Audience and voice in current L1 composition texts: Some implications for ESL student writers.

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Audience and voice in current L1 composition texts: Some implications for ESL student writers â *†

Vai Ramanathan △ ... Robert B. Kaplan

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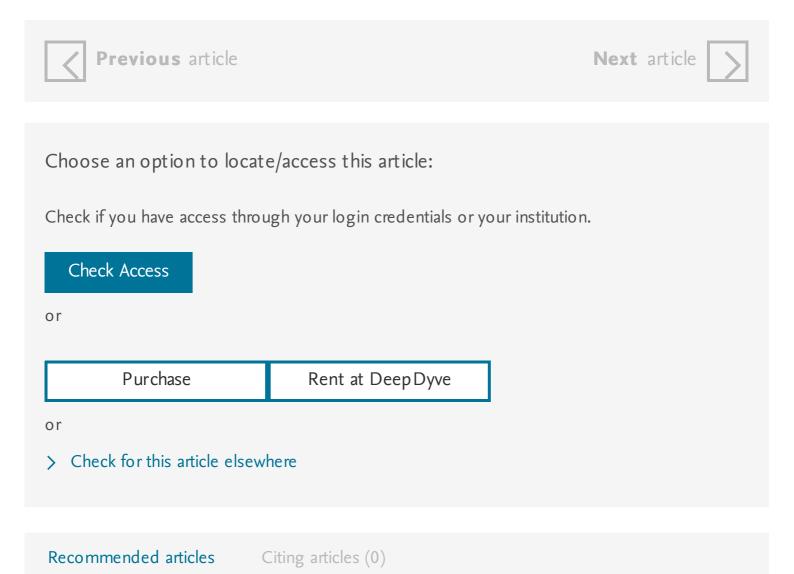
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Abstract

Many freshman writing programs use an inductive approach to writing instruction. Students are encouraged to discover form in the process of writing. This approach views the acquisition of writing skills as a tacit, unconscious process we find problematic for students whose first language is not English. Drawing from 10 widely used freshman writing textbooks, our study demonstrates the problem of implicitness which exists in regard to two notions central to writing instruction in the United States: "voice†and "audience.†Both notions, as presented in these textbooks, are predicated on a set of assumptions that do not translate well in L2 classrooms because they draw heavily on shared cultural knowledge that is often inaccessible to nonnative students. Our article calls attention to ways in which textbook presentations of these concepts disadvantage L2 student writers. We propose that a discipline-oriented approach to freshman

composition will facilitate an easier grasp of these concepts. Such an approach will expose students to the particularities of specific disciplines and provide a more clearly defined discourse community within which to form their views and responses. Knowing for whom they write will create a clearer sense of audience for these students and enable them to present clearer and strongly individualized voices.



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