REFLECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PEER RESPONSE WORKSHOPS

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A Thesis

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Abstract

of

REFLECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PEER RESPONSE WORKSHOPS

by

Leahna Barton

Statement of Problem: Students across the curriculum need opportunities to develop writing by sharing written drafts with peers. The problem is what principles must be used when conducting peer response workshops that enable students to build writing confidence and reflect on the process.

Sources of Data: The data used are drawn from scholarly research on peer response workshops from the past thirty years and from the peer workshop participants, college instructors and their students.

Conclusions Reached: The accountability principle is essential in peer response workshops; however, additional components must be in place in order for students to benefit from the process. Preparation and instruction of peer response workshops are key factors in order for students to gain maximum benefits in their writing development.
DEDICATION

With love and admiration,

for my most patient father,

Robert C. James

who always gave sage advice, and was the best "thesis peer" ever!
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thank you to my patient, loving, and understanding family, my husband, William, and children, Bryan, Gerilyn, Kendra, Olivia and Laurel.

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Thank you to the participating students and teachers at California State University, Sacramento, for their participation in this study; without them, this study would not have been possible.
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Precise writing is an expectation in the work force. Individuals who struggle with the written word rarely gain opportunities for promotion. The best place for college students to gain writing confidence is in classes where writing is a part of the curriculum. However, writing confidence is not gained without adversity; moreover, writing confidence is earned, not given. In classes where writing is required, one beneficial method instructors can assist students in gaining writing confidence is to provide peer response workshop opportunities. When students receive constructive feedback on their drafts, utilize that feedback, and reflect on the process, writing confidence develops. Including effective peer response workshops as a writing tool is an essential principle that will assist students in developing their writing and building writing confidence in classes across the curriculum.

Reflection: My Experience

When I was a second time English 1A intern in a computer assisted classroom, one confused student asked, “Do you have a flash drive I could use? I am having trouble downloading my essay draft from my email.” A peer response workshop was scheduled for the day. In this community college classroom, every student had a computer with Internet connection and access to the classroom printer. Believing in the power of peers in the writing process, and having the experience of conducting all the peer response
workshops in my previous English 1A internship, I was an advocate of engaging all students in the workshop activities. I responded positively and gave Peter (changed name) my flash drive to download and print his essay draft.

As in most internships, I was given a choice of which sections I wanted to teach. I quickly expressed my interest and previous experience conducting the peer response workshops. However, this second mentor professor believed I had enough teaching experience in that area. During the workshops, I was instructed to observe and assist only as needed. As an observer, I noted that the workshops offered no prior student training, provided no modeling, nor were the students given clear expectations about the purpose or process of the workshop which seemed unrealistic for a constructive peer response workshop outcome. Nonetheless, I tried my best to be helpful during the peer response workshops.

After one workshop was underway, Peter called me to his group and questioned my opinion of his thesis openly admitting none of the group members had offered any suggestions. Hoping to elicit a productive small group discussion, I questioned the students which sentence, or sentences, they thought best identified Peter’s thesis. Silence. Compelled to offer advice, I explained the thesis is often the most difficult to develop, and sometimes equally challenging to identify especially if it is not clear. In my attempt to give a thesis mini-lesson, I discussed the importance of a thesis and topic sentence match-up. I offered some suggestions of how to clarify a thesis by giving additional advice — If a thesis does not fit the essay draft, students have several choices: change the thesis; change the topic sentences to fit the thesis; change both to fit the idea/s you want
to convey, or revise the draft. As Peter and the other group members nodded their heads appearing to comprehend the thesis and topic sentence match-up concept, I was led to believe they understood the necessary steps for revision. Then, the class session was over.

The following class session, the final drafts were due. The students asked if it would be necessary to turn in the workshopped draft with the revision; they were told to just turn in their final essay. Upon hearing this, Peter asked to use my flash drive again expressing another computer challenge in his attempt to print his revised essay. Believing his predicament, I loaned him my flash drive. He successfully printed his “revised” essay. After class, my mentoring professor gave me the opportunity to comment on and grade some of the essays asking if I preferred to read any specific students’ essays. Hoping to read Peter’s improved essay, I requested to read his; however, that was not the case. Instead, when commenting and grading Peter’s essay I discovered his “revised” essay was identical to his draft. The proof was on my flash drive.

It was then that I began to question the lack of accountability in peer response workshops. If instructors take the time to conduct peer response workshops, what steps must be demonstrated during the workshops that lead students to revise drafts? How can teachers better assist students to consider and utilize peer feedback after a peer response workshop? These questions directed my research process.

What was investigated?

As a Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) advocate, my research intention was to focus on student writing in classes across the curriculum. My research objective was to
help students become better writers by including an accountability factor (utilization and consideration of feedback) in established peer response workshops, and determine if the process of self-reflection on student feedback is an indicator of improved drafts.

This research investigated the revisions of students who reflected on their drafts after a peer response workshop. This study examined student feedback given on essay drafts and the subsequent revisions, and student reflections on the workshop experience, as well as a personal reflection of their revision intentions. This process occurred naturally, as students responded to peers’ writing in classes where writing was expected at different class levels. The study was designed to reflect principles of ethnography with regard to the natural setting. There was no control group; the instructors and students participated in an investigation of authentic student writing, authentic student feedback, and authentic student reflection on feedback. Clifford Geertz, an anthropological ethnographer, in The Interpretation of Cultures borrowed the term “thick description” from Gilbert Ryle (9). This term can be used as a way to understand a culture or phenomenon, and ethnographic method of inquiry is dependent upon interpretation (Geertz). Geertz argues “Culture is a context; something within which social events, behaviours and processes can be intelligibly - thickly – described” (14). In the classroom culture at California State University, Sacramento where writing is expected, each group showed different characteristic attitudes, behavior patterns and values with regard to understanding the dynamics of peer response workshops. This study’s naturalistic inquiry is an attempt to explore the interweaving of the methods of teaching peer response workshops and the revision outcomes in a college setting.
Research questions:

The following research questions were explored in this study: 1) Does an accountability component, such as “Reflect and Revise Questions” (R&RQ), after a peer response workshop lead to better revisions? 2) What levels of writers give and reflect on text-specific feedback? 3) What type or types of feedback leads students to reflect and revise? 4) How can students be taught to respond reflectively?
Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

1. What is peer response and what is its purpose?

Peer response has been used as a teaching method to improve writing and encourage revision. Generally defined, the term peer response refers to students reading and responding to each other's written work to provide their peers with comments on how they can improve the draft versions of their papers. The term peer response is used interchangeably with peer assessment, peer critique, peer evaluation, peer feedback, peer review, or writing groups. However, in the context of this research "peer response" is used because "response" is something that constitutes a reply or a reaction, which best describes student expectation of the peer response task—responding to peers' writing. In A Sourcebook for Responding to Student Writing, Richard Straub states "response is integral to the teaching of writing and to any improvement in writing, no less for student writers than for experienced adult writers. Getting responses from others helps writers see how their writing is experienced by readers, where it is and is not working, and how it might be made to work better" (3). Although Straub claims his book was written to be a sourcebook for teachers, students, too, can learn how to give articulate and specific responses to a peer's written text if trained and guided.

Regardless of the term used, the expectation of peer response outcome is that the quality of the work of the participants will improve as a result of the thinking involved and the feedback provided. Peer response workshops allow students to "subsequently
reflect independently about how his or her writing can be improved and will revise his or
her paper before turning it in to the teacher” (O’Donnell & Topping 255). When students
are given opportunities to share written drafts with peers, cognitive thinking and
reflection results; however, students must be guided throughout the response process. As
students read peers’ drafts, ideas are generated and shared either orally or in writing.
Although oral response is important in a peer response workshop process, it is ephemeral,
intangible, and depends on memory which is subject to error. On the other hand, when
peers provide written feedback, either on a peer feedback form or the draft itself, it is
concrete, tangible feedback. In Vygotsky’s Thought and Language, he states “written
speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and
mode of functioning” (98). Writing requires a writer to engage in “deliberate semantics”
which are “maximally detailed” (Vygotsky 100). Also, written feedback can be addressed
by a peer when reflected on. Reflecting on and responding to written feedback are
important components in the workshop process (Elbow & Belanoff; Ferris & Hedgcock;
Horning; Lui & Hansen; Yancey). Furthermore, giving students opportunities to respond
to feedback instills the value of peers and can provide the circumstances necessary for
reflective thinking. However, feedback is only useful when acted upon (Ferris &
Hedgcock; Moffet; Topping). Depending on the method of instruction, the timeliness of
the feedback, and the perceived value placed on the task of peer response, students will
respond accordingly.

The purpose of peer response is for students to gain a better understanding of the
writing process, build audience awareness, improve writing, and gain confidence (Ferris
Students must be guided throughout the peer response workshop learning process in order for them to understand the benefits of a collaborating classroom (Ferris & Hedgcock; Gere; Liu & Hansen; Spear “Sharing”). The general focus of the writing process consists of drafting, revising, and audience awareness. Many students write in isolation, and the reality of audience is not actualized. When a social connection is a part of the writing process, student writing is enhanced. Utilizing the power of peers as an authentic, helpful, and knowledgeable audience is often overlooked. Rarely are students given opportunity to experience peers as audience during the drafting stage of writing. Much research on peer response posits that students gain more experience as a reader of peers’ written work, than they do from reading and re-reading their own text (Fontaine & Smith; Gere; Lockhart & Ng; Murray “A Writer Teaches;” Spear “Sharing;” Straub “A Sourcebook”). Not only do students become better college writers by reading others’ drafts and by participating in response activities, they also will “be serving an apprenticeship in becoming an academic reader” which is equally important to developing writing (Fontaine & Smith 137). Peer response workshops are beneficial, active, cognitive experiences that can enhance the writing process if the process is accounted for, believed in, and conducted and modeled by the teacher (Falchikov; Ferris & Hedgcock; Gere; Liu & Hansen; O’Donnell & Topping).

2. What theoretical frameworks are used to justify peer response?

Theoretical frameworks used to justify peer response in a writing classroom include, but not limited to: process writing theory, collaborative learning theory, and
Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development theory. These theories emerged and overlapped in the composition field between the late 1960s and 1970s, through the efforts of composition scholars such as Peter Elbow (1973); Janet Emig (1971); James Moffett (1968); and Donald Murray (1970). Kenneth Bruffee (1984) promoted the collaborative learning process theories in the 1980s. Each of these theories promotes the use of peer response workshops as a means for teaching the processes of writing.

**Process writing theory**

The process approach to writing surfaced in composition field in the late 1960s. Prior to the 1960s, traditional methods of teaching writing focused on the product which emphasized a “learning to write” rather than a “writing to learn” paradigm (Emig 12). In the early 1970s, Janet Emig was instrumental in the process-over-product movement, in her dissertation on a case study involving the writing processes of twelfth graders which was later published as a book, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*. Emig states, although writing is a common activity, “descriptions of what occurs during writing are unsatisfactory” (“The Composing Processes”1). In the process of her research, Emig discovered students differ in writing practices, both in their pre-writing and writing activities. In 1977, Emig wrote, “Writing as a Mode of Learning,” and “writing to learn” paradigm shift became her focus (12). She asserts writing simultaneously involves multirepresentational modes—the hand, eye, and brain, making it neurophysiologically integrative, connective, active and available for immediate visual review, noting the differences of the other verbal language processes—listening, reading, and talking (Emig
14). Drawing on the shared consensus of philosopher John Dewey, and psychologist Jean Piaget and their view "learning is the re-organization or confirmation of a cognitive scheme in light of experience," Emig believes learning can be defined in many ways, according to one's predilections and training ("Writing as a Mode" 10).

"Re-enforcement and feedback" are attributes that also characterize successful learning ("Writing as a Mode" 10). To support her argument, Emig refers to psychologists Jerome Bruner, A. R. Luria, and Lev Vygotsky, stating they all agreed that "higher cognitive functions, such as analysis and synthesis, seem to develop most fully only with the support system of verbal language—particularly, it seems, of written language" ("Writing as a Mode" 7). If the act of writing provides a product available for immediate feedback or review, and cognitive functions of analysis and synthesis develop with the support of verbal language, integrating peer response workshops as a method of writing to learn makes sense. By conducting peer response workshops instructors can provide opportunities for students to receive feedback and exercise higher cognitive functions such as analysis and synthesis when revising written work.

In 1972, Donald Murray presented a paper titled "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product" explaining that teachers must accept the full implication of teaching "the process of discovery through language" (4). In his paper, Murray asserts the process of discovery through language is:

The process of exploration of what we know and what we feel about what we
know through language. It is the process of using language to learn about our world, to evaluate what we learn about our world, to communicate what we learn about our world. (4)

When students write, they must communicate their learning with peers. In *A Writer Teaches Writing*, Murray argues the writing process can be divided into three stages (prewriting, writing, and rewriting); however, these stages are nonlinear and recursive, consisting of many processes (4). These processes vary "with the personality or cognitive style of the writer, the experience of the writer, and the nature of the writing task" ("A Writer Teaches" 4). He believes students need to "realize that rewriting is not punishment but opportunity" ("A Writer Teaches" 60). Audience plays an important role in the writing processes, for Murray. When he finishes a draft, he simultaneously exploits and values writing friends "above gold" ("A Writer Teaches" 60). His readers, or "writing friends," give support and criticism: support without undeserved praise; suggestion without appropriation; and they tell "what works best for them and what may need work" ("A Writer Teaches" 60). Reader response fosters the writing processes.

Peter Elbow also advocated the writing as a process in his 1973 book *Writing Without Teachers*. Elbow believes the elements of writing cannot be isolated, and no one has succeeded in making the process of writing a "kind of orderly, hierarchical progression that works" like the teaching of mathematics (135). Elbow claims it is theoretically impossible to learn to write, and shares the complexity of the process:

The most appropriate path for learning to write is not to try to break up the skill into its ideal progression of components which can be learned one at a time, but
rather to try set up some situation in which the learner can persevere in working at the whole skill in its global complexity. Since you have to work on all different aspects and there is no ideal order, you might as well feel free at any time to work on something different. Since it is going to require a lot of time, sweat, frustration, you might as well find some way of working that is enjoyable and rewarding in itself. (136)

Elbow promotes “free writing” as a writing process (3). According to Elbow, free writing is a non-stop, uncensored way of generating ideas as they flow, and “practiced regularly, it undoes the ingrained habit of editing at the same time you are trying to produce” (6). This process “will make writing blocked because words will come more easily” (Elbow 6). However, Elbow claims process writing does not come easily for many students. Straub suggests using a cover letter or self-reflective cover letter to help students learn “to see their own thinking and writing more clearly and to be more aware of their writing process” (“A Sourcebook” 198).

Elbow, like Murray, believes audience plays an important role in the process of writing, and in order for students to improve writing, they must write frequently and share their writing. “The writer should learn how his words were actually experienced by these particular readers” (Elbow 78). By conducting peer response workshops, students benefit can benefit from readers’ response and build audience awareness.

Nurturing the writing through audience is how James Moffett views the process. Just as a parent nurtures a child, so must an audience be with a writer. Throwing students into the process of a peer response workshop dismisses the initiation steps of guidance. In
his book, *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*, Moffett addresses all teachers who require writing from students. He states “writing is learned in the same basic way other activities are learned—by doing and by heeding what happens” (193). When writers write, audiences react; and “the *quality* of feedback is the key” (Moffett 193). Moffett argues a writer’s need for feedback:

A maximum amount of feedback would be provided him [the writer] in the form of audience response. That is, his writing would be read and discussed by this audience, who would also be coaches. This response would be candid and specific. Adjustments in language, form, and content would come as the writer’s response to his audience’s response. Thus instruction would always be individual, relevant, and timely. These are precisely the virtues of feedback learning that account for its great success. (193)

Moffett considers classmates’ feedback, in general, “more effective” because “young people are most interested in writing for their peers” (194). According to Moffett, peer audience is a “natural audience,” in contrast to an instructor’s whose authoritarian position is often “potent enough to distort the writer-audience relationship” (193). He argues “the significance of the responder influences the writer enormously,” and “if the teacher shifts authority to the peer group, which is where it lies anyway for adolescents, and takes on an indirect role, then his [the peer’s] feedback carries a greater weight” (Moffett 194). Peer feedback is most helpful “during the writing process, before the final draft” (Moffett 197).
Collaborative learning theory

According to James Bruffee in his 1984 landmark essay “Collaborative Learning and the Conversation of Mankind,” collaborative learning, in practice, is “a form of indirect teaching in which the teacher sets the problem and organizes students to work it out collaboratively” (418). Due to the influx of nontraditional, unprepared students entering college in the 1980s, alternative teaching methods became of interest to American college teachers. Although many teachers and college professors were (and still are) “unsure about how to use collaborative learning and about when and where, appropriately, it should be used,” teachers began to integrate collaborative learning into traditional classroom teaching (“Conversation of Mankind” 416; “Collaborative Learning” 1-2). Classroom group work, peer evaluation, peer response, peer review, peer tutoring, and writing groups all fit under the umbrella term of collaborative learning.

Collaborative learning was not a new concept in the 1980s. Bruffee believes the idea developed in the 1950s and 1960s by a group of British secondary school teachers and by a biologist studying British, post-graduate medical education (“Conversation of Mankind” 416-17). M. L. J. Abercrombie’s ten years of research on the selection and training of medical students resulted in her suggesting that diagnosis (the art of medical judgment and the key element in successful medical practice) is better learned, and arrived at faster when students worked collaboratively than individually (“Conversation of Mankind” 417).

According to Bruffee, collaborative learning provides “a particular kind of social context for conversation, a particular kind of community—a community of status equals:
peers (423). Whether the community consists of scientists, philosophers, linguist, writers, or college students, in order for us to think as individuals we must learn to think collectively—as “communities of knowledgeable peers” (“Conversation of Mankind” 427). Bruffee gains support of the collaboration concept from scholars in communities of philosophy (Richard Rorty), science (Thomas Kuhn), and literary critic (Stanley Fish). If the concept of collaboration is to work jointly with others, it is important that each individual understands that learning is a social construct, not an individual process (“Conversation of Mankind” 421). Rorty refers to this learning process as “socially justifying belief” (“Conversation of Mankind” 427). Through collaboration — the social activity of peer response — students can learn to justify belief by responding to feedback:

By challenging each other’s biases and presuppositions; by negotiating collectively toward new paradigms of perception, thought, feeling, and expression; and by joining larger, more experienced communities of knowledgeable peers through assenting to those communities’ interest, values, language, and paradigms of perception and thought.

(“Conversation of Mankind” 427)

Since students come to class with varied levels of learned knowledge, by engaging them in the collaborative learning processes, they can begin to understand how knowledge is generated, and how it changes and grows.

Students are members of several knowledge communities within and outside the academic community. According to Bruffee, one of the main goals of collaborative learning is “to provide a context in which students can practice and master the normal
discourse exercised in established knowledge communities in the academic world and in
business, government, and the professions” (“Conversation of Mankind” 424). In the
academic college community different majors are offered. Each major is has specific
jargon in written language, and consists of students who are professionals-in-training
within a specific community. When students help each other, regardless of chosen major,
their work tends to improve. They “learned from the students they helped and from the
activity of helping itself” (“Conversation of Mankind” 418). All disciplines in the
academic community can benefit through the collaborative learning process of peer
response workshops.

In 1984, Bruffee recognized collaborative learning “harnessed the powerful
educative force of peer influence,” but also claims it “still is—ignored and hence wasted
by traditional forms of education” (“Conversation of Mankind” 418).

In 1987, Anne Ruggles Gere advocated collaborative learning in Writing Groups:
History, Theory, and Implications, which traced the two hundred year history of peer
response (52). Similar to Moffett’s nurturing concept, Gere connects “classroom
communities like all other living bodies” with their need for “continuing nourishment”
(103). Gere’s concept of nurturing includes: teaching collaborative skills, modeling, and
giving clear and appropriate tasks to foster collaborative learning (103). Gere says
“Successful classroom writing groups depend on teachers committed to preparing
students with the necessary social and intellectual skills. When this preparation is
effective, students become proprietary about their writing groups” (107). Gere clearly
advocates the collaborative process of writing groups, but forewarns “commitment can be
caught if not taught” because students sense instructor “diffidence or uncertainty” (105). She explicitly states:

I find instructors who put students into writing groups because they think it’s “good” to do so, not because they know their value first-hand and believe in it. Instructors who introduce writing groups successfully usually are those who have participated in writing groups themselves and know the benefits for their own writing. Part of their success may derive from the fact that such instructors can, by drawing on their own experience, anticipate and offer more useful guidance than their inexperienced colleagues. Nevertheless, their commitment to writing groups takes precedence with students, who, like all subjugated groups, read their superiors’ feelings expertly. (106)

If commitment to the purpose of peer response groups is positively “felt” by the instructor, students, too, will “catch” the commitment to the task and their group.

*Vygotsky’s theory*

Within the field of teaching writing and peer response, Lev Vygotsky’s concept of the “zone of proximal development” is most often referenced (86). The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is defined as “the distance between the actual development as determined by individual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky 86). Exchanges between learners occur within this zone. The
ZPD can also be described as the area between what a learner can do by himself and that which can be attained with the help of a "more capable peer" (Vygotsky 86).

The ZPD is always changing as the student expands and gains knowledge. The thesis behind this "zone" claims that regardless of an individual's age developmental stages vary, and certain problems can be solved when interaction and cooperation with peers is encouraged. Once the problem solving activities have been internalized through the guidance of a teacher and the collaboration with others, independent learning is activated; and in the case of writing, development occurs. Vygotsky emphasized the social factor as a way of knowing the world, and this social factor must be integrated with the innate factors of intelligence and mental abilities. Through the collaborative social aspect of peer response workshops, student's known knowledge can be pooled with unknown knowledge allowing opportunities to access the ZPD which activates learning.

Combining the concepts of process writing, the collaborative learning theory, and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development reveals the complexity of writing processes. As these theorists and scholars conclude, writing is a complex activity that requires time, effort, and support which can be developed by integrating effective peer response workshops across the curriculum.

3. What are the pedagogical implications for peer response workshops in classrooms across the curriculum?

Due to the influx of college student diversity and the challenges of teaching writing, instructors have been attempting to integrate process writing and collaborative learning in classrooms. College students of today represent a substantial range of
backgrounds and academic preparation. Just as student diversity is vast, so are writing levels. Since college students are at varying levels which embody the ZPD, including peer response workshops as a pedagogical method to enhance writing benefits all student levels.

According to Jun Liu and Jette Hansen, the cognitive, social, linguistic, and practical benefits of peer response workshops outweigh the constraints (8). Liu and Hansen outline positive benefits for using peer response workshops to enhance writing (8). The cognitive benefits in using peer response for students include: exercise in thinking; take an active role in learning; engage in exploratory talk; build critical skills; demonstrate and reinforce knowledge; and build audience awareness. The social benefits include: enhance communicative power; receive authentic feedback; gain confidence and reduce apprehension; establish collegial ties and friendships; and influence learners’ affective state. The linguistic benefits include: enhance metalinguistic knowledge; gain additional language skill practice; enhance participation and improve discourse; and find right words to express ideas. The practical benefits include: applicable across student proficiency levels; flexible across different stages in the writing process; time-efficient in some cases; and reinforces process writing. Although Lui and Hansen’s book was intended for teachers of second language (L2) writing classrooms, the aforementioned benefits in using peer response are advocated by writing researchers in first (L1) and L2 language settings.

Gail Poirrier advocates student writing in *Writing-to-Learn: Curricular Strategies for Nursing & Other Disciplines*. Poirrier, a registered nurse, author, and professor,
offers numerous, well documented writing-to-learn strategies which can be incorporated and utilized in any discipline. She recommends teachers use writing activities to help students learn subject matter. Poirrier claims “feedback is essential for learning” because it assists students in recognizing their own level of understanding (47). She posits that “students need to be shown from the start that these in-class writing activities are designed to help with their understanding of content, enhance their critical thinking, communication skills, and problem solving” (46). Furthermore, she recognizes that by integrating in-class writing activities “students will ‘feel’ the writing process and make connections between reading, writing, thinking and learning the writing process” (46). College essay writing is rarely a comfortable process regardless of level, regardless of discipline, because thinking is hard. Increased use of peer exchange is helpful in the classroom to foster “active learning” for students and “interactive teaching” for instructors (Poirrier 47). By integrating effective peer response workshop activities in class, students are given opportunities to ease the stress that comes with the challenges of writing in a specific discipline.

The majority of contributing authors in Poirrier’s book are professors of nursing and registered nurses. Art Young, one of the founders of the Writing across the Curriculum movement, insists Poirrier’s book “offers all disciplines a valuable model for educational change” (xi). Young, also acknowledges the contributing authors “understand that the primary purpose of writing in their curriculum is not to help English faculty teach the skill of writing (as some faculty mistakenly assume), but to make better prepared and more capable nursing professionals” (Poirrier xiii).
4. What components are best used in the peer response process?

Dana Ferris and John Hedgcock outline principles for effective peer response in *Teaching ESL Composition: Purpose, Process and Practice* (233). Using Ferris and Hedgcock’s principles incorporates the components that are best used in the peer response process. These effective principles are shown in Table 1.

As a graduate student enrolled in classes taught by Dr. Ferris, I experienced these principles, and as an English intern I taught them. Although my research questions focused on the accountability factor of peer response (principle #6), investigation on whether principles #1-5 were in place also became a focus.
Table 1.
PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE PEER RESPONSE

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Make peer response an integral part of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Model the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Build peer response skills progressively throughout the term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Structure the peer response task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Vary peer response activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Hold students accountable for giving feedback and for considering the feedback they receive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Consider individual student needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Consider logistical issues, including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) the size and composition of groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) the mechanics of exchanging papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) time management and crowd control.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ferris & Hedgcock 233
5. How can students be held accountable for the process?

A writer is ultimately responsible for his or her own paper; however, in order for students to invest in the revision process, accounting for peer response—the feedback—is necessary. When students complete the peer response workshop process, they must be held accountable for considering and utilizing feedback by reflecting on the feedback they have received (Boud; Falchikov; Ferris & Hedgcock; Topping & Ehly; Wilson). Ferris asserts holding students accountable for the peer response process is an exercise that “not only requires them to think critically about their own text and the feedback they have received, but it also underscores the seriousness of their responsibility to consider feedback carefully” (130). This exercise simulates the procedure of prospective authors, such as a revise-and-resubmit cover letter, which is required by editors. If an instructor takes the time to conduct peer response workshops, students must take the time to reflect and revise; otherwise, the workshop is just an activity of the process, rather than an activity with a purpose.

6. What is reflection and why is it important in the peer response process?

In order for students to become “agents of their own learning,” Kathleen Blake Yancey claims they must participate “in a process that is product that is becoming known [. . .], as reflection” (5). Yancey clarifies “1) the processes by which we know what we have accomplished and by which we articulate accomplishment and 2) the products of those processes (eg, as in, ‘a reflection’) (6). The procedure of reflection “entails a looking forward to goals we might attain, as well as a casting backward to see where we
have been” (Yancey 6). For writing, Yancey asserts, there are three processes of reflection: “1) goal-setting, revision, and refining; 2) text-revising in the light of retrospection; and 3) the articulating of what learning has taken place, as embodied in various texts as well as in the processes used by the writer” (6).

The term reflection is mentioned consistently in teacher education and student learning, and the works of John Dewey are most often referenced: How We Think, Experience and Education, and Democracy and Education (1910/1933, 1938, 1916/1944). However, what Dewey actually meant by reflection has “suffered from loss of meaning,” and become to mean “everything to everybody” (Rodgers 843). “Thinking, particularly reflective thinking or inquiry, is essential to both teachers’ and students’ learning” (Rodgers 842). Carol Rodgers outlined Dewey’s four criteria for reflection in an effort to make his concept of thinking more accessible:

Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas.

Reflection is a systematic, rigorous, disciplines way of thinking, with its roots in scientific inquiry.

Reflection needs to happen in community, in interaction with others.

Reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and the intellectual growth of oneself and of others. (845)

Peer response workshop activities encompass Dewey’s criteria for reflection. For example, when students participate in a peer response workshop experience, it is
interpreted according to personal beliefs and the principles established in the workshop. Students will make meaning of the workshop process according to their perceptions and previous connections to other experiences and ideas about peer response. This meaning-making process is perceived in and constructed from the workshop experience which determines its value. If the workshop is perceived as having value, students will invest. However, if the workshop experience is not perceived as valuable by both the student and the instructor, the outcome of the process is a “mere haphazard mulling over” rather than a reflection (Rodgers 849).

According to Dewey, the focus of the third criteria is interaction; without it learning is sterile and passive, never fundamentally changing the learner (Rodgers 847). Dewey recognized “reflection with others is essential” because “to think without ever having to express what one thought is an incomplete act” (Rodgers 856). Peer response workshops provide opportunities for students to interact and reflect with others. However, providing students the opportunity for interaction falls short of responsibility—the accountability principle. Students often ignore peers’ suggestions when revising because they are not held accountable for utilizing or considering the feedback. However, Dewey believes that “when one is accountable to a group, one feels a responsibility toward others that is more compelling that the responsibility we feel to only ourselves” (Rodgers 857). If an accountability principle is integrated in a peer response workshop, reflection can be instilled in the process.

The fourth criteria for reflection as outlined by Rodgers may confuse educators. Educators use of the term “affective dimension” when referring to attitudes. This
indicates a separation of the emotional and the intellectual. Dewey is aware of this distinction and acknowledges

Human beings are not normally divided into two parts, the one emotional, the other coldly intellectual—the one matter of fact, the other imaginative. The split does, indeed, often get established, but that is always because of the false methods of education. Natively and normally the personality works as a whole. There is no integration of character and mind unless there is a fusion of the intellectual and the emotional, of meaning and value, of fact and imaginative running beyond fact into the realm of desired possibilities. (“How We Think” 278)

When instructors conduct and when and students participate in peer workshops, their attitudes or dispositions play a crucial role. Dewey believed “the attitudes that the individual brought to bear on the act of reflection could either open the way to learning or block it” (Rodgers 858). If positive energy about teaching (as well as participation in) writing-to-learn activities is guided by what Dewey refers to as set of attitudes of “whole-heartedness, directness, open-mindedness, and responsibility,” peer response workshops that include reflection stand a much better chance of broadening one’s field of knowledge and awareness (Rodgers 858). Peer feedback is a means by which students can be supplied with reactions to writing performance, and when given an opportunity to reflect on feedback, student writing can improve (Falchikov). Including “Reflect and Revise Questions” (RR&Q) as a culminating activity in peer workshops is a way for both instructors and students to reflect and to benefit from the writing processes (See Appendix A).
Chapter 3

METHOD

Intended Methodology — Potential Workshop Participants

Students who lack confidence in their writing abilities are in every discipline. Regardless of discipline, peer response workshops can assist students with academic writing challenges. A recent CSUS faculty survey claims over 80% of the instructors at CSUS give writing assignments and 63% face challenges with student writing (Melzer “WAC Newsletters”). Since many English instructors provide their students with peer response workshop opportunities, I wanted to see how professors outside the English department were conducting workshops. I wanted to collect essays for analysis to determine if the accountability component enhanced the writing process. Effective peer response workshops include this component by holding students accountable for considering and utilizing the feedback received.

Process of Data Collection

With assistance from the CSUS Writing across the Curriculum Coordinator, I received names of six professors (outside the English department) who were actively conducting peer response workshops as a part of their curriculum. I contacted the six professors in the spring of 2007 in order to prepare for fall data collection. They taught in: education, family and consumer sciences, geology, health and human services, nursing, and sociology. Five of the six stated they would not be teaching classes which warranted conducting peer response workshops in the fall of 2007.
However, one professor, who was teaching a Freshman Seminar class to pre-
 nursing students, offered to participate in the study providing the researcher conduct the
 peer response workshops. Another instructor (in the same department and new to the
 staff) who was mirroring the professor of nursing in an identical Freshman Seminar class
 also advocated participation. I agreed to conduct the peer workshops for both classes.

Initially, the professors of nursing believed peer workshops would benefit the
 students and enhance their writing, but the professor’s understanding of the process of
 teaching writing through peer workshops was limited. When I discussed the necessity of
 modeling a sample student essay as part of the workshop activities, this professor
 responded, this “sounds like you will be lecturing” (Professor of Nursing). As I detailed
 the rationale of each component of the workshop process to the professors, I felt more
 distance between my purpose, which was to help students with their writing by providing
 specific workshop components and the instructor’s “imagination” of teaching writing.
 After several months working with the professors of nursing, giving the students an
 introductory talk about the benefits of peer response, and providing them with a proposed
 schedule of two mandatory in-class and 10 optional out of class peer workshops (to be
 conducted in the CSUS Writing Center), the professors unexpectedly bowed out of the
 study. Although the professors of nursing claimed to be familiar with the peer response
 process and workshop expectations, they clearly indicated lack of understanding the
 processes of teaching students “writing to learn” concepts. This misunderstanding was
 evidenced in the final email:
Perhaps this is not what I imagined. Our students are too overwhelmed with their transition, plus I really don’t think they will feel comfortable sharing their “stories” at this time. Asking them to share and let them be taken home is just too much. We are going to have to bow out of the study. (Professor of Nursing)

The assignment for the students in the pre-nursing Freshman Seminar was to write a three to four page essay about the importance of a college education to self and society, citing three class assigned authors (See Appendix B). According to Dan Melzer, CSUS Reading and Writing Coordinator, “Writing is one of the most effective ways to engage students in critical thinking about a subject or discipline” (“The Role of Writing” 1). He further asserts “instructors at CSUS use writing as thinking in a variety of ways: for example: an essay in a Freshman Seminar course asks students to reflect on their purposes for attending college” (“The Role of Writing” 1). The pre-nursing Freshmen Seminar essay assignment simulated that which Melzer referenced. The purpose of college writing is for students to make meaning of a subject regardless of the department in which writing is assigned. The idea that freshmen students are not comfortable sharing written work is sometimes accurate, but only initially. Due to their professors’ lack of understanding the benefits of peer workshops and the writing to learn processes, the sixty pre-nursing freshman students did not have the opportunity to experience the peer response workshops as they were led to believe.

The dynamics of peer response workshops confuses many instructors outside the English discipline. Conducting effective peer response workshops is not what many instructors imagine; workshops require planning and are sometimes challenging for both
the student and the teacher (DiPardo & Freedman; Gere; Liu & Hansen; Spear “Sharing”).

In need of additional participants for my research, I promoted my intentions for peer response workshop research at the CSUS 2007 fall pre-semester faculty development WAC Conference. A humanities instructor and an instructor from the Health and Humanities Department expressed interest.

Although the professor of humanities claimed to value peer response, little class time was allowed to teach students the collaborative approach to process writing. This class was a writing intensive class (WI) which requires students to write extensively; the heavily weighted writing expectation in this class was three 1700 word essays. WI classes are approved for the Writing Intensive general education courses which requires students to have a passing score on the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) or successful completion of ENGL 109W or ENGL 109M before enrollment in a WI class (CSUS catalog 2006-2008). The humanities class syllabus stated in bold print “this is an Advanced Study course; I will evaluate these assignments for their form and mechanics as well as their content” (Class syllabus, Humanities 140). The professor expressed “the students passed the WPE; therefore, they should know how to write. Perhaps the students can benefit from peer workshops, and I would like to read better student essays” (Professor of Humanities). Timed writing such as the WPE, however, cannot equate with analytical writing expectation of a six page, graded essay written about a recently lectured topic. Furthermore, Melzer claims “No single course (like freshman composition) or essay
exam (like WPE) can insure that students will be able to write effectively across all of the varied disciplines” (“WAC Newsletter” 5).

Early in the semester, the humanities instructor gave me 10 minutes to promote the positive aspects of peer response workshops. During this time, I provided the students with a mini-rational of peer response workshops, questioned them about previous workshop experiences, and handed out a schedule of the optional workshops I would be conducting in the CSUS Writing Center. A total of eight workshops were planned throughout the semester. Before each essay was due, the students were given two different times to participate in outside class workshops. The outcome: Only two, “A” grade students came to the last scheduled workshop. These students came, not for extra credit, but out of curiosity and desire to help a struggling classmate with writing; however, the struggling student never showed. Consequently, no student writing data from Humanities 140 was used in this study; however, an end of the semester class survey was conducted to discover possible reasons why students did not attend the outside of class peer workshops (See Results section and Appendix C).

The instructor from the Health and Human Services Department, who taught Inclusive and Therapeutic Recreation (RPT 106), also requested I conduct the peer workshops, but allotted class time for the process. I was given three class periods to conduct the workshops—one 15 minute and two 20 minute opportunities. Peer workshop details for the RPT 106 class are included in the actual peer response participants section.

Since I was still lacking sufficient data for my research, I returned to the English department where peer response workshops had established roots. Again, oddly, only a
few instructors answered my request for peer workshop participants. Generally, researchers who want to study how specific pedagogical methods work, or do not work, are teachers and are paid through a private or federally funded grant to investigate the process. Research on peer response "how to" or "dynamics of," or "positive /negative effects" abound; however, peer response workshops that focus on the accountability factor are few. Ferris asserts there are numerous peer response studies "about what goes on during and after peer review and very little that demonstrates or even posits cause and effect" (85).

I was determined to investigate this specific component of peer response workshops which entails looking at the products of class work—the peer response feedback and the utilization or consideration of (or lack thereof) peer feedback. Finding instructors who included an accountability component in the peer response workshop was proving to be a challenge since accountability factors in peer response are generally evidenced through the process of participation, a workshopped draft. Assessing performance through the process of reflection is a demonstration of the cause and effect of teaching methods of peer response and reflective practices of students. According to William Condon "performance assessments [...] are invasive assessments" because they look "directly at the responses students make to the tasks they are assigned in a class or set of classes. Therefore, these actual tasks are exposed to views, along with the teaching methods and practices that frame those tasks" (Condon 4). My intention was to collect student's workshopped drafts and revisions — "outcomes [that] flow directly from the instructional objectives the teacher sets in designing the course" (Condon 34). My
research objective was to help students become better writers by including an accountability factor (utilization and consideration of peer feedback) in already established peer response workshops. Accounting for the peer response process requires participation from teachers and students. In order for both teachers and students to value the process of peer response, teachers must instruct students in how to give responses that evoke change, and students must be expected to consider and utilize feedback given from peers. Reflecting on the process of peer response allows both agents—the teachers and the students—to benefit from the process.

Peer Response Workshop Participants

Subjects

Ultimately, five teachers and forty-two students at California State University, Sacramento, (2007 fall semester and 2008 spring semester) participated in the study. Forty-two student essay drafts with peer feedback and the revisions before teacher commentary were analyzed. The student levels varied and included: two college preparatory courses—Learning Skills 87 (Basic Writing Skills for Multilingual Students), and English 1 (Basic Writing). The undergraduate courses included: English 1A (College Composition) which consisted of primarily freshmen students, RPT 106, a Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration course comprised of sophomore, junior and senior level students, and a Senior Seminar in English 198T course, comprised of only senior level students. In addition to the essay drafts and revisions, student responses to the “Reflect and Revise Questions” were analyzed (See Appendix A). Teachers and students
in the following classes participated: Learning Skills 87 (LS 87), English 1, English 1A, Senior Seminar in English 198T (Senior Seminar), and Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration (RPT 106). The number of essays, randomly selected, from each class included: ten essays from LS 87; ten essays from English 1; ten essays from English 1A; and six essays from Senior Seminar; and six essays from RPT 106. The instructors in each class conducted the peer response workshops, with one exception. The peer response workshops in the RPT 106 class were conducted by the researcher.

What was examined?

This study examined student feedback given on essay drafts, their revisions and student responses to R&RQ. Types of feedback were categorized and coded, and reasons why student feedback and responses differed among the levels of writers were investigated. This research design included: 1) Communication with instructors about the process of conducting peer response workshops, peer workshop instructor survey questionnaire (See Appendix D), personal interviews, and emails; 2) Class syllabi, essay assignments, class handouts, and peer workshop feedback forms were gathered from instructors; 3) Student written data—essay drafts with student feedback and their revisions before teacher commentary was collected from the instructors; 4) Additional student writing included: student responses to the “Reflect and Revise Questions” which were either collected from the instructor or emailed to the researcher. This data was consolidated and analyzed for this research.
The English instructors who participated all had their own methods of conducting peer response workshops. They drew upon their own peer workshop strategies. The options varied among the instructors’ techniques: Some required participation, some did not; some used feedback forms, some did not. Regarding group composition, some were instructor selected and some student selected. A summary of peer response instruction across the five classes is described in Table 2.
Table 2.

SUMMARY OF PEER RESPONSE INSTRUCTION ACROSS THE CLASSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR PEER RESPONSE</th>
<th>LS 87</th>
<th>English 1</th>
<th>English 1A</th>
<th>Senior Seminar</th>
<th>RPT 106</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Integral part of course</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Model the peer response process</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Build peer response skills throughout the semester</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Structure: Feedback form used</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vary peer response activities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Peer response participation required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Essay assignment: 1st, 2nd, 3rd in semester</td>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>2nd essay</td>
<td>2nd essay</td>
<td>One research paper, third peer workshop</td>
<td>3rd essay assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Size and composition of groups pairs / groups (number) instructor/student selected</td>
<td>Pairs Student selected</td>
<td>Groups / 4 Student selected</td>
<td>Groups / 4 Student selected</td>
<td>Pairs Student selected (required to select different peer each workshop)</td>
<td>Pairs Instructor selected (heterogeneous)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Class Descriptions

The state-wide CSU system requires new incoming undergraduate students to be tested for English placement. The English Placement Test (EPT) is a requirement for entering undergraduates (a few exceptions), and the English Diagnostic Test (EDT) is required of students whose native language is not English (a few exceptions). If a student fits certain criteria, without exceptions, they must take both tests before enrollment. The EPT is “used to identify students who need special help in English in order to do college-level work,” and the EDT, administered to multilingual students, determines placement in the most appropriate English course and which students are eligible for the multilingual administration of the WPE (CSUS 2006-2008 Catalog 65). Depending on the test results, students are placed in the prescribed English course. Table 3 shows the prescribed English placement course direction of the EPT and EDT for CSUS students.

Learning Skills 87 (LS 87): CSUS offers three levels of college preparatory writing courses for multilingual students. LS 87 is the second level English as a Second Language (ESL) course (LS 86 is the first level). Students are placed in this class if their results on the EPT are 142-148, and the results for the EDT are a score of 4 or 5. These scores are cut-off scores to fill different level courses which give indication of where the other number scores are placed (See Table 3). Students with these combined results must enroll in LS 87 the first semester attending CSU (a few exceptions). LS 87 students are required to pass a CSU portfolio assessment process in order to continue CSU enrollment. Nineteen students were enrolled in this class; ten essays were randomly
selected. The second class essay, which was the midterm essay assignment, required students to take a position on whether or not voting laws should be changed. A feedback form, Feedback for Midterm 1, was used (See Appendix E). Since the group compositions consisted of dyads (which remained constant throughout the semester), each student received written and oral feedback from only one peer. Workshop participation was not required.

**English 1:** English 1 is a college preparatory course designed for CSU students whose EPT test score resulted in the range of 120-148. These students must enroll in this class the first semester of attendance. English 1 students must pass a CSU portfolio assessment process in order to continue CSU enrollment. Twenty-four students were enrolled in this class; ten essays were randomly selected. The essay assignment (3 page minimum) required students to analyze 2 or 3 print ads and make a claim about the message the ads send to their audience (See Appendix F). No feedback form was used. The group composition consisted of four students, and each student received written feedback from two peers. Workshop participation was required.

**English 1A:** English 1A is a CSU mandatory college-level English Composition course that instructs students in the writing of essays. Students with scores of 149 and above can enroll in English 1A, and it is generally taken at the freshman level. However, students who scored 149 or 150 must pass English 1A with at least a C- within the first year of enrollment. This English 1A class was portfolio assessed by the instructor. Twenty-four students were enrolled; ten essays were randomly selected. The second essay assignment
Table 3.

ENGLISH PLACEMENT INFORMATION FOR EPT & EDT

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPT Scores Only</th>
<th>Course Placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>120-141</td>
<td>LS 15 and ENGL 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142-146</td>
<td>ENGL 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147-148</td>
<td>ENGL 1 or ENGL 1A and 1X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149+</td>
<td>ENGL 1A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>ENGL 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If EPT score is 149-150, must pass ENGL 1A with at least a “C-” within the first year of enrollment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPT and EDT Scores</th>
<th>Multilingual Course Placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPT=120-141 and EDT=3</td>
<td>LS 86 and LS 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPT=142-146 and EDT=4</td>
<td>LS 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPT=147-148 and EDT=5</td>
<td>LS 87 or ENGL 2 and 2X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPT=149+ and EDT=5</td>
<td>ENGL 2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>ENGL 20M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If EPT score is 149-150, must pass ENGL 2 with at least a “C-” within the first year of enrollment.

EPT=English Placement Test for entering undergraduates
EDP=English Diagnostic Test for multilingual students

Source: California State University, Sacramento Catalog (2006-2008) 66.
(2-3 pages) required the students to analyze two letters they had previously written, to compare and contrast them, and come to a conclusion about differences and similarities in language, tone, voice, content, ideas, form, etc (See Appendix G). The second part of the essay assignment was examined. A feedback form, Essay #2, Workshop Script, was used (See Appendix H). Workshop groups which remained constant throughout the semester consisted of four students, and written feedback was received from two peers. Workshop participation was required.

Senior Seminar in English 198T: English 198T, Senior Seminar is a mandatory course for senior level English majors. The Senior Seminar 198T classes are thematic in design. Students are required to write one significant research paper — “a paper which will emphasize the student’s ability to: Analyze and interpret multiple texts; Integrate primary and secondary sources; Construct a sustained, coherent, and rhetorically sophisticated piece of writing. Prerequisite: ENGL 120A and a minimum of 90 units. (CSUS Course detail, fall 2007). Twenty students were enrolled; six essays were randomly selected. This thematically designed essay assignment required the students write one 12-15 page analytical/research paper about Pop Culture—its meaning, influence, and how it affects self and society. The students participated in their third peer response workshop, and a feedback form, “Revision Exercise 3,” was used (See Appendix I). Students were expected to pair up with a different peer for each workshop. The third draft and final revision were examined. Workshop participation was required.
Inclusive and Therapeutic Recreation (RPT 106): Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration (RPTA) is a recently new major offered at CSUS. This undergraduate class was taught in the College of Health and Human Services department. Department set student outcomes include: Critical thinking, written communication, oral communication, interpersonal skills, and a global view. The RPT 106 course description:

Addresses the etiology and nature of common disabling conditions and examines issues of leisure participation and inclusion for underrepresented populations. Topics include: attitudinal barriers, advocacy, normalization, universal design, activity analysis and modification, and legislation. Emphasis on leadership, supervision, and organizational development of inclusive and therapeutic recreation programs (Class syllabus, RPT 106).

The written communication outcome is set at the introductory level; student skills are demonstrated through knowledge audits, service learning, and an accessibility assignment (Class syllabus, RPT 106). The third class assignment was a Service Learning Experience, and the students were given the option of either a written paper or an oral presentation (See Appendix J). Although fifteen students opted to write the Service Learning paper, only six students participated and completed the all the workshop activities. Due to the minimal amount of time allotted for the actual peer workshop activity, the students brought their peers’ essay drafts home. A feedback form was used, Service Learning Experience: Peer Response Workshop (See Appendix K). Three in-class workshops were conducted, the students were paired heterogeneously. Participation was not required; however, the students who chose to participate were given extra credit.
Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analyses are divided into six parts. In Part 1, the results of the research questionnaire from the Humanities 140 class describes the students’ previous college peer workshop experience and preferences (See Appendix C). In Part 2, categories of the types of feedback comments made on working drafts used in this study are described. In Part 3, results of types of feedback given and utilized across the classes are discussed. Similarities and differences in peer response instruction across the classes are discussed in Part 4. The key peer response workshop principles are discussed in Part 5. And in Part 6, justification of the use of “Reflect and Revise Questions” as an accountability principle and necessary component in peer response workshops, and examples of student responses to these questions are discussed.

Part 1: Humanities 140 - Student Questionnaire

Since my initial intent was to focus on student writing across the curriculum, including the Humanities 140 end-of-semester survey results investigating possible reasons behind the student non-participation intrigued the instructor. Baffled at lack of student participation (with the exception of the two curious “A” students), the humanities instructor allowed class time for me to conduct a survey in an attempt to discover why. Twenty students participated and responded to the questionnaire (See Appendix C)

Of the twenty upper division students, 13 different majors were identified. Contrary to peer workshop researchers Cho et al. who claim peer response workshops are
“ubiquitous in 1st-year composition,” twelve students (60%) indicated having no previous college peer workshop experience (261). Of the eight students (40%) who had previous peer workshop experience, only one student indicated English 1A as the resource. For college accreditation and baccalaureate graduation, English 1A is regarded as a college-level 1st-year composition course. Considering the myriad of majors identified, and the minimal amount of students who had previous college peer workshop experience, it is not surprising that researcher Keith Topping, who conducted the first comprehensive review of research on any kind of college-level peer assessment in 1998, found only 67 empirical studies to include in his study (Cho et al. 260).

The three top reasons why the Humanities 140 students did not participate in the prescheduled, outside class peer response workshops were: 1) Peer workshop times did not fit my schedule; 2) I barely finish my essays before they are due; 3) I would prefer to participate in peer response workshops during class time.

Although the humanities professor expressed the value of peer workshops to the students and offered extra credit to those who participated, the survey results indicated outside class peer workshops was not a viable option. Eight students (40%) marked “I would prefer to participate in peer response workshops during class time.” Sacrificing lecture time for peer response workshops — passive learning for active learning, was not the instructional choice for the humanities instructor. “Classes in which students are expected to receive information passively rather than to participate actively will probably not be effective in encouraging students to think reflectively” (King & Kitchener 239).

Only two of the best writers, “A” students, took advantage of the last outside of class peer
response workshop opportunity out of curiosity; they did not bring their essay drafts. Consequently, no essay data from the Humanities 140 classes was received. The humanities students knew what the teacher really valued and responded accordingly.

The second and third reasons the Humanities 140 students indicated they did not participate in outside class workshops was due to time. Of the surveyed students, 45% indicated "I barely finish my essays before they are due." Procrastination is a common writing approach for many students, and many students mistakenly think writing cogent essays is an exercise that can be addressed successfully in one sitting. When students are given opportunities to activate the drafting process earlier by incorporating in class peer workshops, students are provided with more time to develop their writing, as well as time for reflective thought.

Part 2: Feedback Typology: Categorized

This study categorized four types of feedback frequently given by students on working drafts. The four most common types of feedback given by students and instructors alike include: Praise, Problem Detection, Advice, and Edit/Mechanics. These categories were used and coded to analyze the feedback comments given in the classes (Table 4). According to Larry Beason, these types of feedback reflect what is "described in composition literature: explicit and implicit cues for revising problems (Ziv, 1984); positive feedback (Daiker, 1989); and descriptive, nonjudgmental feedback (Elbow & Belanoff, 1989); and categories found in taxonomies developed by Lees (1979) and Connors and Lundsford (1992)" (qtd. in Beason 402).
Edit/Mechanics, Advice, and Problem Detection comments are often divided into types of feedback that lead to higher-order concerns or lower-order concerns. According to John Bean, feedback commentary aimed at higher-order concerns (HOC) focus on ideas, organization, development, and overall clarity, and feedback commentary aimed at lower-order concerns (LOC) address grammatical errors, misspellings, punctuation mistakes, and awkwardness in style (243, 246). A goal of peer response workshops is to address HOC in student drafts and get students to utilize that feedback. The general premise for this study is commentary in problem detection or advice categories lead to HOC, and commentary in Edit/Mechanics category denote LOC. Dividing these types of commentary is helpful for studying revisions, but due to the subjectivity of writing both types of commentary are helpful. This study's results showed that the students in the college preparatory courses, LS 87 and English 1, primarily focused on editing and mechanics of writing, and the students in the upper division classes, Senior Seminar and RPT 106, focused on advice and problem detection.
Table 4.

FEEDBACK: CODING CATEGORIES, DEFINITIONS, AND EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories Used to Analyze Feedback Comments</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PRAISE</td>
<td>Shows approval.</td>
<td>“Great introduction”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Nice job”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. PROBLEM DETECTION</td>
<td>Indicates a problem, concern, or error.</td>
<td>“What?” “Thesis?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“This isn’t quite accurate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ADVICE</td>
<td>Gives general options or direction but does not offer the actual deletion, punctuation, or language needed. Might explain why change is needed.</td>
<td>“Consider deleting some this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“This would be convincing if you addressed . . . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Perhaps if you . . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. EDIT/MECHANICS</td>
<td>Indicates a problem and supplies the actual deletion, punctuation, or language needed. Might explain why change is needed.</td>
<td>“Put a comma here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Drop this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Would ‘person’ be a better word?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Beason, 1993.
Regarding praise feedback, researchers debate the necessity of such commentary claiming they cannot be directly correlated to the result of better final drafts. Ferris' study on teacher commentary claims "positive comments almost never lead to any changes at all" ("Influence of Teacher Commentary" 330). Paul Diederich concluded from research in evaluation that "noticing and praising whatever a student does well improves writing more than any kind or amount of correction of what he does badly, and that it is especially important for the less able writers who need all the encouragement they can get" (20). Other researchers claim praise commentary plays an important role in helping student writers recognize their strengths and gain confidence (Daiker; Dragga; Spandel & Stiggins), and others argue that praise may lead to the improvement of writing quality through motivational effects (Cho et al). Straub challenges all responders, teachers and students alike, "to write as many praise comments as criticisms" and "when you praise, praise well" because "sincerity and specificity are everything when it comes to a complement" ("Responding—Really Responding" 167).

This study indicated a correlation of praise comments and problem detection and/or advice especially when given with hedging, or indirect commentary. Indirect commentary given by a peer levels the power structure. When a peer provides indirect commentary by framing remarks or uses modal constructions to qualify comments such as "You might want to consider . . ."; "Maybe, you could...”; “I’m not sure, but perhaps you might want to...”; or “I would suggest...,” students are more receptive to this type of commentary because a writer is given a choice, an option, rather than a directive. When indirect written feedback is provided with advice or problem detection,
students give and receive feedback to each other “as equals rather than as authorities in a position of power over each other” (Schneider & Andre). This balancing of power structures is rarely possible between instructor and teacher. When praise is included in the overall commentary on a draft, it is a confidence builder. Students were more likely to respond to feedback in problem detection and advice if they were also given praise.

Part 3: Feedback Given/ Feedback Utilized across the Classes

A summary of the types of feedback given and utilized in each category for each class is shown in Table 5. A total of 752 comments were given on 42 drafts. The results varied in the types of feedback given in each class, as did the utilization of the feedback. Each class focused on different types of feedback and provided varying amounts of praise. Since praise comments can not be directly correlated or evidenced to revision, of the remaining 694 comments given in all the classes, 497 (72%) comments were utilized and 197 (28%) comments were not utilized.

The overall types of feedback given by peers and the percentages in each category across the classes are shown in Figure 1. Student feedback given in Praise constituted 8%, Problem Detection 15%, Advice 17%, and Edit/Mechanics 60%. Similar to other peer response research, the Edit/Mechanics category constituted the majority of feedback given by peers (Beason; Berger; Keh; Lillios & Iding).
Each class focused on different types of feedback. Figure 2 shows a comparison of the types of feedback utilized in each class in the each of the four categories. The types of feedback utilized in each class were ranked accordingly:

LS 87: 1) Edit/Mechanics; 2) Advice; 3) Problem Detection (Praise total: 1)

English 1: 1) Edit/Mechanics; 2) Tie: Problem Detection and Advice (Praise total: 31)

English 1A: 1) Problem Detection; 2) Edit/ Mechanics; 3) Advice (Praise total: 9)

Senior Seminar: 1) Advice; 2) Problem Detection; Edit/Mechanics (Praise total: 10)

RPT 106: 1) Edit/Mechanics; 2) Advice; 3) Problem Detection (Praise total: 7).
Table 5.
SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding Categories</th>
<th>LS 87 n=10</th>
<th>English 1 n=10*</th>
<th>English 1A n=10*</th>
<th>Senior Seminar n=6</th>
<th>RPT 106 n=6</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PRAISE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>= 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. PROBLEM DETECTION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilized</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>= 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Utilized</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>= 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ADVICE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilized</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>= 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Utilized</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>= 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. EDIT/MECHANICS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilized</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>= 311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Utilized</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>= 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of comments</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>= 752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures in English 1 and English 1A had two peers commenting on essay draft.
Figure 1. Types and percentages of feedback given in the categories of praise, problem detection, advice, and edit/mechanics across the classes.
Figure 2. Types and percentages of feedback utilized in the categories of praise, edit/mechanics, problem detection, and advice across the classes.
Part 4: Peer Workshop Instruction - Similarities and Differences

Correlations can be made between types of student feedback and instructional direction. For example, many instructors require student participation in peer response workshops. Both the English 1 and English 1A instructors required workshop participation and required students to turn in a workshopped draft (with feedback from two peers) along with a revision. The participation and evidence of that participation (draft with peer feedback) were considered the accountability factors. However, requiring participation neither motivates, nor accounts for HOC revisions. Moreover, participation as the “accountability factor” did not motivate student involvement which was evidenced in the minimal number of utilized feedback in the categories of advice and problem detection in both English 1 and English 1A.

Purpose and attitude are additional issues that need to be considered regarding the peer response participation requirement. For example, neither the LS 87, nor RPT 106 instructors required student participation in the workshop process. However, the few students in the RPT 106 class who participated in the workshop process did so in order to gain assistance with their writing; whereas, the LS 87 students participated because it was a class activity, hence the disparate difference in the amount, typology, and utilization of feedback. Not only did the students in the RPT 106 class realize they had writing shortcomings and desired to improve, they were comfortable sharing their writing and believed classmates could help. The purpose of the workshop and instructional techniques reflect the attitude of students. The instructional differences between these
classes, modeling the process, building peer response skills and group composition added to the outcome differences.

Regarding group composition, English 1 and English 1A demonstrated a similar instructional technique – student selected groups of four. However, none of the other classes demonstrated similar group compositions. The LS 87 instructor permitted student selected pairs; the Senior Seminar instructor suggested pairs, but students were required to select a different peer each workshop; and the students in RPT 106 were relegated to instructor selected heterogeneous pairs. Instructor selected heterogeneous pairs generally produces a natural variation of perspectives. Falchikov claims gender “heterogeneous groups formed by the instructor are better than homogeneous student selected groups (218). Bruffee explains “heterogeneous decision-making groups work best because [. . .] differences tend to encourage the mutual challenging and cancellation of unshared biases and presuppositions” (“Collaborative” 32). He further claims, “groups that are socially or ethnically too homogeneous (everyone from the same home town, neighborhood, family, or fraternity; close friends, teammates, clique member) tend to agree too soon, since they have an investment in maintaining the belief that their differences on basic issues are minimal” (“Collaborative” 32). Maintaining positive group relations is important; however, the peer workshop purpose is to get students to be more interested in helping each other with writing rather than establishing solidarity.

Differences between English 1 and English 1A instruction included: the use of feedback forms and varying peer response activities. The English 1 instructor stated the students received a feedback form for the first peer workshop, but chose not to provide
one for the second. The English 1A students received the same feedback form for each essay; only the essay number changed accordingly. With regard to varying peer response activities, writing groups can engage students in a variety of activities at different stages of the writing process. Varying peer response activities and guiding all collaborative tasks is important. Ferris and Hedgcock claim, students can gain "valuable experience working on both written and oral assignments with their classmates, an important skill that is increasingly needed across the disciplines in university courses and in the workplace" (243).

As mentioned previously, the Edit/Mechanic category showed the highest amount of feedback overall. The students in the RPT 106 class gave the most Edit/Mechanic feedback (199) which represented over 40% of all the Edit/Mechanic comments given. In this class, both the workshop feedback form and the essay grading criteria directed students to focus on grammar. The instructor’s grading criteria explicitly states higher marks are given if the paper is “free from grammatical and typographical errors” (See Appendix J), and the researcher’s choice of feedback form directed the students to re-focus on editing grammatical errors by adding instructor’s criteria for high grades in the feedback form instructions. In addition, question #6 on the feedback form explicitly addresses grammar issues — “Are there any grammatical errors that stand out or that may need addressing”? (See Appendix K). Furthermore, one student’s feedback in the RPT 106 class, accounted for over one-third of the total Edit/Mechanics comments due to another student’s poor spelling errors. The RPT 106 students focused accordingly by taking explicit instructions into consideration.
The feedback form in the LS 87 class also directed the students to focus on Edit/Mechanics (See Appendix E). However, this feedback form requests the students to mark Sentence Structure Grammar/Mechanics Vocabulary with a check rather than specifically stating what the errors are. This type of feedback form limits understanding and space for students to give detailed written communication about specific areas of concern. Sarah Freedman refers to this type of feedback form as a use of “procedural heuristics [...] lists of questions and reminders (‘editing sheets’).” In her 1987 study, she found “use of editing sheets correlates with a marked reduction of student-to-student talk” (127). Furthermore, Freedman claims:

such devices lessen the extent to which small groups are truly peer-run collectives, and, in the most extreme case, move toward a mere parceling of tasks traditionally completed by an instructor, with students attending so closely to teacher-mandated concerns that groups no longer serve the function of providing a wider, more varied audience for student writing (127).

Just as the amount of Edit/Mechanic feedback indicated instructional direction, the amount of praise commentary in English 1 and RPT 106 results indicated instructional direction. Praise commentary can be a required response via a feedback form or simply the instructor’s feedback style which students often attempt to imitate. For example, question #1 on the feedback form in RPT 106 requests the responder/reader to praise what is worthy in the essay draft (See Appendix K). Although the students in English 1 were not given a feedback form, they gave more praise feedback than the students in all the other classes, and consequently, they utilized more problem detection
and advice feedback. Since I have personally experienced this particular instructor’s text-specific praise feedback in an English 220A class at CSUS, I believe the students in English 1 were attempting to emulate their instructor’s feedback. If praise is minimal, as evidenced in LS 87, students rarely consider or utilize HOC feedback. Whether explicitly instructed or not, praise is an important type of feedback that motivates students to invest in the peer response process.

Part 5: Key Peer Response Workshop Principles

Methods of teaching peer response workshops varies more than categories of feedback. The summary of peer response instruction across the classes (See Table 2) shows some differences between the instructors’ teaching techniques and Ferris and Hedgcock’s eight principles of effective peer response (See Table 1). Ferris and Hedgcock’s principles were used as a guideline to compare instructional techniques. The sixth principle — “hold students accountable for giving feedback and for considering the feedback they receive” was addressed by adding the R&RQ to the scheduled peer workshops in each class (See Appendix A). None of the participating instructors claimed to have ever used an accountability component such as R&RQ in previous peer workshops. The seventh principle — “considering individual student needs” was not a primary focus in this study; however, size and composition of group variances are described and discussed. Although the students in the upper level classes may have had more writing experience and more confidence, this study evidenced that instructional techniques play a key role in the outcome and success of the workshop process.
The first, second, and third principles outlined by Ferris and Hedgcock are also key: 1) Make peer workshops an integral part of the course, 2) Model the peer response process, and 3) Build peer response skills throughout the semester. These principles cannot be overlooked and warrant discussion.

Three of the four participating instructors claimed peer response was an integral part of their course (English 1, English IA, and Senior Seminar). The fact that these classes were portfolio assessed often means a personal reflection letter accompanies the portfolio at the end of the semester. Generally this type of student reflective letter provides a context for the previously written texts in the portfolio as a “description of a writer’s process against which a final draft can be understood, or as some synthesis of what a student has learned” (Yancey 146). Additionally, three of the four classes (English 1, English IA, and Senior Seminar) indicated on the class syllabi that workshopped drafts were required with all essays. Peer response workshops were not an integral part of the RPT 106 class expectation. Not only was the student writing expectation in the RPT 106 class less than in the English classes, the time allotment given from the instructor for the researcher to conduct the peer response workshops activities was rationed to only 55 minutes.

Only two classes activated the vital second principle of modeling the peer response process — Senior Seminar and RPT 106. Modeling is method of establishing effective peer response workshops and can be conducted in a variety of ways. For example, the RPT 106 students were given opportunities to experience modeling of the peer response process in two class sessions, approximately 35 minutes. Since handouts
were given for homework, additional time was expected from the students to prepare for the process.

The first peer response modeling activity in RPT 106 class was a class discussion about peer response. The students were informed about the goals, the rationale, the purpose of peer response workshops, and what they could expect to gain from the process. The discussion focused on the positive rationale behind peer response workshops such as opportunities to improve essay drafts before turning them in, practice in reading for revision, audience awareness, better communication skills, and confidence in writing. The students were also given an opportunity to share their previous workshop experiences, both positive and negative.

The next peer response workshop was dedicated to modeling a sample student essay (Appendix L). The students were given a week to read the homework handouts: the sample student essay, and the “Do’s and Don’ts for Writing Commentary” (See Appendix M). A class discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the sample essay and ways of giving text-specific commentary on a peer’s draft were explored by using the “Do’s and Don’ts for Writing Commentary” as a guideline. According to Barron, using a “C” grade student sample essay on the same or similar topic is most ideal since “a polished paper severely limits the opportunities students have for suggesting revision options, sending the message to students that they cannot provide useful advice about how to improve a paper” (26). The sample student essay used in this research was according to the instructor an “A-/B+ paper” which limited the class discussion. Using a
“C” graded paper would have given the students more opportunities to engage in discussion and instill writing confidence.

The Senior Seminar instructor also modeled the peer response workshops. Initially, these students were prepared for the peer response process by instructor assigned readings from a chapter in the class text, “Giving (and Getting) More from Peer Review Workshops: Some Guidelines” (Lee-Keller 109-120). In addition, the students were given text-specific exercises for each workshop from another chapter called “Revision Guidelines” (Lee-Keller 139-47). These chapters describe student benefits of peer response and how to respond to peers. This necessary guidance encourages and provides positive modeling of the process.

In both the RPT 106 and Senior Seminar classes, the students were given explicit instructions about the importance of peer response and how to respond to peers through the process of modeling. Consequently, these classes received and utilized the highest amount of feedback in Problem Detection and Advice. The peer response instruction in these classes consisted of modeling and varying workshop activities which aided the students to focus on HOC during the workshop. After the workshop, the text-specific student responses to the R&RQ were additional evidence of their HOC focus. The variances in peer response instruction determined some of the differences in the feedback received and utilized.

Students can be guided to focus commentary accordingly depending on instruction. Methods of guiding students toward HOC types of commentary include giving specific task-instructions such as feedback forms, “how to” respond handouts,
and modeling the peer response process. It is necessary for teachers to assist students throughout the peer workshop with explicit guidance in how to interact because “students will interact with each other at a very basic level unless they are taught specific skills of higher level discourse” (King 90). Only one class, Senior Seminar, focused primarily on types of feedback that addressed HOC, and the instruction in this class directly aligned with the principles for effective peer response as outlined by Ferris & Hedgecock. The student commentary given in the Senior Seminar class was text-specific feedback in advice and problem detection categories which led to substantial revisions. The amount of utilized comments in advice and problem detection categories in the Senior Seminar class surpassed all the other classes by almost 40%.

Part 6: Accountability Principle: “Reflect and Revise Questions”

When students are held accountable for considering feedback from a peer, utilization of feedback is maximized; however, none of the instructors had ever used an accountability component, such as the R&RQ, in previous peer workshops. All the participants, instructors and students, involved in the reflective process benefited from R&RQ. Many students groaned at an added dimension of peer response expectation of answering the R&RQ, but when students gave reflective, text-specific responses to the questions engagement in the writing-to-learn process was indicative in their revisions.

The first reflect and revise question, for example, addresses the student’s feelings about the peer response session. This question gives students an opportunity to express positive or negative feelings about the workshop process. Generally, students respond
positively; however, when a negative response is given, a student is providing an instructor with an opportunity to reflect on adjusting and/or enhancing future workshop processes. Examples of beneficial reflective student responses to question #1:

**Necessity for Student Accountability:** I think my peers responses were ok and not that great. One of the papers I got back had like only a few words scribbled here and there just to make it look like it was revised. The other paper I received back actually had ok revision which kind of helped me with my polished draft of the essay. (English I student)

**Necessity of modeling how to give text-specific feedback:** I felt it was helpful, but it wasn’t quite so specific. It didn’t exactly tell me what to fix. (LS 87 student)

**Necessity of varying peer response activities (possibility of including time for verbal response or teaching students technology, such as Comments feature in Microsoft word):** I felt that it went well. The comments I got were helpful but sometimes not explained fully. Sometimes I understood what they were talking about but sometimes I did not. One time someone wrote “a bit wordy” next to a huge paragraph. I did not have time to talk to them about it because I only went to one day of workshop but I did not know if she meant the whole paragraph was wordy or what parts of it were wordy and what she even meant by wordy. But other then that I have received really helpful comments that have only improved my writing. (English IA student)

**Necessity of including Praise feedback:** My peer response session was somewhat helpful. My peers made some good responses on my paper that were able to help me during my final revision. Not everyone in my group gives positive feedback though so sometimes it is difficult to receive comments from those who are completely negative. Negative feedback is good, but I feel that with negative should come positive. (English IA student)
The second R&RQ asks the student to explain why (or why not) their peers’ comments were appropriate and helpful. How a student responds to this question is usually an indication of a student who either revised their paper utilizing HOC feedback, or edited their paper utilizing LOC feedback. If a student only answers the first half of the question (Do you think your peers’ comments were appropriate and helpful?) and/or has not answered the second half explaining text-specifically why, this also, is generally an indication that the student has not revised their paper. Similar to question #1, student responses to the second question can provide a teacher with additional instructional opportunities, of which they can reflect on, and to include, expand, or revise their workshop principles. The following responses to question #2 are examples that resulted in students addressing only LOC type feedback:

- It was helpful and appropriate. It stated that I should work most on the grammar. (LS 87 student)

- I don’t think my peers suggestions were that helpful. Most of the time they don’t really make any suggestions. They usually say “This was good” or “I didn’t see any major mistakes.” That doesn’t help me. What does “this was good mean?” what was good? My peers don’t go deep enough for me. It seems as though they are trying to be nice and don’t want to hurt my feelings so they say good things. I feel that I can notice my own strengths, I need someone to tell me what to enhance, and I rarely get that out of these peer reviews. (English I student)

- The comments they gave outside of what they wrote were always more helpful than whatever was written on the revision sheet. The revision sheet always seemed to bind people into writing down a specific answer. You can really get more specific when you are talking directly to the person whose paper you just corrected. (English 1A)
We discussed how we should be completely honest with each others' work. I am completely honest with my response. I am expect the same from my peers' responses. I think the group I work with is good. I really trust their feedback. (English 1A student)

I do think the peer comments I received were helpful. It's always good to get another opinion on your paper. I always read their comments and try to fix my errors or include some new idea that they suggest should go in. I like my group and we are good at giving each other advice. (English 1A student)

Yes the comments were helpful. He made some suggestions to the essay that I feel will make it stronger than I thought. (English 1A student)

Often, students tend to express positive responses to question #2 indicating that the peer response workshop was helpful just to appease the instructor or follow the instructional request. However, these types of vague, platitudeous responses rarely led to HOC revisions. On the other hand, responses to question #2 that led to HOC revisions, and either focused on instructional shortcomings or gave specific examples of why a peer's comments were helpful gave writers some basis for revision:

The comments that my peer left me were helpful. It showed me how I had more than one topic in a single paragraph, and that I can take those paragraphs and make them into smaller paragraphs. It also showed me that my thesis statement wasn't clear. (English 1 student)

My peer's comments are appropriate and helpful. They find my flaws in my essay and give me some ideas to improve that flaw area. In writing essays, you feel as though you don't have anything to talk about anymore, but when a peer reads it they put out an idea that you can use making your essay stronger. As you do the same for them. The things that you do well in they
comment on those too, so you have an idea that you are heading on the right path. That helps also on so many levels too giving you a boost and making you focus more on the weaker area in the essay. (English I student)

I do think that my peers’ comments were helpful and appropriate. I believe that they were helpful because they addressed the questions on the peer workshop worksheet. I believe that my peers’ comments were appropriate because the concerns they brought up were applicable to the essay. The positive aspects of the paper that my peers noticed was also what I, as the writer, also felt that I had done a good job on. I also enjoyed that my peer reviewers used smiley faces to indicate was done well, in addition to what needed improvement, in the paper. (English IA student)

I usually think my peers have valuable things to say about my work and it’s generally helpful. However, after Monday’s session, I felt like I did not get very much feedback. My partner mainly told me things (which I appreciate) but I was really looking for some ways to improve my paper since it’s far from finished. I think part of this problem was the revision exercise 3. Though it had some really good questions and gave some direction for peer review, I don’t think that we had enough time to really delve into the papers, complete the exercise, and then give feedback.

(Senior Seminar student)

My peer’s comments were appropriate. However, he did not seem to be knowledgeable of the word “surmised.” He had a good understanding of the content and flow requirements of the paper. I was not convinced of his knowledge of English grammar and spelling after reading his paper.

(RPT 106 student)

The third R&RQ required a yes/no response, but the second part of this question asks the student to be specific about which suggestions will be utilized, and how. Again, if the student does not answer this question in a text-specific manner, chances are little
revisions of HOC. The following examples are from students who addressed the question and gave text-specific responses to specific comments given. The following responses led students to revise in areas of both LOC and HOC:

I take all their suggestion into my revision. Like fix my intro since it’s a little off topic with the rest of my essay. Make paragraph three longer since the two paragraphs before are in more detail, do it also to paragraph four. Those suggestions help me. I put more thought into my intro and try and hook it with the rest of my essay. Look at my third ad and see what else I can talk about to make the fourth paragraph seem more interesting and providing more details about it. (English I student)

I would definitely utilize their suggestions in my revision. My peer group members advised me to clarify the use of certain terms, such as “letters,” also to specify what I meant by “Help” and what emotion I was trying to convey. My peer group also suggested that I clarify my conclusion. I will address these suggestions by making my conclusion longer and adding more detail. I will also add more sentences describing the “letters” I am discussing as well as what emotion I am trying to convey to the reader. (English IA student)

I will most definitely utilize Amy’s suggestion to improve my paper. I will take her advice to add more to my first paragraph by providing readers a bit more information on my accident and how I ended up in the chair. I will also take her suggestion to rephrase a couple of sentences in order to make more clarity and create a better flow. Finally, I will look back to the grammatical errors she spotted and attempt to make changes throughout my draft where appropriate. (RPT 106 student)

I will absolutely utilize his suggestions. His primary complaint – that I did not connect redefining female sexuality with permanent body modification (plastic surgery) – genuinely surprised me. Then I realized from his perspective (that is, being male), he did not understand that plastic surgery is often a way for women to enhance their own sexuality, an aspect of femininity heavily
emphasized within our popular culture. His observations made me realize that I was implying this connection, rather than explicitly stating it. I was making the assumption that my reader was female. (Senior Seminar student)

The fourth R&RQ requires students to answer specifically “after rereading their essay, in addition to (or in contrast to) the comments from your peer, what changes [.....] might be necessary or helpful.” When the student answers this question and the previous questions text-specifically, chances are more than likely they will have reflectively revised their draft in areas of HOC utilizing and considering peers’ feedback. One student’s reflective response to question # 3 was a particularly telling example of a student who appreciated the purpose of peer response workshops:

I am so fortunate to have had someone else’s eyes to take a closer look at my paper. I must have typed through it too fast and did not catch the mistakes/lacking content. I will definitely change the definition of Angelmen’s Syndrome because one it was too wordy and matched too closely with the Wikipedia’s definition. That is something I did not consider to be a problem but I am glad my peer caught because it could have looked like plagiarism. I know I would not want that to be the case. (RPT 106 student)

For the most part, the majority of student responses to the R&RQ reflect positive attitudes toward the workshop process. Each response indicated a personal reflection of the workshop experience, the students’ writing processes, and specific actions each believed necessary for revision. Engaging students in effective peer response workshops connects students’ personal workshop experience, writing processes, and specific
intended action/s, all of which encompass zones of proximal development and instill reflective attitudes.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Results: This study supports the use of R&RQ as an accountability principle in the process of effective peer response workshops. However, this accountability principle cannot stand alone. This principle used in conjunction with the other effective peer response principles results in revisions of HOCs which is the purpose of teaching peer response workshops. This study suggests both instructors and students benefit when a reflective component is included in the process of peer workshops. Instructors can benefit by reflecting on peer response instructional methods and can adjust their methods according to reflective feedback given by students. Students benefit by taking initiative and responsibility for their own learning and understanding of the conventions of writing well. In addition, when students spend time reflecting on their own writing and critically evaluate their drafts, they demonstrate the intricacies of their thought process. In order for students to respond reflectively, effective peer response principles must be established. This study’s results provide insight into what constitutes accountability in effective peer workshops as well as the importance of including a reflective component as a method for improving the teaching and the outcome of peer response workshops.

Referring back to the questions addressed in this study may provide insight to methods of teaching more effective peer response workshops.
Does an accountability component, such as “Reflect and Revise Questions,” after a peer response workshop lead to better revisions?

Although the inclusion of R&RQ does not guarantee significantly improved drafts, it creates a climate for improvement. Through the process of reflection, students can discuss the variables of writing conventions as they apply to their own texts, their individual learning processes, and possible ways of improving their drafts. When students reflect on feedback received, they engage in a goal directed activity as they justify their writing choices. Adding an accountability component to peer workshops, such as R&RQ, will lead to better revisions only if other principles of effective peer response are established. By answering R&RQ text-specifically, students can activate the peer response process, provide more HOC feedback, and reflect on the feedback received—all of which encourage revision.

Four of the five classes participating in the study were portfolio assessed either by an English grading committee or the instructor. As part of the portfolio process, students are expected to write an end-of-semester reflective letter discussing their writing challenges and progress. Having the experience of peer response workshops that include R&RQ can cultivate the portfolio process. The process of reflection does not occur naturally for many writers, but “when practiced, it becomes a discipline, a habit of mind” (Yancey 19). Integrating the process of reflection, modeling the peer response process, and building peer response skills throughout the semester can provide students with the necessary tools for the writing process to develop.
What levels of writers give and reflect on text-specific feedback?

All levels of writers are capable of giving text-specific feedback. However, they must be trained and guided in the process. Only two classes were trained and guided in the workshop process, and as a result they were able to provide more HOC types of feedback. Text-specific feedback was evidenced in the classes where the peer response process was modeled and peer response skills were built upon throughout the process. Students at any writing level can be trained to give and reflect on text-specific feedback, but the key is to provide all students, regardless of level, with training and guidance throughout the process.

Teaching begins with instruction, and as Gere posits, students read their instructors' feelings expertly (106). An instructor must believe in and value writing-to-learn concepts before a student will. Although Senior Seminar and RPT 106 are considered upper level classes, these students experienced workshops that closely aligned with the effective principles outlined by Ferris and Hedgcock. Consequently, these students provided a substantial amount of HOC feedback and utilized it. All students, regardless of academic level, can adjust to instructional techniques. However, they need to feel belief in the workshop process from the instructor during the peer response experience in order to develop writing confidence and a more comprehensive understanding of the writing processes.
What type(s) of feedback leads students to reflect and revise?

According to Dewey, reflection requires recognizing that a problem exists and then evaluating the problem(s) with potential solutions in light of existing information even though that information may be incomplete and unverifiable (King & Kitchener). Students giving text-specific feedback can recognize problems and offer advice. When students reflect on text-specific feedback of problem detection and/or advice given from a peer, they tend to revise. This study suggests that when students received little or no praise, they tend to disregard feedback. Praise commentary is extremely important in the workshop process because it sets a positive tone, elevates student confidence, and is an influential stimulus of peer feedback acceptance. When students answered the R&RQ in a text-specific manner, they tended to revise, edit, and address both HOC and LOC. And when students are given opportunities to reflect on the provided feedback and are held accountable for their learning process, they will develop the understanding and reasoning skills needed throughout the revision process. Reflective revision runs parallel with the HOC being addressed.

How can students be taught to respond reflectively?

Responding reflectively takes practice. In order for students to respond reflectively to peers’ writing, they must be taught how through modeling and guidance from the instructor throughout the workshop process. This study suggests that students can be taught how to respond reflectively through the integration of the principles for effective peer response workshops. The students in Senior Seminar and RPT 106 were
instructed how to respond to student texts through modeling and structure, which led them to give feedback in categories of problem detection and advice. They responded reflectively because the feedback in these categories warranted reflection.

**Teaching Implications**

In this study, instructors taught peer response workshops in a number of ways. The results of the study indicated that peer response instructional methods can either minimize or maximize student feedback. This is likely due to the fact of the variances of peer response instructional techniques. Therefore, teachers might consider integrating effective peer response principles as outlined by Ferris and Hedgcock (See Table 1). In addition, students must be guided to give praise commentary so they will not disregard feedback. If peer response workshops are provided as part of classroom curriculum, teachers need to be aware that their attitude is reflected on by the students, and students will emulate their teachers. The results indicate students tend to utilize peer feedback, but the type of feedback given varies according to the instructional methods employed. This study suggests that the closer workshops align with effective principles of peer response, the more students provide feedback of higher order concerns. An accountability principle, such as the R&RQ, cannot be integrated purposefully without the effective peer response principles in place. Rarely do students invest in the workshop process. They do not reflectively revise drafts addressing areas of higher order concern if the teaching techniques do not reflect effective principles for peer response. When instruction aligns
with the effective peer response principles, students revise reflectively in a text-specific manner.

Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

This study is limited by the number of participants in each class, and that only the researcher was the rater of student essay drafts, the revisions, and the R&RQ which constrains the extent to which this study may be generalized. However, the results of the study are suggestive for future research in the terms of correlation of teaching methods and how these methods reflect the types of feedback considered and utilized in the process of peer response workshops.

In addition, this study showed there are a number of variables that can be researched within the peer response processes. Few studies link the stances that students take to what they do with the feedback they receive. This study was an attempt to triangulate teaching techniques for peer response workshops with feedback characteristics and student revisions. Hopefully, future studies will include a larger sample size and examine classes across the curriculum. Understanding the reflective process brings promise to teaching practices and encourages students to respond to that process. Reflection according to Dewey is habitual and learned. Dewey said it best—“While we cannot learn or be taught to think, we do have to learn how to think well, especially how to acquire the general habit of reflecting” (“How We Think” 34). If workshops are a part of the classroom writing curriculum, instructors and students will gain maximum potential benefit provided effective peer response principles are
established as the foundation. Students need to be made aware of the purpose and expectations of peer response workshops, and must be guided throughout the process. They must be guided with techniques that include modeling of how to give text-specific feedback. When students are held accountable for utilizing peer feedback, they will invest in the process reflectively. Then, the integration of peer response workshops will reflect students' writing development and build writing confidence.
APPENDIX A

Reflect and Revise Questions

Reflection: Responding to Peer Commentary & Revising Your Essay Draft

Instructions:
Respond in writing to the questions below (1-4). Use a computer and write no more than one paragraph for each question.
Make any changes to your essay draft that you feel are needed at this point.

Reflect-and-Revise Questions

1. How did you feel about your peer response session?
2. Do you think your peers' comments were appropriate & helpful? Why or why not?
3. Will you utilize any of their suggestions in your revision? If so, which one(s), and how will you address them?
4. Reread your essay. In addition to (or contrast to) the comments from your peer, what changes —additions, deletions, clarifications, corrections, reorganization might be necessary or helpful?

(Adapted from Ferris, CSUS, English 215B, 2005)
APPENDIX B

Pre-Nursing Freshman Seminar Essay Assignment

Nursing 21 Syllabus change

Fall 2007

This mandatory essay is to be completed by all students taking Freshman Seminar in Fall 2007. It will replace the “Reflective Best Self” exercise explained in the syllabus. Please see WebCT for due dates. Further explanation will be given during class.

Essay Assignment:

Several of the readings that we have discussed from your textbook offer ideas about why a college education is important for you individually and for society (see, e.g., Pierce, Jones, Atwell, Pelligrino, Cicarelli, Carter, Thoreau). Write a 3-4 page essay in which you first briefly explain

(1) why three of these authors say getting a college education is important for you as an individual student and

(2) why three of these authors say getting a college education is important for a democratic society. Be sure to correctly cite the authors in your summary.

Second, critically examine your own thinking and assumptions about college: explain why you think getting a college education is important to you, and how your own thinking and assumptions about college have changed since starting this course.

Finally, end your essay by providing your own personal mission statement about your personal, social, and occupational goals and responsibilities and how completing your degree at CSUS will help you achieve them.
APPENDIX C

Research Questionnaire - Humanities 140

Major: ________________________________

Please circle applicable answers:

College Level: Freshman  Sophomore  Junior  Senior  Graduate

1. How many Writing Intensive classes have you completed? 0 1 2 3 or more

2. Did you know peer response workshops were available to you outside of class?
   Yes  No

3. Have you experienced any peer response workshops in college?  Yes  No
   a) If yes, how many times?  One  More than one
   b) Which class/es?

4. I revise my essays before turning them in.  Yes  No

5. Did you use the CSUS Writing Center this semester?  Yes  No

6. Please identify the reason/s you did not participate in the peer response workshops. Check all that apply:
   _____ Times available did not fit my schedule
   _____ Not a class requirement
   _____ I barely finish my essays before they are due
   _____ I would prefer to participate in peer response workshops during class time
   _____ I do not need the extra credit because I am getting a satisfactory grade
   _____ I do not like to share my work with peers
   _____ I have participated in peer response workshops before and did not find them effective
   _____ I do not think sharing my essays with peers is helpful
   _____ I prefer to have only my instructor assess my essays

HRS 140 Research 2007
APPENDIX D

English Instructor Survey

1. Do you conduct peer response workshops?
   Yes ______  No ______
   In which class/es? ____________________________________________
   Number of times/semester? ____________________________

2. How do you prepare your students for the peer response process? Is the peer response activity modeled? For how long (time/day(s))? How many times is it modeled in the semester (once, twice, etc.)

3. Do you vary peer response from task to task? (Do you use a peer response sheet? Is this sheet specific to the task? That is, do you make one up for each individual activity?)

4. How do you select groups/pairs for peer review sessions?

5. Do you hold students accountable for giving and receiving feedback?
   Yes ______  No ______

6. Do you hold students accountable for considering and utilizing feedback?
   Yes ______  No ______

7. How do you measure accountability for peer workshops?
   Do you grade them? If so, how? (pass/no pass)
   Do you use a “Revise-and-Reflect” questioning method?
   Yes ______  No ______  Unfamiliar with the method ______

8. What do you believe is the value of peer response?

9. To what extent do you think the students incorporate student comments?

10. Would you consider being a part of CSUS research by using the “Reflect-and-revise” component in your peer response workshops? (See attached)
     Yes ______  No ______

Best way to contact you? Email? ________________________________
Best time to contact you? ________________________________

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT FILLING OUT THIS SURVEY!
PLEASE RETURN SURVEY TO THE WRITING CENTER, CALV 128
Leahna Barton, CSUS Graduate Student, leahna2000@yahoo.com
APPENDIX E

LS 87 – Peer Feedback Form: Feedback for Midterm 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>√</th>
<th>Focused Task to Address</th>
<th>Description of the Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis statement</td>
<td>The thesis should be clearly written and/or state if you agree with the author's position on gender roles of women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of ideas</td>
<td>Body paragraph(s) should have more details and explanation to convince your reader of the main idea in your topic sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reference to the Articles</td>
<td>At least two body paragraphs should include reference to an article in the form of quotations and/or paraphrased ideas from the readings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization of the essay and body paragraphs.</td>
<td>Each body paragraph should be logically sequenced. Each paragraph should demonstrate cohesiveness with appropriate transitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of the evidence</td>
<td>Each paragraph should provide analysis of the issue of gender roles: Provide your interpretation of action or statement. Provide the consequences of an action. Provide reasons or an example of statement presented in the evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence Structure Grammar/Mechanics Vocabulary</td>
<td>Areas that should be addressed systematically in your writing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical reading for academic literacy</td>
<td>Spend time rereading the articles to obtain a better understanding of issues in the readings. Your approach to writing the topic may be illogical or simplistic, or you may misunderstand the texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other concerns:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

English 1 - Essay Assignment

English 1

Essay Two: Using Visual Literacy to Analyze Advertisements

In the first essay, we looked at what kinds of literacy video games might (or might not) promote. In this essay, we are going to stick with our general theme of literacy; instead of writing about literacy, however, we are going to use our visual literacy (our ability to read pictures) in order to analyze print ads.

**Analyse** 2 or 3 print ads and **make a claim** about the message they send to their audience.

In order to fulfill this assignment, you will need to do several things:
- Select your ads
- Break down the ads into small parts, using the “Analyzing Images” worksheet
- Come up with a category that your ads fall into – remember the more unique the category, the more interesting the paper (In class, we really liked categories like “body transformations” and “striving for the good life” much better than we liked “ads about clothes” or “ads with bodies in them.”
- Include at least one quote from Susan Bordo’s essay in our book
- Include at least one explanation of an enthymeme in your essay (we will go over enthymeme’s in class next week)

All drafts need to be:
- Typed, double-spaced, paginated, stapled
- 3 pages minimum
- Turned in at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus
APPENDIX G

English 1A - Essay Assignment

A Request (or Plea) for Money
Formal Essay #2

Context/Background:
We have been discussing the importance of audience awareness and the power of tone and voice in writing. For this assignment, you will have the chance to produce two pieces of persuasive writing for two different audiences. You will then analyze these letters in order to better understand the differences between the two and the writing situations appropriate for each.

Your Assignment (2 PARTS):
PART ONE - You will write two 1-page letters:

1. Letter One to a Scholarship Committee: Write a letter to a scholarship committee persuading them to award you scholarship money. Include any information you think this committee would want to know or need to know in order to award you the money you need.

2. Letter Two to our Parent/Guardian(s): Write a letter to your parents or guardians persuading them to send you more money for school. Include any information you think your parents would want or need to know in order to send you the money you need.

PART TWO
You will write a 2-3 page essay analyzing the two letters you have created. Your essay will compare and contrast your two letters in order to come to a conclusion about the differences and similarities in the language, tone, voice, content, ideas, form etc. of the two writing situations.

Questions to Consider:
- What did you have to consider about your audience before writing each letter?
- How does the language, tone, and/or content differ in the two letters? How and Why is this significant?
- What is similar between the two letters? How and why is this significant?
- How is one type of letter more persuasive or less persuasive than the other?
- Or, How are both equally persuasive?

Specific Evaluative Criteria:
Successful letters will:
- Clearly and thoughtfully address the writing situations for each of the two letters
- Use appropriate language, form, and content for each writing situation
- Demonstrate audience awareness

A successful analysis essay will:
- States a clear, identifiable thesis
- Clearly presents and develops ideas that examine comparative and contrasting aspects of the two writing situations
- Uses specific examples from two letter to support ideas
From the English 1A Rubric, evaluation of this assignment will focus on (rewrite criteria here in your own words):

- 
- 

Requirements:
Letters One and Two:
- 1 page typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman
- Follows proper letter format

Analysis:
- 2-3 pages typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman

Due Dates:
March 7: Letter 1 & 2 Draft
March 12 & 14: Analysis/Letter Draft Workshop
March 19: All Three Parts of Essay due for my Responses
APPENDIX H

English 1A – Peer Feedback Form: Essay #2 Workshop Script

ESSAY #2 WORKSHOP SCRIPT

Writer: ____________________________

Reviewer: ____________________________

**Read through the ENTIRE paper first before answering the following questions**

THESIS / FOCUS:

1. What is the writer’s thesis? Is it clear, specific, and focused? Can you suggest any of the Thesis Writing strategies to help this writer improve his/her thesis?

2. What aspect(s) of the letters does the writer focus on in his/her paper? (Language, tone, content, voice, ideas, form etc) Is this made explicit in the thesis? Basically, as a reader, do you know what the writer will be discussing in the paper?

SUPPORT / EVIDENCE:

1. What specific examples and evidence from the letters does the writer use to support the thesis?

2. Does the writer include enough evidence to sufficiently support the thesis? As a reader, are you left wanting more? Can you offer any suggestions? What more do you want to know about the topic?
ORGANIZATION:

1. How is the paper organized? (Comparisons, then contrasts? Vice versa? Discussion of language first, then voice etc?) In other words, do the ideas logically follow one another, or do they seem to jump around? (i.e. language, then voice, then language again, then content, then language again etc.)

2. Look at the topic sentence of each paragraph. Does each topic sentence refer back to the paper's main idea? Which paragraphs seem to stray off topic?

3. Now look at the CONTENT of each paragraph. Does the information contained in each paragraph help support the topic sentence? Is there any information that goes off topic or seems unnecessary?

WRITER'S QUESTIONS: As the writer, what questions do you have for your reviewer?
APPENDIX I

Senior Seminar 198T - Peer Feedback Form: Revision Exercise 3

REVISION EXERCISE 3

This exercise will help you comment on someone else’s writing by answering straightforward questions regarding mechanics and content. This is also useful to apply to your own paper.

READ ONLY THE INTRODUCTION

- What is the thesis?
- What function does the pre-thesis intro perform: is it a filler, or does it head somewhere?
- What is going to be argued?
- Are the title, author’s name, and subject matter introduced?

READ ONLY THE TOPIC SENTENCES OF THE BODY PARAGRAPHS

- What are the bare bones of the argument?
- Does the language vary, or is it redundant or stylistically uneven?
- Read only transitions (The last and first sentences of each paragraph).
  - Do they flow together?
  - Does one idea lead to the next?
  - Is it clear why the paragraph ends where it does?

READ ONLY LAST SENTENCES OF PARAGRAPHS, THEN THE FIRST SENTENCES OF THE SAME PARAGRAPHS

- Can you tell using only these two sentences what the paragraph is about?

READ ONLY THE CONCLUSION

- What was the paper about?
- What is the text under discussion?
- Who is the author?
- What was the argument?
- Why is it important?
- Is there anything else in the conclusion?
- Does the extra info fit in with the rest of the paragraph and serve a purpose?
RPT 106: Inclusive and Therapeutic Recreation

Service Learning Experience (200 points)

Purpose: This assignment is designed to provide you with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in recreation settings working with people who have disabilities.

Community Engagement Center Clearance Process (10 points)

Description: Prior to beginning your service learning experience, you must fill out the forms required through the Community Engagement (CEC). After you have been approved for community service through CEC, you can then contact a potential agency for this assignment. (I will provide you with a list of agencies to choose from). The conversation you have with the site should include an overview of the agency, the nature of the volunteer responsibilities, and examples of a typical volunteer experience. The agency will provide you with the appropriate orientation prior to starting your volunteer hours. It is your responsibility to secure your service learning opportunity. If you encounter any difficulties with this, please inform me early in the semester.

Service Learning Experience (signed time sheet) (90 points)

Description: You will select and volunteer in a clinical and/or community-based recreation program for a group (or individual) with disabilities. This experience will include active participation for a total of 15 hours. Programs should be selected and approved by September 26th. If the experience is not approved by the instructor, you may not receive credit. Choose a population you are interested in, this way it will be a quality, meaningful learning experience. You will be completing your hours at one agency and you will receive credit only for 15 hours. You may receive 2 points extra credit for every additional hour you volunteer. (up to 10 points).

Procedure: A time sheet (verifying participation hours) must be signed by your agency supervisor following each session. At the conclusion of your experience, your agency supervisor will complete a brief evaluation of your performance. Please submit your time sheet and evaluation with the paper or when you do your presentation or you will not receive full credit.
Service Learning Experience Paper or Presentation (100 points)

Description: After completing your volunteer experience, you will either write a paper or do a brief (5 - 10 minute) presentation on your experience. It is recommended that you submit your paper or do your presentation (arrange date in advance), within one week of completing your hours. If you choose a presentation, visuals, such as PowerPoint is expected.

Grading Criteria for S-L Experience Reaction Paper or Presentation:

90-100 points This paper/presentation shows thoughtful reflection of your learning process and includes:

a. Your thoughts before the experience
b. Description of the population, type of program and activities
c. A thorough description of your experience with personal anecdotes
d. A summary of what you learned from this experience about people with disabilities and about yourself
e. How this learning experience will be integrated into your future behavior
f. This paper is word-processed, well written, organized, and free from grammatical and typographical errors or this presentation is articulately delivered with excellent organization, good eye contact, proper grammar, and voice projection.

80-89 points This paper/presentation shows thoughtful reflection of your learning process and includes:

a. Your thoughts before the experience
b. Description of the population, type of program and activities
c. Several specific examples of your experience with personal anecdotes
d. A summary of what you learned from this experience about people with disabilities and about yourself
e. This paper is word-processed, well written, organized, and generally free from grammatical and typographical errors or this presentation is articulately delivered with adequate organization, good eye contact, proper grammar, and voice projection.

70-79 points This paper/presentation is a summary of what you did during your volunteer hours and sites specific examples of your experience. It includes some reflections on your thoughts during the experience. It may have a few typographical or grammatical errors (written or spoken).

60-69 points This paper/presentation is merely a summary of what you did during your volunteer experience and may have a few typographical or grammatical errors (written or spoken).
APPENDIX K

RPT 106 – Peer Feedback Form

RPT 106: Inclusive and Therapeutic Recreation
Service Learning Experience: Peer Response Workshop

Grading Criteria for S-L Experience Reaction Paper for 90-100 points:
This paper shows thoughtful reflection of your learning process and includes:
   a. Your thoughts before the experience
   b. Description of the population, type of program and activities
   c. A thorough description of your experience with personal anecdotes
   d. A summary of what you learned from this experience about people with disabilities and about yourself
   e. How this learning experience will be integrated into your future behavior
   f. This paper is word-processed, well written, organized, and free from grammatical and typographical errors

When responding to your peer’s paper, remember to have the attitude that you are not only helping yourself to become a better writer, but you are also helping each other. Use the above grading criteria as a guide for your responses, and answer the following questions and be as generous with your comments as possible!

1. What do you think is deserving of praise in this paper? Give the writer 3 suggestions of how you think they can improve this draft. What was the most important thing said? What do you want to know more about?

2. What types of details could be added or deleted to make this paper more interesting or effective? Explain by giving specific examples on the draft.
3. Does the draft carry out the assignment? What could the writer do to better fulfill the assignment?

4. Do any of the main points need to be explained more fully or less fully? Should any be eliminated? Do any seem confusing or boring? Do any want you to know more? How well are the main points supported by evidence, examples, or details?

5. What kind of overall organization plan is used? Are the points presented in the most useful order? What, if anything might be moved? Can you suggest ways to make connections between paragraphs clearer and easier to follow?

6. Which paragraphs are clearest and most interesting to read, and why? Which ones are well developed? Which paragraphs need further development? What kind of information seems to be missing? Are there any grammatical errors that stand out or that may need addressing?

Adapted from Robert Connors and Cheryl Glenn, *The St. Martin’s Guide to Teaching Writing*, 1995. RPT 106 Research 07
When it came to choosing a location for my service learning hours, I was immediately drawn to the therapeutic horseback riding program, Project R.I.D.E. I have always been fascinated with horses, especially their use in therapeutic practices. I knew that this would be a rare opportunity to watch and learn how the relationship between child and horse can develop and ultimately improve the child’s overall well-being. Also, because I am still relatively new to working with people with disabilities, I thought it would be wise to choose an environment where I could work with people with many different disabilities.

Program Overview

Project R.I.D.E creates an atmosphere that offers children the chance to be independent through their horseback riding endeavors. The program serves approximately 200 children and young adults, ages 3-22, with varying disabilities. These disabilities include, but are not limited to, Down syndrome, autism, hearing impairments, visual impairments, MS, CP, MD, spina bifida, TBI, THI, SCI/D, and ADHD. The goal
of Project R.I.D.E. is to improve physical, emotional and social functioning through participation in a highly structured and safe program. Also, the bond between horse and rider promotes independence, normalization, and rehabilitation.

Volunteers at Project R.I.D.E. mainly serve as leaders, sidewalkers, and classroom assistants. Leaders and sidewalkers have one-on-one interaction with the children while helping with activities in the arena. These activities include simple stretches while on horseback, spelling games with letters placed around the arena, and beanbag basketball. Classroom assistants help groups of approximately 10 children with various activities including arts and crafts projects, lessons about horses and riding equipment, and karaoke.

**Personal Experience**

As both a sidewalker and classroom assistant, I had many wonderful experiences with the children. My first memorable experience as a sidewalker was helping a teenage girl with Down syndrome. I was told that she had been very hesitant of riding in the past. When I was helping her, however, she felt very comfortable and wanted to show me how she could do it all by herself. The instructors could not believe that she had put aside her fear and was riding independently. She was so thrilled by my encouragement that she gave me a huge hug when she finished her ride. I also helped with a private lesson where twins, both with autism, were riding for the first time. They came with their mother, father, and two caretakers, and all parties were noticeably nervous for this first riding experience. Once on their horses, however, the boys were calm and smiling. The family was moved to tears
because they had never seen the boys so focused and happy. This was a very special moment to witness.

In the classroom, I had the best moments during our karaoke parties. The volunteer coordinator was very sick one day so I volunteered to lead the class. I did not know at the time that this was a day when the kids were doing karaoke and that the volunteer coordinator always began the party with a few songs. Although I fancy myself a good dancer, I am not a singer. I put my pride aside, however, and got things started with a less than fabulous rendition of “Girls Just Want to Have Fun.” The kids followed my performance with Disney and top 40 songs while I got the rest of the group up and dancing. It was amazing to see some of the quieter children come alive when they were performing. I also had a chance to show the children a few dance steps.

Reflection

I have had plenty of experience working with children, but this was my first time working exclusively with children with disabilities. I was not surprised that my experiences were similar to working with able-bodied children. The participants at Project R.I.D.E. proved to be honest, blunt, and without inhibitions. These qualities definitely help to put life in perspective for an adult.

This experience allowed me to travel outside my comfort zone and really enjoy the activities. I noticed that some other volunteers seemed embarrassed when it came to singing and dancing and I truly think that they missed out on a big part of the learning experience. Putting yourself out there is essential when working with children and
sometimes that means looking a little silly. I do not regret any of my “off key” moments because they allowed me to make real connections with the children.

*Implications for the Future*

This experience definitely reinforced my choice of going into the field of therapeutic recreation. I enjoyed my time at Project R.I.D.E. tremendously, continuing to volunteer even after my required hours of service learning were complete. I plan to apply the knowledge I have gained through this experience to my current job at Access Leisure and to any future employment in this field.
APPENDIX M

RPT 106 – Class Handout

*Do’s and Don’ts for Writing Commentary*

**Commentary DO’s:**
Read an essay version all the way through BEFORE you begin to comment on it
Spend at least 20 to 40 minutes commenting on a single essay
Raise questions from a reader’s point of view; points that may not have occurred to the writer
Focus on the overall problems of content before looking a surface level errors (i.e. grammar, spelling)
Phrase comments clearly and carefully (The average Joe should be able to read the commentary and understand what needs to be changed)
Make comments **text-specific**, referring specifically to that writer’s essay. Avoid vague or generic comments such as “awkward” or “unclear” or “not developed”
Direct comments to breaks in logic, disruptions in meaning, and/or missing information
Structure comments to help writers to clarify their purposes and reasons in writing that specific essay
Offer **SUGGESTIONS**, not direct commands. Soften comments by using language such as “Consider” or “You might” instead of “You need to”
Comment through the use of questions (“This sentence confuses me a little; can you reword it to make it more clear? OR “Could you make a stronger transition between these two points?”)
Look for unexplained “code words” and ask the writer about them (“What exactly does ‘Different aspects’ mean here?”)
End comments should include the main **STRENGTHS** in the writer’s essay as well as 2 or 3 most important things that need improvement
If something appears too complicated to write n the commentary, just mention that you have something that you would like to talk about to the writer

**Commentary Don’ts:**
DON’T write commentary in red ink
Avoid turning the writer’s paper into YOUR paper
Do not contradict yourself (“Condense this sentence,” followed by, “You need to be more specific and develop this paragraph.”)
Don’t overwhelm a writer with too much commentary
If the writer is not sure that they have understood the assignment, and you aren’t sure either, DON’T be afraid to tell the writer to talk with his or her professor

Adapted from Advice For Written Commentary, by Adria Bader, UR Writing Fellow, WC '96. <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/dosdons.html>. RPT 106 Research 07
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