

## Undergraduate Research Symposium May 20, 2011 Mary Gates Hall

### Online Proceedings

---

---

#### SESSION 1B

---

#### LINGUISTICS AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

*Session Moderator: Ellen Kaisse, Linguistics*

**Mary Gates Hall 082A**

*1:00 PM to 2:30 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

#### **Tutors as Participant Researchers: How English Language Learners (ELLs) Taught Us Better Ways to Support Writing and Learning**

*Jessica Jungwirth, Senior, Anthropology, English*

*Karl Eckhardt, Senior, Business Administration (Finance), International Studies*

*Camille Dodson, Senior, International Studies*

*Garrett Strain, Senior, Economics, International Studies, Mathematics*

*Mary Gates Scholar*

*Mentor: Jennifer Halpin, English, Odegaard Writing & Research Center*

*Mentor: John Webster, English*

English Language Learners (ELLs) often face policies based on outdated remediation models which promote neither best pedagogical practice nor commitments to diversity. The University of Washington's 2008 English Language Proficiency Working Group strongly recommended that additional ELL support services be coordinated through writing centers. This motivated our interdisciplinary research team of undergraduate tutors (from Anthropology, International Studies, Business, Geography, Math, and English) to research language acquisition and second language writing in order to develop support models and innovative practices for supporting ELLs. This research resulted in a new program called 'Targeted Tutoring,' in which ELLs are recruited from English 131 composition classes and offered group tutoring in addition to traditional one-to-one tutoring sessions. Piloted Autumn Quarter 2010 and revised by our team for Winter and Spring Quarters, this research involved: imagining program and research goals, designing research methods and materials (surveys, interviews, observations, reflective writing), recruiting participants, conducting sessions, seeking student feedback, assessing overall program effectiveness (analyzing data), and using findings to recommend policy changes to the writing center

and the university. In brief, this research has facilitated an unprecedented form of undergraduate-led learning resulting in a degree of confidence and self-advocacy unusual for language learners. In its design, the Targeted Tutoring program aims to provide: more than token diversity; additional time to engage with course ideas in a non-evaluative low-stakes learning environment; and a sense of shared intellectual struggles among native and non-native speaking peers. What we have learned about best ways to support and work alongside ELLs can valuably inform department chairs, program administrators, other writing centers, student support services, any unit involved in training teachers, and undergraduate students themselves.