her speaking and listening skills in the ESL environment by working in the "safe" one-on-one space of the writing lab, taking a phonetics and phonology course, and just conversing in in- and out-of-class settings were instrumental for her linguistic confidence building.

As a result of Tetyana's extensive training a year prior to starting to teach, she received high student evaluations both semesters she taught at OU. Since Tetyana taught exclusively international students, her NNES and international student status was highlighted in evaluations, but only in a positive light: some students appreciated that Tetyana has gone through similar experiences as them and thus could understand their academic and personal needs and relate to them. Anastasiia also received high student evaluations in her second year of teaching. Her NES students did not focus on her NNES background in the evaluations; instead, they commended her for engaging and interactive lessons, well-organized material, and willingness to work individually with students to help them understand linguistic concepts. Through the evaluations, it became apparent to us that with sufficient training and support, the NNES status is not a barrier to effective teaching, and in some cases, it might even be an asset.

## Additional Professional Development Activities

To continue learning beyond our master's program and pursue initiatives recommended by our mentors, we engaged in many additional PD activities. These activities included extracurricular readings, engagement in professional organizations, publications, and presentations.

Apart from readings assigned in classes, we read additional research articles and books on academic writing independently. Throughout the program, Tetyana's advisor shared with her readings, including eight books from his personal library related to ESP and academic writing discourse for Tetyana to read during her first winter break. The most impactful reading for Anastasiia was suggested to her by her mentor, the writing lab coordinator. During one of their conversations in her first semester of tutoring, Anastasiia mentioned that she felt like an impostor, questioning her ability as a NNEST to help students. To support Anastasiia, her mentor suggested that she read an article by Tetyana's mentor that built upon previous research arguing that one does not have to be a NES to be an accomplished writer, tutor, or teacher (J. Lee, 2005). This knowledge contributed considerably to Anastasiia's confidence as a NNEST. Tetyana also read this and other articles on the strengths of NESTs and NNESTs independently.

To further promote our learning and confidence building, we became members of professional associations such as TESOL. Memberships allowed us to follow important debates related to writing pedagogy through newsletters and forums, thus supporting our teacher identity formation (Kim & Saenkhum, 2019). Professional community membership also, in part, contributed to our engagement in research that later resulted in publications (e.g., Bychkovska & Lee, 2017; Kryzhanivska, 2017). Data for Tetyana's published empirical projects were collected from previous sections of the same course that Tetyana would teach in her second year, which allowed her to analyze the language use and needs of the student population she would encounter. Working on publications strengthened our confidence as NNEST writers since we again recognized that the NES status does not define our writing effectiveness or chances of publication. Also, by going through the process of publication ourselves, we gained the skills that would allow us as instructors to coach advanced writers working on their publications.

Finally, our conference experiences were an important aspect of our PD. Since our first semester of the master's program, we attended and presented at state, national, and international conferences (e.g., Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Conference, Ohio TESOL, International TESOL), which supported our professionalization (Kamhi-Stein, 1999). We attended

presentations about writing, including ones on plagiarism, genre-based writing, and feedback practices. Upon graduation from OU, we had delivered over 10 presentations each, in which we focused on our projects from master's courses or independent research with mentors. Seeing the positive feedback and support of the professional community encouraged us to pursue PD even further and helped us improve our professional confidence. Additionally, after attending Ohio TESOL once, we made friends that we were looking forward to seeing at other conferences and after graduation. It created a personal connection to the professional community and fostered a sense of professional selves that contributed to our confidence building.

These additional PD activities helped us follow recent research on writing, learn about cutting-edge pedagogical practices, and feel a part of a global community of writing teachers. In fact, it was through engaging in additional readings and attending conference presentations that we learned extensively about the topics of native speaker fallacy, linguistic diversity, and language ideology, which we remember to be only briefly covered in our coursework. Explicit learning of these topics helped us understand our strengths as NNESTs and complimented our observations that in comparison to our NES peers, we had greater explicit knowledge of grammar (since we learned English rather than acquired it) and understanding of NNESTs' needs (since we were NNESTs ourselves). This knowledge felt empowering and contributed to our confidence building as NNESTs of writing.

The described training and PD activities also contributed to us obtaining employment after graduation. A wide range of activities that we engaged in as a program requirement and that we sought out independently helped us add valuable experience to our CVs and demonstrate competence in other job application materials or during the interviews. In fact, it was during the community English class that Anastasiia wrote her first teaching philosophy and recorded a teaching demo to use in job applications. Close interaction with our mentors and their encouraging feedback also led us to receive help with job application documents and obtain recommendation letters in support of our candidacy. In general, the described training and PD gave us, NNESTs of writing, enough confidence to believe that despite our accents and different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, we have the necessary qualifications to teach writing.

## Discussion

Based on our reflection above, we present the following implications for trainers of NNESTs of writing.

**Training in writing pedagogy.** Provide opportunities for NNESTs of writing to take a pedagogical writing course. Such a course should be required and include both theoretical foundations and practical teaching advice. Unfortunately, previous research (e.g., Kasztalska, 2019) shows that some NNESTs' formal education in writing pedagogy is limited to short pre-semester training, which is insufficient for developing writing teacher competencies. While NESTs would also benefit from such a course, they have the advantage of taking at least one first-year writing course in college and observing it from a student perspective. NESTs are also more likely to have had opportunities to notice pedagogical strategies used by their professors and develop their meta-awareness while completing other courses. Most NNESTs, however, would lack this experience.

**Delaying teaching.** Allow NNESTs to start teaching later—in their second semester or second year—unless they already have prior teaching experience in the US. Some states (e.g., Virginia, Texas) have a legal requirement that graduate students must complete a certain number of course credits—typically a year's-worth of full-time coursework—before they are allowed to teach; such delayed teaching can also be possible in the states without this law, as Tetyana's experience in Ohio demonstrates. While preparing for teaching, NNESTs can work, for example, as tutors or research/program/administrative assistants. Because Anastasiia was required to start teaching in her first semester of the master's program, her experience was more stressful than that of Tetyana who had an opportunity to prepare for teaching by conducting observations, tutoring writing, and engaging in other activities. Delayed teaching can also positively contribute to NNESTs' implicit linguistic competency development, which is crucial for effective communication with students. This recommendation is supported by research both for NESTs (Kanno & Stuart, 2011) and NNESTs (J. Liu, 2005; Wolff, 2015). However, delaying teaching is especially valuable for the latter because of linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical adjustments necessary for many NNESTs. This would allow them to feel more confident in the classroom and avoid traumatizing experiences such as the ones described in George Braine (1999).

**Tutoring writing as a teacher education component.** Encourage NNESTs to engage in tutoring writing to gain pedagogical, assessment, and content knowledge necessary for teaching. This recommendation is consistent with the literature that argues that the writing center is an effective training ground for composition instructors and regards it as a crucial experience for teachers-in-training before stepping into their writing classrooms (Broder, 1990). Because some NNESTs might be coming from a context where writing centers are not an established practice, explicitly recommending writing center tutoring to them is important for teacher education.

**Leadership positions.** Advise NNESTs to apply for leadership positions at the writing center or in a writing program, if such are available, after a semester or two of tutoring. Developing leadership and mentoring skills while working in the writing center is an unparalleled opportunity for graduate students (Hewerdine, 2017), and NNESTs in particular. Tetyana was hired for her first full-time job to a large extent due to this experience, and in Anastasiia's current administrative role, she heavily relies on the skills gained through her tutor training role at the writing center. The realization that one does not need to be a NES to assume a leadership role may build NNESTs' confidence and support their professional growth (Braine, 1999).

**Observations.** Provide multiple opportunities for structured observations (i.e., with an observation form or protocol and post-observation discussions) of experienced writing instructors. Both Anastasiia and Tetyana attended and observed every class meeting of the courses they were about to teach, mostly in their free time, which was time-consuming but crucial for their sense of preparedness. When NNESTs of writing start teaching, observe them several times per semester, offering constructive feedback and highlighting their strengths. Recommendations to include observations, in person or through video recordings, in teacher training are supported by previous research (e.g., Long, 2003; Snow et al., 2006; Wolff, 2015). This recommendation for NNESTs might help address cultural, educational, linguistic, and pedagogical differences and expectations of teachers-in-training.

**Mentoring and collaboration.** Work closely with NNESTs of writing to collaborate and support their development. Provide NNESTs-in-training with opportunities for both formal mentoring where they would work with a professor or experienced mentor and informal opportunities to discuss teaching practices with peers. This accords with previous recommendations for NNESTs (e.g., Floris & Renandya, 2020; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Kasztalska, 2019; Kim & Saenkhum, 2019; Li, 1999; Ruecker et al., 2018; Snow et al., 2006; Wolff, 2015). Formal and informal mentorship can address the unique needs of NNESTs in various domains: content, pedagogical, curricular, and assessment.

**Additional Professional Development.** Encourage NNESTs of writing to engage in PD activities such as reading additional literature, becoming involved with professional organizations, publishing research, and attending and presenting at conferences (Connor, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 1999). Inviting a student to collaborate on a research project and guiding them through the presentation and publication processes may be helpful for building NNESTs' confidence as academic writers and provide them with the expertise necessary to teach or tutor graduate students working on publications. While most novice teachers, including NESTs, would likely benefit from this recommen-



dation, NNESTs of writing, in particular, can gain additional conference and public speaking experience that NESTs might already possess.

**Building connections between language and identity.** Provide opportunities to learn about the strengths of NNESTs, linguistic diversity, and language ideology through graduate coursework. This recommendation is supported by previous research that emphasizes the importance of promoting discussions of these topics in graduate pedagogical writing courses (Kasztalska, 2019; J. Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018; Zheng, 2017). Self-reflections, autoethnographic projects, and personal narratives can be incorporated (Kryzhanivska & Hunter, 2021; Li, 1999; Selvi & Yazan, 2021; Worden-Chambers & Horton, 2020) to help NNESTs develop knowledge of self (Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Wolff, 2015).

While we encourage trainers of NNESTs of writing to consider implementing our recommendations, it is important to acknowledge the impact of the programmatic, financial, or wider structural constraints they operate within. Not every aspect of the training we mentioned may be possible to implement in every context. It might not even be necessary to do so since teacher trainers should avoid overwhelming NNESTs of writing who might deal with multiple obligations and stressors in their academic or personal lives. We did not engage in every aspect of our training all at once; the required and additional activities we participated in were spaced out throughout the two years of our program. We also find it important to acknowledge that we do not think that the responsibility of building NNESTs' confidence should fall exclusively on NNESTs and writing program administrators; university administration at all levels needs to work on addressing issues in this area. It is also important for linguists to engage in more public-facing work to address beliefs about NNESTs among students and the general population (Floris & Renandya, 2020; Kang et al., 2015).

## Conclusion

This chapter presented activities that two pre-service NNESTs of writing engaged in to overcome initial challenges and build their professional confidence as novice instructors. An obvious limitation of this paper is that it is based on a self-reflection of only two NNESTs. While there is value to this account of our experiences, more research with a larger number of participants is needed. A larger-scale study would help uncover other aspects of training that NNESTs of writing from other contexts or backgrounds found useful for confidence building. Future research may also systematically collect advice or strategies for success unrelated to training or PD, such as, for example, the strategy of sharing the relevant experience with students at the beginning of the semester to establish authority or other strategies (e.g., Subtirelu, 2011).

We hope that this discussion can help the trainers of NNESTs at the graduate level support beginning instructors more effectively. Our account in this chapter may also be useful to NNESTs of writing who seek possible activities to develop their skills to enter a writing classroom with confidence.

## References

- Braine, G. (1999). From the periphery to the center: One teacher's journey. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 15-27). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Broder, P. (1990). Writing centers and teacher training. *Writing Program Administration*, 13(3), 37-45.
- Bychkovska, T., & Lawrence, S. (in press). Tutors' perspectives on their work with multilingual writers: Changes over time and in response to revisions in training. *The Writing Center Journal*.
- Bychkovska, T., & Lee, J. J. (2017). At the same time: Lexical bundles in L1 and L2 university student argumentative writing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 30, 38-52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2017.10.008>
- Chen, W. (2021). *Teaching in a foreign land: Portraits of international teaching assistants in English composition classes and students' evaluations* [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Memphis]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Connor, U. (1999). Learning to write academic prose in a second language: A literacy autobiography. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 29-39). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. In K. T. Bartlett & R. Kennedy (Eds.), *Feminist legal theory: Readings in law and gender* (pp. 139-167). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429500480-5>
- Floris, F., & Renandya, W. (2020). Promoting the value of non-native English-speaking teachers. *PASAA: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning in Thailand*, 59, 1-19.
- Hewerdine, J. M. (2017). *Conversations on collaboration: Graduate students as writing program administrators in the writing center* [Doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Kang, O., Rubin, D., & Lindemann, S. (2015). Mitigating U.S. undergraduates' attitudes toward international teaching assistants. *TESOL Quarterly*, 49, 681-706. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.192>
- Kamhi-Stein, L. (1999). Preparing non-native professionals in TESOL: Implications for teacher education programs. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 145-158). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kanno, Y., & Stuart, C. (2011). Learning to become a second language teacher: Identities-in-practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95 (2), 236-252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01178.x>

- Kasztalska, A. (2019). International teaching assistants in the composition classroom: From world Englishes to translanguaging and beyond. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, 18, 161-175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2018.1545584>
- Kim, S. H., & Saenkhum, T. (2019). Professional identity (re)construction of L2 writing scholars. *L2 Journal*, 11(2), 18-34. <https://doi.org/10.5070/1211242088>
- Kryzhanivska, A. (2017, July 24–28). *Do you also see what I see: Russian-Ukrainian conflict in European, Ukrainian and Russian media* [Paper presentation]. Corpus Linguistics Conference 2017, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/corpus/conference-archives/2017/general/paper80.pdf>
- Kryzhanivska, A., & Hunter, L. (2021). The person in personal narrative: Two ESOL instructors teaching away from home. In R. Jain, B. Yazan & S. Canagarajah (Eds.), *Transnational Identities and Practices in English Language Teaching* (pp. 38-54). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788927536-004>
- Lee, J. J. (2005). The native speaker: An achievable model? *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(2), 152-163.
- Lee, M., Schutz, P. A., & van Vlack, S. (2017). Non-native English-speaking teachers' anxieties and insecurities: Self-perceptions of their communicative limitations. In J. de D. M. Agudo (Ed.), *Native and non-native teachers in English language classroom* (pp. 119-138). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501504143-007>
- Li, X. (1999). Writing from the vantage point of an outsider/insider. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 43-55). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Liu, D. (1999). Training non-native TESOL students: Challenges for TESOL teacher education in the West. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 197-210). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Liu, J. (2005). Chinese graduate teaching assistants teaching freshman composition to native English speaking students. In E. Llorca (Ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession* (pp. 155-177). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-24565-0\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-24565-0_9)
- Long, K. (2003). *Self-perceptions of non-native English speaking teachers of English as a second language* [Master's thesis, Portland State University]. PDXScholar. <https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.5179>
- Mirhosseini, S. (2018). An invitation to the less-treaded path of autoethnography in TESOL research. *TESOL Journal*, 9(1), 76-92. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.305>
- North, S. (1984). The idea of a writing center. *College English*, 46, 433-446. <https://doi.org/10.2307/377047>
- Norton, B., & De Costa, P. (2018). Research tasks on identity in language learning and teaching. *Language Teaching*, 51(1), 90-112. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444817000325>
- Rinehart, R. E., & Earl, K. (2016). Auto-, duo- and collaborative- ethnographies: "Caring" in an audit culture climate. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 16(3), 210-224. <https://doi.org/10.1108/qjrj-04-2016-0024>

- Reis, D. S. (2011). Non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) and professional legitimacy: A sociocultural theoretical perspective on identity transformation. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2011(208), 139-160. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2011.016>
- Ruecker, T., Frazier, S., & Tseptsura, M. (2018). "Language difference can be an asset": Exploring the experiences of nonnative English-speaking teachers of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 69(4), 612-641. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44870978>
- Ryan, L., & Zimmerelli, L. (2016). *The Bedford guide for writing tutors* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Selvi, A. F., & Rudolph, N. (2017). Teachers and the negotiation of identity: Implications and challenges for second language teacher education. In J. de D. M. Agudo (Ed.), *Native and non-native teachers in English language classroom* (pp. 257-272). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501504143-013>
- Selvi, A. F., & Yazan, B. (2021). Beyond "native" and "non-native" English-speaking teachers. In Y. Bayyurt (Ed.), *Bloomsbury World Englishes* (Vol. 3: Pedagogies) (pp. 107-125). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Snow, M. A., Kamhi-Stein, L. D., & Brinton, D. M. (2006). Teacher training for English as a lingua franca. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26, 261-281. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190506000134>
- Subtirelu, N. (2011). Juggling identity and authority: A case study of one non-native instructor of English. *TESL-EJ*, 15(3), 1-30.
- Swales, J., & Feak, C. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). The University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.2173936>
- Thomas, J. (1999). Voices from the periphery: Non-native teachers and issues of credibility. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 5-13). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Wolff, D. (2015). *All in the same boat?—native and non-native English speaking teachers' emerging selves in a U.S. MATESOL program* [Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Worden-Chambers, D., & Horton, A. (2020). Becoming multilingual, becoming a teacher: Narrating new identities in multilingual writing teacher education. *Composition Forum*, 45. <https://www.compositionforum.com/issue/45/multilingual.php>
- Zheng, X. (2017). Translingual identity as pedagogy: International teaching assistants of English in college composition classrooms. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(S1), 29-44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12373>